

Case study

Integrated software: an essential ingredient in HFM's business strategy

Since founding HFM Tax & Accounts Ltd in 1996, Managing Director Ian Marlow has steadily grown the firm from very small beginnings. The current eleven-strong team supports several hundred clients, with particular expertise in helping professionals in the City of London with residence/domicile issues and property letting. They also prepare accounts for companies and partnerships across a range of sectors.

Key benefits for HFM



High levels of software integration help remote employees work as a team



Client communications and records securely available from any location



Reliable software backed by responsive service

An important revenue stream

CCH software from Wolters Kluwer has played an important part in the business since its early days, with the number of modules being used extending over time from core compliance on to CCH Document Management and CCH Practice Management.

Ian Marlow values having reliable software for compliance work. "Compliance is our bread and butter, with the production of clients' annual accounts and tax returns being a major component of our work. It's crucial that we get it right. Fortunately, we can rely on Wolters Kluwer to keep our software aligned to the latest HMRC requirements."

Opting for integration proves a wise choice

Ian says that 'back in the day' when he set up in practice, he was faced with a choice of implementing stand-alone best-of-breed solutions or an integrated

suite of accountancy software. He's pleased he opted for the latter path, as having fully integrated software has been a key factor in enabling the HFM team to work remotely, with secure access to information wherever they are based.

Remote working, combined with using serviced offices in London, gives the firm and its clients the best of both worlds: it helps to keep down operational costs, improves utilisation of resources and frees staff from the daily grind of commuting into the capital, while retaining the flexibility to meet with clients whenever need arises.

Using CCH Document Management as part of an integrated suite makes previously scanned-in client communications available from any location. This equips the team with access to key documents in client meetings and enables the adoption of paperless working practices.

Ian explains, "As the software is so integrated, we are saved having to enter key data more than once and can rely on the information we see on screen to be accurate."

"Having fully integrated software has been a key factor in enabling the HFM team to work remotely."

In addition, when I travel into London, I no longer bother to take pen and paper; I enter my notes from the meeting electronically straight into the system.”

Ian highlights that operating as a remote team requires all members of staff to be methodical, “When you’re not all sitting together in the same office, you need to be systematic in entering information into the database and updating it as the client’s circumstances change. However, we see this as an advantage. Why would any practice not want to work this way? The alternative, with individuals scribbling notes on bits of paper or squirrelling client information away in their own systems, is a barrier to providing professional, joined-up service.”

Using integrated software also means that the impending transition to Making Tax Digital is no big deal for the firm. “With our business already heavily digitised, we see it as an opportunity rather than a threat.”

Software + support = a winning combination

Along with reliable software, Ian and his team depend on the support provided by Wolters Kluwer. Indeed, it was one of the key factors that made them choose the software in the first place.

“It’s no use having great software if the support is lacklustre. With Wolters Kluwer, we simply log a query online and the right person calls us back very promptly. In addition, our account manager maintains regular contact, helping us to troubleshoot any emerging issues and talking us through our options to keep the software attuned to our business.”

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Find out how we can help



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