From process to profit:
Four ways payroll processing can add to your bottom line

The big four: How payroll leapt into the future

Historically, the words 'payroll' and 'innovation' haven't always been synonymous. In fact, some circles would consider the two concepts to be an oxymoron.

After all, payroll is all about the day-to-day, people management aspects of a business: managing your client's annual leave requests, recording leave, sending payslips and payroll reports, updating contact details and accurately recording employee hours.

This is bread-and-butter stuff. It's important, no doubt, and it must be done. But it's also time-consuming and repetitive.

At the same time, progress in how these functions are carried out remained elusive. How tech has transformed accounting is well documented. Cloud accounting has swept through the profession, and now AI and machine learning are automating the many procedural tasks of an accountant.

By industry standards, **payroll** has lagged behind. While other core accounting functions have leapt ahead, the payroll field

seemed stuck in the past by comparison.

Things have changed, though. In the six years since BrightPay was launched, a new wave of payroll innovation and cloud access has completely remoulded the sector, from onerous, manual input into a low effort, dynamic and automated service offering.

The potential implications are big, not just for your client service offering - but the very DNA of your firm. Payroll is now more than an administrative task, it can be a profit machine and innovation centre for your firm with the advancements of cloud portals.

Let's take a look at just four specific areas where payroll innovation has already had an impact. ➔
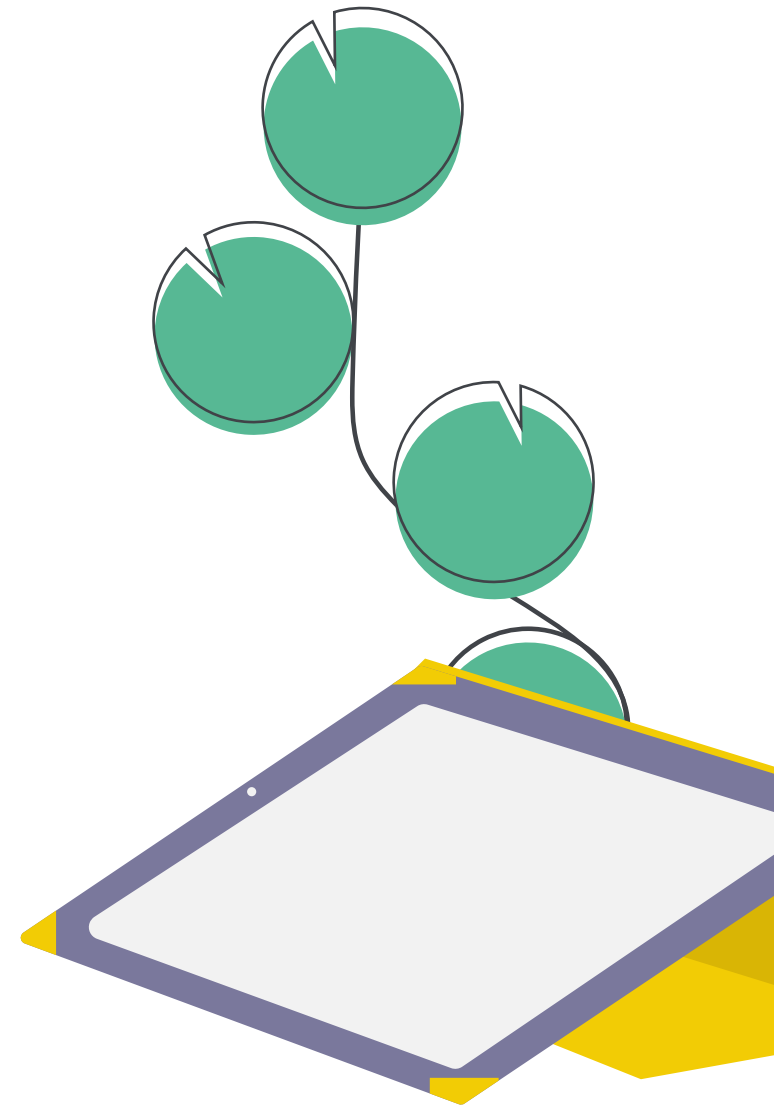
Into the clouds: Payroll as a cloud service

Payroll services have long inhabited a strange dual state of unpopularity. Businesses dislike it because it's onerous, while accountants loathe it because payroll has proven difficult to monetise. Not to mention, the work is complex and there are bountiful opportunities to mess it up.

Cloud computing has altered this dynamic for the better, making payroll services and online accessibility easier and more convenient to offer. Just consider how much more powerful accounting software has become in the era of cloud.

Moving beyond the confines of the desktop and connecting **payroll software** to the cloud opens all sorts of new, exciting prospects. Cloud allows constant and iterative improvements because software companies can offer added benefits and additional layers of access via the web, rather than through more traditional, unsecure methods like sending attachments via email.

This formula for progress holds true for cloud payroll accessibility. Synching your payroll data to the cloud enables new features, fully supported by a remote access infrastructure for your clients that's always improving the payroll process.

As for your clients and their employees, a cloud portal acts like an in-house HR system, streamlining many internal payroll administrative duties.

Cloud integration updates your information in real time which is easily accessible at any time via any device with internet access. Whether it's just checking something after hours, or enabling flexible online access to payroll information creates freedom.

Cloud payroll portals are making it easier and cheaper to provide payroll services at scale for all of your clients. Drudge work is automated, it's more collaborative, and a simple, intuitive online interface speeds up your work.

But the potential profits from **online payroll platforms** aren't just about payroll itself. Time is money, as the old saying goes. Less work filling in boxes means more time spent on lucrative work such as advisory services, consulting and new business development.

All throughout the accounting profession, we've seen that when firms cut the time spent on traditional services like bookkeeping, tax preparation and now payroll, they can then take on additional clients and projects, using the same number of staff.

More capacity, more time, more flexibility, more collaboration, more profits: the benefits of cloud automation and remote self-service portals will seep into every corner of your practice.

The buck stops here: How cloud innovation jacks up your cybersecurity

For many years, the average small business was an unlikely target for a sophisticated cyber-attack. Things have changed. SMEs are doing more business online than ever and they are using cloud services that don't use strong encryption technology.

It's turned your average SME into a likely, lucrative target. There's a lot of sensitive data to be had, and if it's behind a door with an easy lock to pick then all the better.

This new reality bears out in government statistics. Over four in ten businesses (43%) and two in ten charities (19%) experienced a cybersecurity breach or attack in 2018, according to the government's cybersecurity breaches survey.

Three-quarters of businesses (74%) and over half of all charities (53%) surveyed also identified cybersecurity as high priority for their organisation's senior management. It's likely GDPR and its stiffened sanctions for breaches and blunders has a lot to do with this heightened priority.

Payroll processing is a key innovation battleground in this new era of hacks and data regulation. Clients want the convenience of online access to their payroll information, but they also demand (and require) the very best in security.

Cybersecurity is a valuable way to add and demonstrate value, with very little actual effort on your part. A payroll bureau using the most secure **cloud payroll facility** will offer data security as standard.

Meanwhile, the security itself is handled by the software supplier and the infrastructure they provide. When using BrightPay Connect in conjunction with your BrightPay desktop application, for instance, all communication between both systems is carried out on a safe channel with maximum security.

BrightPay utilise all manner of best practice to guard against nefarious tactics such as data injection, authentication hacking, cross-site scripting, exposure flaws, request forgery, and the many other types of vulnerabilities. BrightPay Connect utilises the Microsoft Azure platform to give users reliability, scalability, data redundancy, geo-replication and timely security updates out of the box.

As a payroll bureau, cybersecurity is a critical commercial battleground. You must be able to promise security to both current and prospective clients. By investing in payroll software that offers cloud integration powered by the latest tech, that's an easy promise to keep. Being at the bleeding edge of cybersecurity has never been simpler.

DIY payroll: Empowering clients with self-service remote access

There's a lot of talks these days about 'customer-centricity'. Behind this slightly new-agey sounding term is an old fashioned idea: that of customer service. But customer-centricity also denotes something deeper.

It means integrating your clients into the processes that serve them. That means going beyond the transactive buyer-seller relationship. It's deeper, it's more collaborative. The internet - and specifically self-service in the cloud - makes it easy for clients to help themselves because they can access specific functionality that isn't confined to a single location or computer.

The benefits of self-service are obvious: Businesses can give their employees easy online access to their payroll documents and data. When you have linked an employer file to **BrightPay Connect**, employees can be invited to access an online self-service portal via any internet browser or through the employee smartphone app. The self-service enables employees to complete core tasks like:

- Browse and download their history of payslips and other payroll documents.

- View their payroll calendar, including annual leave, sick leave and parenting leave.

- Request annual leave directly from the self-service portal. Approved requests will flow directly back down to BrightPay on the bureau's PC or Mac.

- View the personal details you currently hold for them, and request to make updates if there are changes to these personal details. Approved changes will flow directly back to the BrightPay desktop application.

- Employees can access their self-service from any computer (PC or Mac), tablet (e.g. iPad), or smartphone (e.g. iPhone, Android).

That means less admin for you, the **payroll bureau**. And it means happier, more engaged employees for your client, too. No more laborious back-and-forth; it's literally a click of a button.

Alleviating this bureaucratic burden is fantastic, of course. But it's important to remember what self-service in the cloud is and what it isn't. It is a great way to devolve simple tasks to different parties and save you time to focus on core tasks. But self-service isn't a set-and-forget scenario, either.

The advantage is, ultimately, strategic and the experience can be improved on in numerous ways. Whether it's anticipating the types of questions that will arise from users, optimising processes or, if you're using BrightPay Connect, for example, personalising the experience for your clients and their employees.
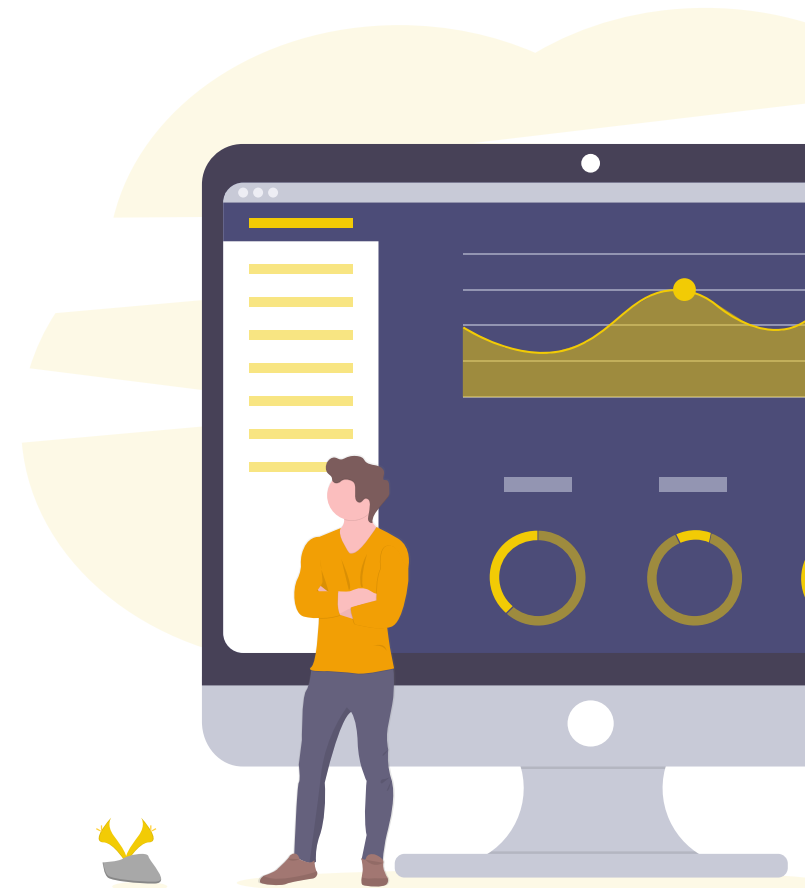
The bigger, the better: Payroll as a profit centre

Offering cloud self-service access will allow your capacity for new business to increase exponentially. As we covered earlier, the time and admin burden of payroll is substantially lessened while simultaneously the benefits of automation reduce the bureaus workload. You can operate at scale because you've got the time to do so. The experience is optimised and standardised, making it easy to path for growth.

It's now possible to offer industry-leading customer service at scale, too. Working with the right **payroll provider** that offers this additional layer of cloud innovation makes providing unique, personal value-added service offerings easier than ever before.

BrightPay Connect's cloud portal acts as an in-house HR system, streamlining many internal administrative duties. Showcase your payroll bureau's forward-thinking expertise and skills and stay ahead of the curve.

This is more than payroll processing. Industry leading software turns payroll into a pathway towards more revenue, not just an add-on or legal annoyance. It means more clients, less work and, most importantly, bigger revenues.
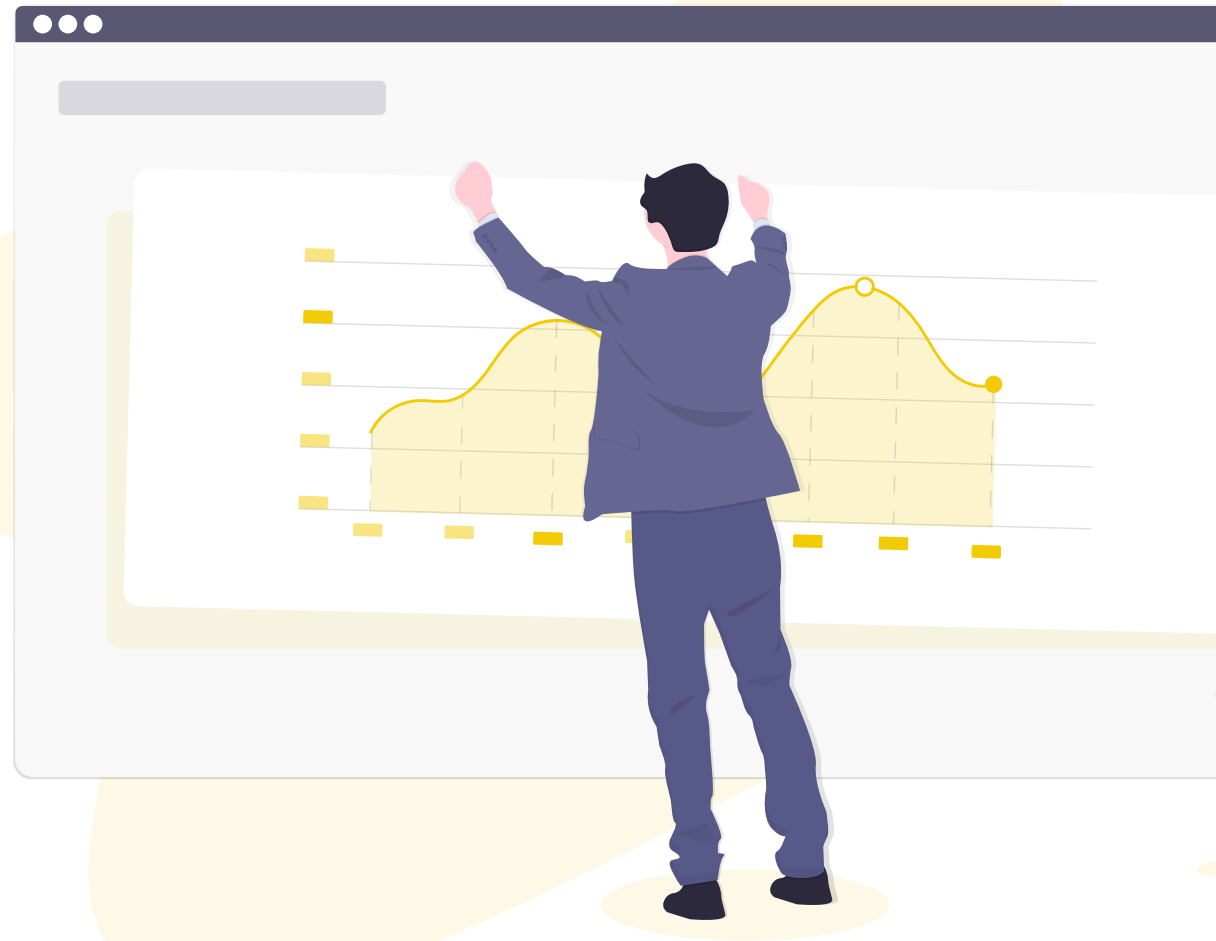
Every Cloud has a silver lining: Making the right choice

Innovation is exciting and dazzling, of course - but it's also a little bamboozling. With every boom comes a cacophony of suppliers and vendors promising the world. What to make of it all?

Innovation is great, but you need to be sure that whatever software you use still performs the core functions well, too. You want the best in compliance and safety with the latest developments in **cloud technology and self-service**.

Most importantly, when choosing the payroll partner for your firm, it needs to a pedigree. Ask yourself, does the supplier have an outstanding history of excellent service, mixed with a constant drive to improvement?

It's here where BrightPay stands head and shoulders above the competition. BrightPay was winner of 'Payroll Software of the Year 2018' and 'Payroll Software of the Year 2019'. BrightPay also has a **5 star rating** on Software Advice and Trustpilot, a 99% customer satisfaction rate and is used to process the payroll for over 320,000 businesses across Ireland and the UK.

The future of payroll processing is certainly bright. For firms looking for more time, more revenue and simply a happier work-life balance, cloud payroll services are a smart investment. Picking the right software is key - and BrightPay Connect offers you the very best.

Book a demo today →