



Martialytics founders Glen Kleinig and Brad Cumbers in Scotland, United Kingdom, before the pandemic. Photo credit: Martialytics

WA tech company delivers new solutions globally

Western Australian software company Martialytics builds member management software for gyms and martial arts schools.

In March 2020, when they realised their clients were at risk of shutting their doors forever, co-owners Brad Cumbers and Glen Kleinig reacted quickly – rolling out a new software tool in only five days.

This helped Martialytics and their clients around the world to survive but also thrive.

Martialytics operates in 52 countries around the world with a base of over 800 clients who support more than 300,000 students.

The company's main focus is on empowering small business owners to automate time-consuming parts of running their business so

that they can spend their time teaching students and supporting their community.

Due to COVID-19 social distancing measures and shutdowns in many countries, it became impossible for Martialytics clients to remain open. Many had to shut the doors of their gyms

and martial arts schools for months at a time. For a lot of small businesses, that could have resulted in closing their doors for good.

"When you are starting a business like this and you have customers everywhere in the world, you think that you are fairly diversified," Mr Cumbers said.

"But then something like a pandemic comes along and it affects literally everybody in the world. It was a bit of a scary moment for us because everyone was shutting down at the same time in March and April."

With many people working from home, and most nurseries and childcare facilities closed, the Martialytics team realised that the best solution was to build something that gyms and martial arts schools could use to put their curriculum online, and that students could access in their own time.

"If you have no clients that can operate because their martial arts school or gym is physically closed, pretty soon they are not going to be able to pay you," Mr Cumbers said.

"We started thinking about ways in which we could keep them going. We realised that if we could use technology to keep our clients operating remotely, then they would be able to ride out the storm and survive – which meant we would too."

But just as they were looking at new ways to help their clients continue operating, Mr Cumbers and his wife both tested positive for COVID-19.

"It was awful, really awful. For about two weeks it was really bad, and it sort of lingered on for about three months after that," he said.

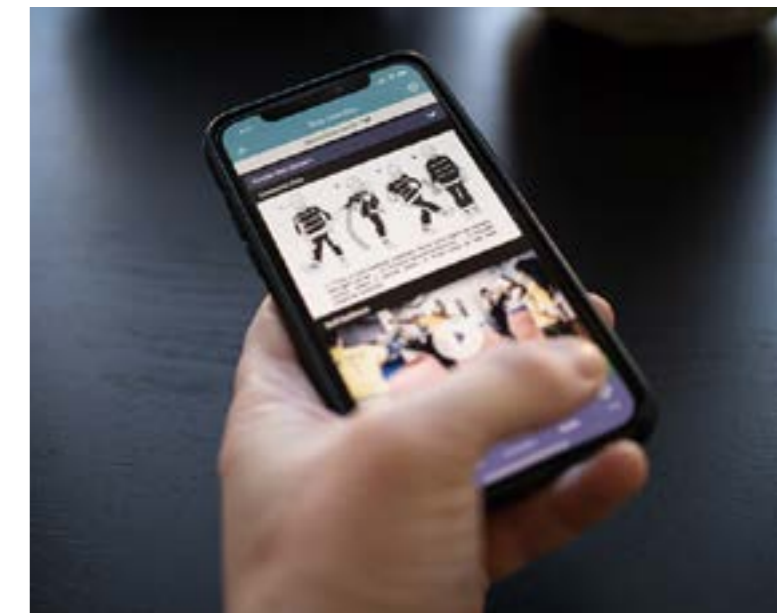
"This is when Glen and I realised, we had to absorb the punch and go with the flow. This one quote by Bruce Lee came to mind – 'Be like water making its way through cracks. Adjust to the object.' We had to do that as a business, to sort of absorb the punch and deliver one back."

Having worked remotely for years, the Martialytics team used their experience to identify how technology could help their clients with face-to-face businesses operate remotely too.

"Immediately, we pivoted all of our development to build a student portal we called 'Study' and released it to our clients in only five days," Mr Cumbers said.

"The schools could upload video content that could be assigned to the student's belt level and they could use their unique login to train remotely at home.

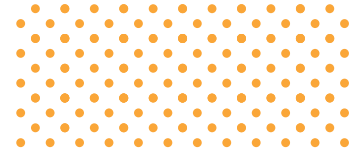
"So, while they've got access to that, they'll still be paying their school, and this was enough to keep the schools open. In addition, if our clients were really struggling, and they couldn't pay us, we deferred payment for a few months."



Martialytics successfully used technology to keep their clients operating remotely during the pandemic. Photo credit: Martialytics

Surviving and thriving

The new features, coupled with live video classes, meant that schools could stay open and keep providing value to their students who needed them more than ever – having the ability to remain active helped their mental state immensely during this period.



"The students found it extremely helpful, as their own lives were in a bit of turmoil with the uncertainty surrounding jobs and schedules, adapting to working from home and not being able to go anywhere. This gave them something to do at home in their own time," Mr Cumbers said.

When the lockdowns around the world started to ease, the Martialytics team redirected their focus once again and built a booking and capacity management tool to help schools that were beginning to re-open in small numbers around the world, set up and keep track of their class sizes.

"This tool helped schools set their capacities for individual and group classes, depending on the size of their rooms," he said.

"They are now able to invite students to class, keep track of restricted numbers versus capacity and manage contact tracing."

Get in touch

If you are looking for opportunities in business, investment or trade, contact our experienced team at Invest and Trade Western Australia.

Contact: investandtrade@jtsi.wa.gov.au

www.investandtrade.wa.gov.au

Putting customers first

While Martialytics saw the majority of its customers close their doors in March and April 2020, they were largely able to stay in business thanks to the new online tools.

"Many of our customers told us that our new tools saved them. A lot of them actually used that word – that we saved them. They were talking about us online a lot, and then that drove more sign-ups," Mr Cumbers said.

Due to this support from their customers and its new online capabilities, Martialytics didn't lose any revenue in 2020. In fact, they continued to grow the business at a rate of about 5 to 8% during this period.

"It's important to be innovative and think about your customers first. If you can support them and help them to thrive, they certainly won't forget what you've done for them," Mr Cumbers said.

"The bonds you forge are immense, and we've rebounded off the back of incredible word of mouth as a result of how we looked after our customers during the toughest months of 2020.

"Being small and nimble gave us the ability to react quickly to keep our business going. I think having

that sort of mentality, you don't have to necessarily be small to pull it off, but to be able to pay attention and have a rapid response plan in place, for if and when they turn, is really important for any business."

Mr Cumbers acknowledged co-owner, CTO and lead software engineer Mr Kleinig who played a lead role, working long hours to launch the new features in such a short period of time

"I must take my hat off to Glen Kleinig who was the lead in pulling this off. He worked crazy hours to launch these features in such a short period of time, and ultimately that's what kept us going," he said.

Martialytics is now working on turning their student platform into an app, due to launch mid-2021.

"We are really excited, now that we have these tools that we've built, we want to expand our customer base and work with other member management businesses, like dance schools and yoga schools," Mr Cumbers said.

"Looking back at 2020, it was a tough year. We had to innovate to survive, and our new solutions kept our customers trading enough to survive too and ultimately thrive. Both Glen and I are very proud of our team for pulling it off."