

**Deploy
Dynamics
CRM**

in just 24 hours

LET'S **TALK** TECH

Autumn/Winter 2022

Cyber security
podcast series

Microsoft 365
HIDDEN
FEATURES

axon

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What can you expect
from this edition of
Let's Talk Tech?

Hello and welcome to our latest magazine. This year is flying by for us at Axon, so we wanted to share with you some of our latest business and industry updates.

Our Autumn/Winter magazine is packed with the latest Axon and tech updates.

Hot topics to check out are, Deploy Microsoft Dynamics CRM in just 24 hours, Microsoft 365 hidden features, cyber security top tips and our recent case study with Equilibrium.

Enjoy!

Tim Mears
Managing Director
Axon IT

Axon celebrates 20 YEARS

in business with refreshed
brand and website

Welcome to Axon's new look

You might have noticed that we've refreshed our brand and website recently! Our senior leadership team decided it was time for a new look to better represent Axon's vision and core proposition. The refreshed brand and website now lead with our purpose, to provide cutting-edge advice and implement 'Transformational technology – Just the way you need it'.

Axon traditionally had a partnership with clients where they would predominantly contact us when they had an IT problem that needed fixing. With technology advancing and our skillset expanding, today we are more focused on forming strategic technology partnerships with our SMB clients. This includes readily sharing the latest technology updates and understanding and inputting into our clients' technology roadmaps to fulfil their objectives and to help solve business and process challenges.

Axon's core services today include three different IT support packages alongside solutions driven to boost business efficiencies, team collaboration and, ultimately, profit. Some of our main solutions offer the latest in cyber security, internet connectivity and a suite of Microsoft applications including Teams, Dynamics, SharePoint and Power BI.

On our brand and website refresh, our MD, Tim Mears, says: "The technology world evolves so quickly, and we have to be ahead of the consumer curve for our clients. Our knowledge, advice and solutions keep them at the forefront of the latest innovations to meet their objectives and the end game – better efficiencies and more profit. Our refreshed brand represents Axon today and the switch from service-led to client-led business. It's also a much better reflection of our team's personality and culture."

If you'd like more information on Axon, get in touch

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We take **pride** in being **innovative** and **leading the way.**



Deploy Dynamics CRM in just 24 hours

Are you happy with your current customer relationship management system (CRM)? Most SMEs aren't, yet how do you decide on which option to switch to? There are so many CRM solutions out there. Most are too comprehensive for an SME – they take too long to deploy, are expensive and they have lots of extra features which you may not really need.

Finding the right CRM for your SME

If you don't find the right CRM for your business, we know that you'll struggle to get your team to use it consistently and correctly. You want the ideal solution, which everyone can get on board with.

At Axon, we wanted to meet this challenge head on. We explored Microsoft Dynamics CRM to see how we could strip out all the elements of the enterprise version that SMEs don't need. Being an SME ourselves, and having worked with hundreds of SMEs in the past, we took on board this knowledge to create a CRM that would be super-useful.

Deploy your CRM in 24 hours

Axon's SME Dynamics CRM is an automated solution – which means that we can deploy it in just 24 hours. It's super-quick and cost-effective to set-up, and has everything you need – contact management, sales pipeline, order management, reports and app integration.

As it's an ideal solution for SMEs, you'll find it easy to use, with positive uptake across your team. With improved communication and collaboration, you'll have a CRM where users can work seamlessly with each other. As your team are all on board, your CRM will become a consistent company-wide source of real-time information, so you can make better decisions.

Dynamics is a cloud-based system which allows you to use your CRM anywhere, on any device. It can be customised and extended to fit the unique needs of your business.

Get in touch today to chat about how Axon's SME Microsoft Dynamics solution will benefit your business.

“
As it's an ideal solution for SMEs, **you'll find it easy to use, with positive uptake across your team.**”

What's the best CRM for your SME?

With so much choice, where do you start? This podcast should help.

Tim Mears and Rob Burrell discuss how Axon has developed a specialist automated version of Microsoft Dynamics CRM. It's the ideal CRM solution for SMEs.

All the best CRM features that SMEs want, it's cost-effective and super-intuitive to ensure team uptake.

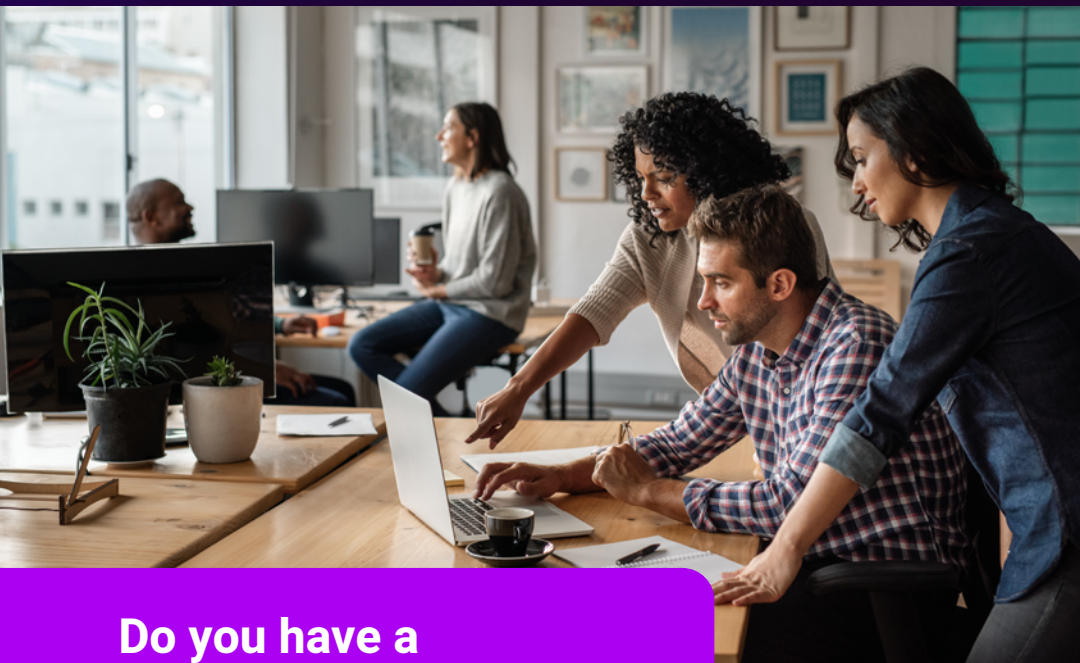
The best bit – you can have your new CRM deployed in just 24 hours!

Listen or watch the podcast, or drop us a message to find out more.



Microsoft 365

Hidden features



Do you have a Microsoft 365 licence?

So many of us do; and yet, most of us only make use of part of our license – Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. In actual fact, with most Microsoft 365 licences, there are lots of hidden features which you can also make the most of. Many of these are really helpful and could make a big difference to your day-to-day activities.

When you're paying for a licence, why use part of it when you could benefit from all of it?!

We're huge advocates of Microsoft 365, which is now Microsoft's fastest-growing consumer product – ever! So, we thought it would be useful to share some of features that you might not be aware are part of your licence, and which could add real value to your day-to-day business.



Microsoft Bookings

Bookings is an online booking and scheduling app which allows you to organise and manage appointments, saving time and streamlining the booking experience for you and your customers. No more double booking!



Microsoft Kaizala

Kaizala is a work management and mobile messaging app which allows you to engage securely with your networks – including partners, suppliers, and customers – all in one place. You'll be able to connect with anyone!



Microsoft Power Automate

Power Automate will expand your automation capabilities across desktop and mobile platforms, allowing you to create and manage flows on the go!



Microsoft MyAnalytics

MyAnalytics is an app designed to help employees and their managers gain insight into how businesses spend their time, with the goal of optimising tasks and making them more efficient. The app can track time spent in meetings, Outlook emails, productivity and more!



Microsoft OneNote

In summary, OneNote is your online digital notebook. You're able to organise, tag, draw and even record voice notes! This one, cross-functional notebook will satisfy all your note-taking needs.



Microsoft Delve

Manage your entire Microsoft 365 profile using Microsoft Delve. It'll help you discover and organise information which is likely to be the most interesting.



Microsoft Lists

Microsoft Lists lets you stay on top of it all, helping to organise events, issues, assets and more. You can track and manage your lists wherever you're working and easily share with others. You'll never forget anything!



Microsoft Planner

With Microsoft Planner, you can create Kanban boards using content-rich tasks with features including files, checklists, and labels. You can integrate your planner into Microsoft Teams and check visual status charts – all in the cloud.



Microsoft Stream

Microsoft Stream enables you to drive engagement and productivity with video. For example, you can deliver live and on-demand events for up to 10,000 attendees, streamed seamlessly from home, at work or on the go. All your videos in one place, wherever you are!



Microsoft Sway

Create visually striking newsletters, presentations and documents in minutes with Microsoft Sway! Save time, captivate your audience and easily add content from anywhere.



Dynamics 365 Customer Voice

Customer Voice allows you to gather and track customer metrics that matter, allowing you to build better experiences. It's super-easy to manage and enhances the customer experience.

If you'd like to chat to us to see how we can help you unlock all the benefits that Microsoft 365 has to offer, call us on **01625 837800**.

Microsoft Azure

A simpler way to manage identities

Be honest – do the individuals in your team all use the same password(s)?

Did you know that 80% of data breaches are traced back to weak passwords; or that, on average, thirty accounts with passwords are needed per person? It's a lot, isn't it?!

Creating and managing user identities can be complicated. Businesses need to give their users productive working environments, without sacrificing security. They also need to enable remote work scenarios where employees, vendors and partners can access internal apps and those in the cloud.

But that's where Hybrid Identity can help.

Hybrid Identity solutions from Azure offer all the tools you need to ensure your people can access internal or cloud apps and data, while you get a single, secure platform that's easy to manage.

So, what does Hybrid Identity allow you to do?



Simplifies access and identity management

With Azure Active Directory, you can securely create and manage all user identities across your entire business from a single location. Your users get secure, single sign-on to all their resources, whether apps are on-premises or in the cloud.



Connects your workforce

Hybrid Identity solutions make it easier for employees, partners, vendors, and customers to use the apps and data they need, from any location. It starts with single sign-on. Then you can extend the solution with VPN Gateway and Azure Networks to create truly hybrid solutions, such as connecting to your existing data centres or linking together different offices.



Safeguards business information

With Hybrid Identity solutions, you have the security you need with multi-factor authentication and role-based access. Perfect for hybrid environments, it's all based on Microsoft security best practices.



What do you get when you use Azure services for your identity management?

Azure Active Directory

This allows you to protect your business with a universal platform that manages and secures identities across platforms. You'll have:

- Single sign-on, including integrated cloud apps
- Multi-factor authentication
- Automated user provisioning
- Self-service password reset

VPN Gateway

Connect your on-premises networks to Azure in a similar way to setting up and connecting to a remote branch office.

- Site-to-site VPN to connect your data centre to Azure
- Point-to-point VPN to connect from anywhere

Virtual Network

Securely connect across resources by enabling secure remote access to on-premises and cloud resources from almost anywhere.

- Hybrid solutions that run in the cloud but can connect to on-premises data sources with ease
- Effortless scalability when you need it
- Centralised control that reduces the cost and complexity of managing hardware/software
- More flexible options for network routing structure and configuration

Sounds great, doesn't it?

To find out more about Hybrid Identity or other features that Microsoft Azure has to offer, get in touch by calling us on **01625 837 800**.



Are you aware that phishing attacks have increased by a whopping 700% throughout the pandemic?

Tim Mears (MD) and Rob Burrell (Sales Director) discuss what cyber security is and what the potential threats are to your business. With cyber attacks on the rise, hackers are becoming more and more sophisticated.

Whether you're a large or small business – you're at risk!



Did you know that 82% of all hacks are initiated through end user error?

Here, Tim and Rob discuss how you can better protect your business, including your employees. Quite often, your users are those who open the door to an attack.

Find out how you can prevent and safeguard your company's data and how to stay one step ahead of hackers.

Connect your business

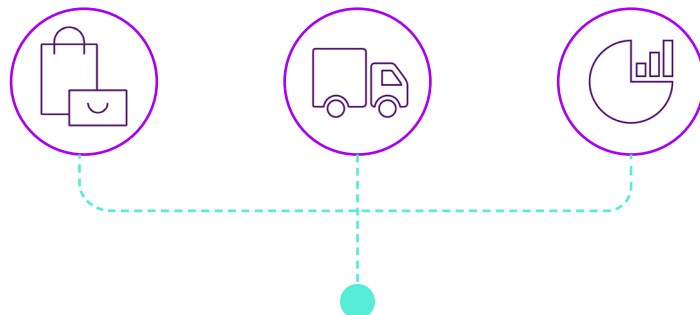
to drive productivity and profits

Supercharge your growing business with an all-in-one solution

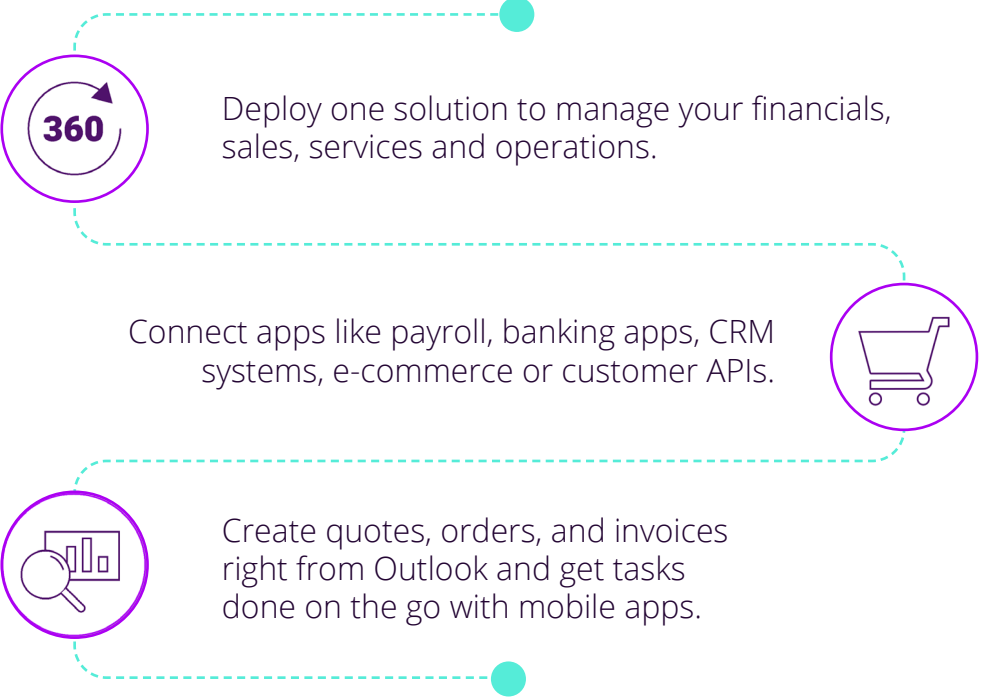


Learn more about how to supercharge your growing business with Dynamics 365 Business Central.

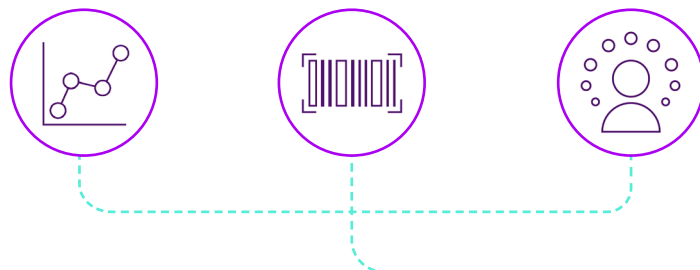
Current systems are disconnected and can't handle the complexity of a growing business



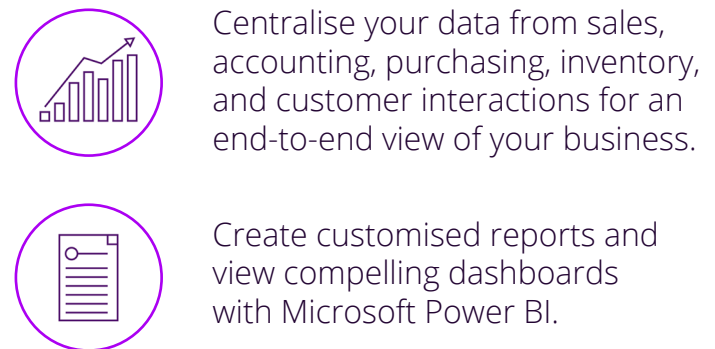
Run your business with a single solution that streamlines business processes and helps employees work faster and smarter



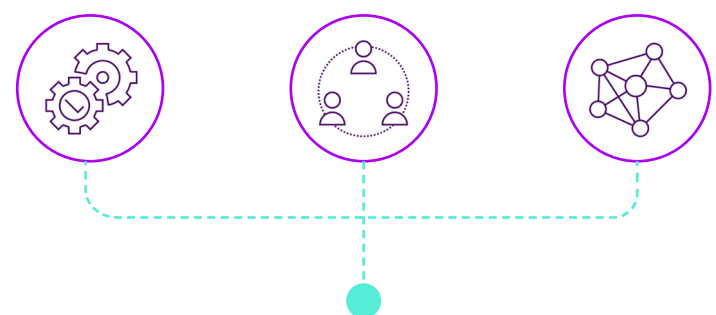
Incomplete data and tedious reporting create blind spots and lead to poor decisions



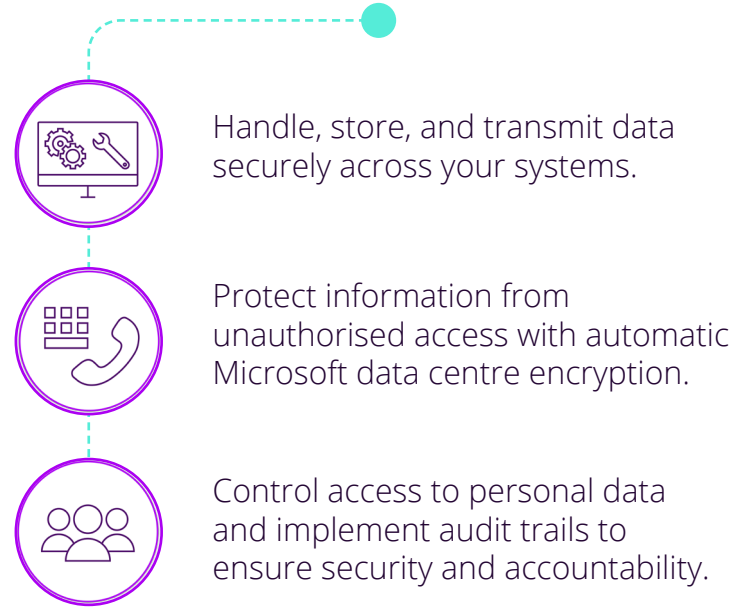
Create a single source of truth by seamlessly sharing data across every line of business



Lack of controls, workflows, and unsecure data causes business risks



Trust in a solution that helps maintain compliance, secures data, and delivers a 99.9% uptime service level agreement



Case study

Equilibrium

Equilibrium is a financial planning company based in Handforth, Cheshire, which has been established for 25 years. Their team comprises of around 90 staff members, including financial advisors and client managers who look after the portfolios and plans for people's investments and pensions.

Axon has been supporting Equilibrium to explore their two-to-five-year business strategy and are continuously helping to develop their internal systems so they run seamlessly. Amanda Jackson, Technology Manager for Equilibrium, tells us why Axon's services have worked for them.

Amanda Jackson,
Technology Manager for Equilibrium



The challenge

Over the past 25 years, Equilibrium have been extremely successful; but, due to that success, they needed a dedicated contact to help and guide them with their technology needs. Axon have been working to move Equilibrium to be totally cloud-based, as they wanted to keep the future and direction of the technology of the company at the forefront of their minds.

Before the pandemic, everybody in their team had a desktop computer and was very much based in the office - there was no homeworking. However, when the pandemic hit, that all changed, and everybody needed to migrate to laptops.

Cyber security needed to be at the forefront of their minds because of the nature of their business and having to deal with their clients' money, daily. They had previously experienced clients being hacked and had received phishing email, too. So, it was critical to them that they had continuous training, reminders and softwares implemented to avoid any data breaches.

Digital presence is also an area which Equilibrium wanted to develop because more and more clients wanted apps to have access to their information as it's recently been brought home that it's more of a hygiene factor for them.

The solution

Axon was originally commissioned to support all hardware and Microsoft applications, which includes having access to the Microsoft Hub where they can log and track tickets and raise requests, as well as being able to reach out about any issues with their emails or computers.

It's extremely important that cyber security was continually looked at, to ensure all protection was in place, and, if any new software came to light, Equilibrium were made aware of them. By understanding their needs and requirements through a discovery session, we established key areas they'd like to improve.

Fortnightly, our account manager would discuss any changes with their team to ensure we were both aligned. This also allowed Equilibrium to cement their roadmap, including their budgeting for the next financial year. Having a trusted

partner was an essential factor for the progression and benefit of the company. Equilibrium had also been using a CRM system which hadn't been meeting their needs for some time, so needed something which was fit for purpose. We looked into developing their own tailored CRM through Microsoft Dynamics, where the team can now internally expand their system; and we support with them with any advice, when needed.

Working with Axon has given the business a much-needed and trusted partner which essentially works as our IT department. Axon knows our business, the people and how we work, and there's a really good relationship between us. We think it's great to have people we can trust to go to for advice on anything technology-related and they're always willing to answer any strange and wonderful queries we might have! They only want us to succeed.

The impact

When the pandemic hit, we were all very desk-based and had to get people to work from home. Axon adapted really quickly to ensure our cloud-based working and Microsoft Office were all in the cloud, which enabled us to get up and running, super-quickly. When the pandemic slowed down, Axon developed a flexible working policy and advised us on the best laptops to use (including installing more than 50, last summer!) over a very short period.

Axon gives us the peace of mind that we're covered in terms of security, anti-phishing, and spam on our emails. Going forward, they will continue to be our trusted advisor and partner, helping us decide the best solutions for our security, networking, hardware choices and helping our team in working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

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In three words, I'd describe Axon as trusted, knowledgeable and unique!

Q&A with Axon's MD, Tim Mears, marks 20-year milestone



Q: How did Axon start out?

A: Axon originally began as a Microsoft training business, which Mike and Graham set up. Graham happened to be selling his house and they ended up acquiring their first managed IT client – the estate agent. As cloud computing evolved, Graham went to a Microsoft briefing and became an early adopter, with Axon becoming one of the first UK businesses to transact a CSP Office365 licence with Tech Data.

Q: How has Axon evolved?

A: In the earlier days we are more of a break/fix business. We still help businesses when any problems occur, but are now more focused on how we can help transform businesses through technology. We do this by really understanding each business's process and working closely with them to better implement their existing technology - or new technology to enhance their business performance.

As Axon hits 20 years in business, this seemed like a good time to catch up and reminisce with Tim Mears. Here's what he thinks about Axon's highlights and its secrets to success.

Q: What's one of your top highlights?

A: Up there has to be that we're advisors to Microsoft UK. Before Microsoft 365 came in, Microsoft Worldwide contacted Microsoft UK and asked if they could interview us to pick our brains on why we were so successful with Office 365. A personal standout for me was being invited to share Axon's views on a product they were developing –that product was Microsoft 365! We're frequently asked to sit on roundtables with multinational businesses on areas such as the Microsoft Partner Programme and what partners need, product development and new product launches.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: We've done well at being ahead of the curve in terms of technology – I'm proud of that. The technology industry evolves quickly, so we keep up with the changes, and that's testament to our team. We're not afraid to make mistakes. You must keep changing as technology evolves and we've had to be fluid. We've attracted team members with this mentality.

Q: How have you been innovative in your approach?

A: One of the areas is that we have our own in-house Dynamics team – that's unique. Because Dynamics is complex, not many try to set up their own team. Our Dynamics team is going from strength to strength. As part of this, we've developed Axon's specialist Dynamics SME solution. It's an automated solution whereby SMEs can have the best parts of Dynamics - the things they really need like opportunity and pipeline management, a CRM, etc. - literally at the click of a button.

Q: How has your team evolved over the years?

A: We have lots of long-standing team members and see many grow with Axon. Several have started out as help desk engineers and are now business process and tech consultants. This isn't an easy thing for team members to do, to shift from fixing IT issues to having a good understanding of how businesses work and where technology can best help enhance overall business performance. We all get on and have fun. Everyone has a single desire to do right by the customer, to help them improve and be successful. They all love technology and want to grow.

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We've done well at being ahead of the curve in terms of technology – **I'm proud of that.**

Q: What key changes have you seen in the industry?

A: We're in a swiftly evolving industry - especially over the past 5 years, where we've seen the fastest period of change in the industry. This includes moving from on-premises computing to cloud computing. The pandemic has massively accelerated change. The old way of working has gone. The pandemic has been a real eye-opener for people to see the benefits of tech and that you can't really run a successful business today without it. With this constant and rapid change, we are engrained in our clients' business processes and how technology can be an enabler. Instead of traditionally where we were fixing tech problems, we're now fixing business problems. We foresee potential problems, build efficiencies for now and the future and guide people through the tech minefield.

Q: Where's the industry heading?

A: The big areas will be around artificial intelligence and big data. People have been wary of AI, but it will become even more intelligent and important. The opportunities are endless with the power of computing. If you don't know what Quantum Computing is, look it up – it's amazing! It's going to take code cracking to a whole new level.



**Get in touch to see how Axon can transform your
business through technology!**

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