

UCL started out in March 2018. At that time, just the two of us, we decided to work from home. We quickly found there were many benefits, which created the freedom and flexibility that we sought. As our small business expanded, we offered and encouraged a fully flexible working model to new employees. We believed this model could be scaled and were keen to maintain this with the growth of our business.

Earlier in 2019 we had come together and developed our company values to guide us as we grew, align us with the right opportunities and hold us to account.

One of our core values and vision was a **'Positive Footprint for Life'**. Whilst aspirational, (as a vision should be), we felt it might be somewhat out of reach for a small business. Our clients are responding to several government, global and humanitarian causes that society is seeking effective and non-disruptive responses to. Climate change, transport congestion, road trauma and sustainable land use to name a few.

**How could we really make a difference on the big issues our clients where working towards?**

In January 2020 this year, our team came together discussing how we all really valued our remote flexible model and discussing the things that set us apart from the 'norm'. We discussed the personal benefits that each one of experienced (the benefits of reduced travel times and costs), the ability to balance our personal lives and ensure those precious moments with loved ones where captured, and how we felt so much more productive getting to work at times that better suited and when we found ourselves in our Zone!

We realised, that whilst small, the size of the impact that we were able to make was greater than the sum of its parts. Our departure from the traditional office-based model had reduced our green house gas emissions, delivered bottom line financial savings and provided a lot of flexibility, increased time and financial savings to our team of trusted and talented people. The measured impacts were potentially far greater than we realised.

We had a light bulb moment and thought what would be the impact if we could encourage 5% of the NZ working population to do the same.

**UCL REMOTE WORKING MODEL**

Our team has developed a remote, flexible, professional consultancy model which is successfully delivering sustainable outcomes and financial savings without compromising our exceptional service.

**UCL... URBAN CONNECTION**  
local and connected

<p><b>The impact just 9 people can make using this model...</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>3,360 TRIPS</b></p> <p>By working remotely 9 people save 3,360 trips p.a</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>476 TREES</b></p> <p>An offset in transport and office emissions equivalent to planting 476 trees.</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>144 HOURS</b></p> <p>Individual travel time savings of 144hrs equivalent to \$2,687 per year per person, and;</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>\$7,976 SAVINGS</b></p> <p>Business savings of \$7,976 per person per year in lost sick days and office operating costs</p> </div> </div>	<p><b>The impact just 5% of NZ working population could make using this model...</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>63M+ TRIPS</b></p> <p>5% would save 63,552,000 trips p.a</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>4.79M TREES</b></p> <p>an offset in transport and office emissions equivalent to planting 4.79m trees</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>216 RUGBY PITCHES</b></p> <p>a reduction in office footprint equivalent to 216 rugby pitches</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>24 CRASHES</b></p> <p>24 death and serious injury crashes prevented on the road at a cost of \$30+m each year, and;</p> </div> </div>	<p><b>Our Values:</b></p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p><b>Positive Footprint For Life</b></p> <p>We make a positive impact on the environment, people we meet and projects we deliver. We add value to the wider community.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Live Life Well</b></p> <p>Maintaining our own wellness and positively influencing the wellness of others is paramount. We work to live the life we choose.</p> </div>
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The results were impressive to say the least and some questions came to mind:

- 'Why are more businesses not doing this when staff really value it and financial performance is improved?'
- 'Why are governments not incentivising this approach when it can be a major impact player in response to the big challenges?'
- 'What are the roadblocks for others?'
- "How do we increase our voice to share this knowledge with others?"

So we wrote a short paper to ACE in February 2020 to share our initial findings in the hope that we could start the discussion.

Role on March 2020 and Covid -19 struck NZ. Suddenly the world had been thrown into chaos, with many having to adapt overnight to working from home, leveraging off the technology that was already available. We are sure the first few days were strange for many and was not without its hiccups, but suddenly everyone had adjusted.

Whilst we are not suggesting that the lockdown is a good comparison to a flexible working model, it has drawn the world's attention to the impacts that humanity has on the world. With people staying at home, the reduced travel resulted in road congestion disappearing, major reductions in road trauma and many parts of the world seeing their skies clearing up.

This was not the trial we asked for, but it certainly pointed out that there is a smarter way of doing things, that can significantly benefit humanity moving forward.

Watching a webinar last week, hosted by Paul Evans at ACE, it was clear that significant change in the climate response should have started 20 years ago, however, must start now if we are to stand any chance of maintaining a 1.5 degree change in global temperature by 2030.

We know not everyone wants to work from home full time and not all businesses could function effectively in a remote setup, however everyone wants flexibility, all businesses want to impact the bottom line and we all want to succeed in saving the world we live in.

The impacts of Covid 19 has empowered us to adapt and see some of the positive benefits that could be achieved by doing things differently.

I challenge you to think about what you will do differently to impact on the world.

