ACCOUNTANTS AMONG KEY WORKERS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACCORDING TO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

- 45 per cent of UK small businesses say their accountant is more important to them than ever before -
- Six in 10 SMEs relied on accountants for pandemic survival -

London, UK - 30 September, 2020 - Small businesses are heralding accountants’ increasingly critical role in keeping them running since Covid-19 arrived, considering them to be among the ‘key workers’ of the post-pandemic economic recovery according to new research.

The study by global small business platform Xero found 43 per cent of small business (SME) owners said that their accountant has been crucial to their pandemic survival, with 37 per cent saying that their accountant helped them retain staff during the height of the lockdown.

However, while one third (32 per cent) of SME bosses turned to their accountant for business advice when COVID-19 struck, 34 per cent turned to government websites and resources and 15 per cent turned to friends or family.

Almost half (45 per cent) of small businesses said their accountant is more important to their business than ever before, while 14 per cent said they have turned to an accountant for the first time. Meanwhile, 38 per cent of SME owners said they have built closer relationships with their accountants in recent months.

More than half (58 per cent) named their accountant as their most trusted business advisor, assisting in areas such as business advice and planning for the future, with 61 per cent saying their accountant supports them in areas they struggle with or are baffled by.

VAT (37 per cent) and payroll (30 per cent) were two areas in which SMEs felt particularly supported by their accountants, with 70 per cent saying they felt most supported in the area of tax returns. To help accountants help their SME clients further with tax compliance, Xero has launched Xero Tax, a cloud-based tax and accounts production solution which provides increased visibility and efficiency when filing for clients.

Darryl Swift, CEO of small business Impact Research, said: “Our accountant has been crucial to us, helping us make quick decisions on what to do next as a business. Thanks to them, we have been able to plan for various scenarios. The pandemic has meant that we now have a closer relationship than ever, and they’re really embedded in our business.”
Pamela Phillips, co-founder and MD at accounting firm de Jong Phillips, said: “Accountants aren't just number-crunchers – they're essential business partners. We've been helping clients interpret the ever-changing rules around furlough and the government support initiatives. Digitising and automating operations has helped save time spent on accounts as well, allowing us to spend more time on providing business advice.”

Gary Turner, managing director of Xero said: “Behind every resilient small business there's a hard-working accountant. They have played such a huge role in saving, and often transforming, small firms adapting to the pandemic. Accountants and bookkeepers are the unsung heroes of our recovery and their importance has never been greater to individual businesses and the British economy.”

Xero Tax offers a single end-to-end workflow for statutory accounts and corporation tax returns, simplifying the process for accountants. Accountants and bookkeepers can use it at no extra cost if they are signed up to Xero’s partner programme. For more information on Xero Tax click here.

**KEY WORKERS IN THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FROM COVID-19**

1. Delivery drivers / postal workers
2. Technology firms
3. Accountants / bookkeepers
4. Political leaders
5. Mentors / business coaches

- ENDS -

**Media Contact**
Xero Press Office
xero@theacademypr.com
020 7100 7100

The survey was conducted by One Poll with 500 Business Decision Makers in SMEs (2-249 employees) in September 2020.

**About Xero**
Xero provides a beautiful and easy-to-use cloud-based accounting software service for small businesses and their advisors around the world. Xero connects more than two million subscribers with an ecosystem of over 800 third-party apps and 200 plus connections to banks and financial service providers. The IDC MarketScape recognised Xero as a Leader in the Worldwide SaaS and Cloud-Enabled Small Business Finance and Accounting Applications 2020 Vendor Assessment.