
2020 Year End Review

Dear Clients, Colleagues and Friends of the Firm

Welcome to this third edition of the Laeceum Year End Review. After what has been a tumultuous year, I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Like many, we started the year in line with plan; we were awarded a nine-month mandate to provide in-house Corporate Development support to the ambitious and tenacious CEO of an aspirant digital challenger bank based in London. We worked side-by-side with the CEO and his team on a broad range of strategic and operational initiatives. From capital raising to investor meetings and marketing strategy to board meetings, we provided on-demand capability across strategy, operations and sales & marketing functions for the time-pressed CEO.

Immediately thereafter, we were tasked with our first sell-side advisory mandate for the CEO of a successful UK-based training and networking business. Having built a market-leading business over nearly two decades, the CEO had been approached by a Singapore-based company to acquire the business as part of a global roll-up strategy prior to an early 2021 listing on the NYSE American. In half the time normally required for such cross-border transactions, the team worked at pace to rapidly review, negotiate and restructure key elements of the transaction to secure an optimal balance of risk, reward and certainty for our client.

On the talent front, it was a privilege to welcome onboard John Mould as a Senior Adviser. John was formerly the CEO of ThinCats, the SME lending specialist where he presided over a four-fold increase in lending and a shift towards an institutional-only funding model. John will accelerate the development and commercialisation of our newly launched SME Data & Analytics advisory capability. Work has already begun in earnest on a range of pioneering initiatives in collaboration with a leading global credit agency. We aim to beta test a number of these initiatives with a selected range of partners during Q1 2021.

Further to our ongoing on-campus recruitment efforts at the University of Cambridge and UCL, we were joined by Mahin Vekaria, an economics undergraduate at Cambridge to support us through the summer. Mahin played a key role in supporting our ongoing business development efforts as well as playing a lead role in our work with the CEO of the aspirant digital challenger bank. Towards the end of the year, we welcomed back Oliver Benson who had successfully completed his chemical engineering degree at Cambridge since interning with us first in 2019. Oliver continues to lead the data analytics workstreams of client engagements as well as playing a key role in helping to shape our SME Data & Analytics capability.

Needless to say, the year was not without its surprises and subsequent course corrections. This was most keenly felt in our work with banking clients who were called upon by the Treasury to provide Future Fund, CBILS, CLBILS and BBLs funding in response to the pandemic. Our work pivoted from the strategic to the operational where we plugged short-term capability and skills gaps for a number of UK lenders.

So as the year draws to a close, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our clients, colleagues and friends for all your support during 2020. We look into the oncoming year with every belief that we will make great things happen together in 2021.

Stay safe and have a wonderful New Year.



Ravi Chauhan
Founder & MD

Laeceum is a fast growing advisory and consulting boutique serving corporates, financial sponsors, fintechs, family offices and entrepreneurs