



How to Win Contracts Post-Covid

As the UK begins its return to the workplace, it's unlikely that this arena will ever be quite the same again. Fundamental changes in business operations are set to affect the marketplace for talent, and this presents contractors with a prime opportunity to capitalise on their skills, flexibility and independence. While the process of bagging the best contracts still follows the same basic principles of good preparation, presentation and performance, we've identified some useful post-Covid refinements. Knowing your market and where your specific skills can add value has never been more important, so here are some crucial tips for when it comes to winning contracts and working well post coronavirus.

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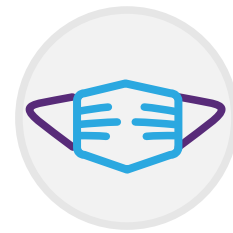
Optimise your remote working capability

In many industries, the increase in remote and flexible working practices is here to stay. As old pros when it comes to this working model, many contractors will be in prime position to lead the way. The increased emphasis on home working means that you should **make sure your set-up is optimised for productivity**. This could mean investing in any areas of 'strain', such as new equipment, improved internet connectivity or communications software to ensure you're ready to hit the ground running. Importantly, it could also mean learning how to optimise your schedule to achieve a better, more sustainable work/life balance. Your performance and the subsequent reputation you build is one of your best marketing tools.



Think ahead about workplace requirements

For contractors returning to a physical workplace, or for those who need to attend for meetings etc, it's important to think ahead. The government have released **industry-specific guidelines for Covid safety in workplaces**, but wherever possible, you should be aware of the specific policies that an organisation has put in place. If the company has online guidance or an available manual, then make sure you familiarise yourself with their protocol regarding PPE etc. Your agency may also be able to guide you here, or gain information on your behalf.



Up-skill for a post-Covid marketplace

One of the best ways to prepare yourself for a post-coronavirus world is to acquire technology skills. The Covid pandemic is fast-tracking digital transformations in companies. Technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, The Internet of Things, Virtual and Augmented Reality**, and Robotics will make businesses more resilient to future disruptions. Whatever your role, contractors who are able to understand how to utilise these tech tools effectively will have a distinct advantage. A good place to start is with PwC's free **Digital Fitness** app. After assessing your skills, there are plenty of free online courses in **AI, Machine Learning and Data Literacy** offered by world-leading organisations. Alternatively, you can search for the specific skills you want to develop on platforms such as **EdX, Udacity or FutureLearn**.

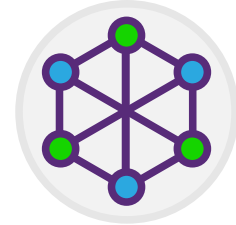


Understand how the market is changing

In addition to identifying key skills that are in demand, an overview of how the market is changing in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic is critical. Here are three areas of the market to look at in order to gain an overview.

1. Models

In addition to a virtual model with accelerated digitisation, one of Covid-19's most immediate economic effects is to accelerate the transition to a **platform model**. A platform business comprises 'ecosystems' of technologies, services and products that bring consumers and producers together, and which can scale quickly and encourage third-party collaboration, thus extending their reach.



2. Trends

The key is to begin thinking about where demand for work will exist and **how best to prepare for those spaces**. Although there's a lot of uncertainty post-coronavirus, the type of work that is robust across multiple sectors and future scenarios offers the most stability. It's always good advice to identify known trends, and to align yourself with those trends.



3. Legislation

Besides unforeseen crises such as the coronavirus pandemic, legislation has the capacity to radically affect the marketplace, especially in certain sectors. One such example for contractors is the off-payroll legislation, which decides how a contractor is classified for tax purposes. Changes to the off-payroll rules scheduled for roll out in the private sector in April 2021 will shift the responsibility for **deciding if a contract is 'inside' or 'outside' IR35**, from the contractor to the end client.



Expand your capabilities and creative capacity

The immediate requirement to engage fully in the virtual realm is pushing people to learn not only digital skills, but also to improve their **auxiliary skills such as collaboration, flexibility, creative problem-solving and openness to new ideas**. Managers and team leaders, for example, are having to learn how to **motivate and engage teams from afar**. The pandemic has also clearly highlighted the link between ingenuity and resilience. Businesses that have been able to adapt their products and services have been able to better weather the storm. This is the time when businesses will shelve old modes of thinking that are no longer productive in favour of ingenuity, new products and new ways of working.



Keep yourself visible, accessible and relevant

The golden rule of consistently bagging the best contracts holds even more true post-Covid. As the virtual working model takes over and face-to-face networking is put on hold for the foreseeable future, having a relevant and accessible online presence is critical. As you build your skills and experience, make sure you update your online profiles and your virtual CV. **Platforms like LinkedIn** are indispensable for customisable work-searches, while also allowing businesses and recruitment agencies to talent spot you for projects. The inbuilt networking capability and wealth of information on topics like **the virtual interview** are other useful assets to tap into.



As the UK begins its phased return to work, **many businesses are already looking to boost their operations with contract roles**. If you need a fast and efficient payroll solution, ContractingWISE have access to a wide range of hassle-free services that can help you with setting up a limited company or finding the right umbrella company for you.



**To talk to a member of our team, call:
0203 642 8679**