

COVID-19: Interview with Adam Popeck, VP Operations at Lifebit

Lifebit is a leading innovator in bioinformatics and cognitive software solution, aiming to democratise access to genomics data by enabling researchers to become experts at running complex analyses to quickly unlock the value of data. Maddyness spoke to Adam Popeck, VP of Operations to understand how they are coping with the COVID-19 crisis.

Maddyness: What is the biggest professional challenge for you today? (and what's the ray of sunshine?)

Adam: The main professional challenge I face right now is creating and nurturing a positive and sustainable remote working culture, one that can accommodate our team's differing personal situations, lifestyles, and communication styles. The ray of sunshine is this: if we get this right (and I believe we will), it will allow us to be much more nimble once the lockdown is lifted, and to expand our reach to an even wider remote talent pool.

What is the biggest personal challenge today? (and what is the silver lining?)

My biggest personal challenge today is my wife and I have to balance full-time jobs with full-time childcare for our 11-month old child (although I have to say I have definitely appreciated spending all this time with him!)

Is remote working a new thing for you?

Yes, it is – even when I’ve been offered that flexibility, I always preferred to work in the office because I know I am more productive there and I do try to keep home/work as separate as possible. Now, at Lifebit we’ve always had this flexible culture, so a number of our team members are based remotely full-time. Because of that, this new situation we find ourselves in was relatively straightforward to transition to.

What changes have you made to keep your business running?

The main changes are remote working for all of our employees and no in-person meetings. Conferences that we were scheduled to exhibit at, or that our CEO was slated to deliver keynotes/talks for, were postponed or cancelled. Having said that, we are in the fortunate position to not be reducing staff. On the contrary, we are launching a recruitment campaign right now. We are looking for more rockstar bioinformaticians and computer engineers plus other positions. Our recruitment process has slightly changed of course – we have added more video interviews for example. And as far as marketing goes, we have maintained our usual spend in the areas of advertising and promotion.

How is your relationship with your investors?

We are fortunate to have a very strong relationship with our investors – they have placed a great deal of confidence in Lifebit and we are humbled by this, especially given the current economic situation. The feedback and strategic input from our investors is always valuable for us, now more than ever as we aggressively grow our business.

Have you had to end or delay your office rent contract?

No, we actually moved into new offices at the start of March, so we only had a few weeks in our new space before we moved to work from home.

What do you think of the support packages for startups offered by the government? What have you been able to use?

Lifebit is in a very fortunate position to not need to access these support packages. We just closed our Series A funding round; we are not furloughing employees and in fact, we are growing!

Do you feel confident in your business post-COVID?

Yes, absolutely. Lifebit is uniquely positioned in the marketplace, and our technology is unlike any other competitive offering. Customers today - even during this pandemic - are deploying Lifebit CloudOS and we see nothing but upward adoption for the foreseeable future.

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