Quarterly Newsletter

CORIENT - YOUR OUTSOURCING PARTNER

CORIENT
Customer Oriented Company

September 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from the Director's desk...

We welcome you to the 2nd edition of our quarterly newsletter. I would like to thank all our clients and readers for their encouragement and appreciation for the content published in the June quarter.

The PM announced the opening up of the economy (including staff returning to work at the office) back in July, making the accountant's role more important than ever in guiding smaller businesses to bounce back with greater success. We are equally ready and committed to providing quality services to businesses through accounting practices.

Corient has launched its new service – Corient Technologies. After successfully delivering many IT projects for accounting firms, we felt the need to extend this service formally and reach out to many more practices. We want to help firms enable technology to grow their practice. Recently, we exhibited at the Digital Accountancy Show at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and the Accountex North in Manchester. It was good to see Accountants' participation in embracing and implementing new technologies and applications to bring efficiency and better customer experience.

Punit Jain, Director, Corient Business Solutions Ltd.

DATA SECURITY GUIDE
FOR ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

Accounting firms deal with sensitive data pertaining to the financial and other personal information of the clients. It is necessary that they employ sound data and cybersecurity controls. Furthermore, the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has sharpened the awareness of companies and businesses on the issues related to data breaches.

Use of cloud servers.

Moving to cloud technology is a productivity-boosting move that enables a business to enjoy the various benefits of the cloud, one of them being data safety as your clients' data is not stored on your computer, where it could be stolen, lost, or accidentally deleted. Instead, it is stored remotely on secure servers and all application functions are performed off-site.

Paperless office using various data software tools.

Storing documents digitally is simpler, and easier to access compared to paper and is also more secure compared to storing physical files. Though paper cannot be completely dispensed with, making the office paperless to the extent possible reduces clutter, improves collaboration, speeds up access to information, and provides better data security. Also, with Making Tax Digital (MTD) requirements in the UK, it has become important to choose accounting software that is compliant with it.

Data Encryption and Password Policy.

Data Encryption. Sensitive data should be always protected whether in transit or at rest. Strong encryption ensures that the data is protected from outside eyes.

Password policy. Passwords are the first line of defence against illegal access to data. A strong password policy enables this line of defence. There need to be strict requirements for employee passwords in terms of length, complexity, and lack of predictability.

No storage of data on local computer or personal computer.

Storing critical data on a local network comes with its fair share of risks including data loss through theft or accident, unauthorized physical access, and unauthorized virtual access. Some of the procedures to protect data from these risks include backing up your data to the cloud such as Dropbox or Google drive which are cost-effective solutions to automate data backup. Also, the data may be backed up to an alternative physical location regularly. Good antivirus and anti-malware are important to safeguard against malware and virus attacks.

Certification- Cyber Essentials or ISO 27001

Cyber essentials. Cyber Essentials certification helps the business to achieve a baseline of cyber-security by identifying 5 fundamental technical security controls that organisations should implement. This should be implemented by all businesses or organisations as it helps defend against most internet-borne threats.

ISO 27001. This is an international standard that provides specifications for the Information Security Management System (ISMS). It provides 114 security controls that encompass people, processes, and technology. A certification assures the clients that the standards recommendations have been followed.

Shredding of data on a regular basis.

Data disposal is an area that should not be overlooked because when it comes to data the adage "Out of sight, out of mind" does not apply. Data discarded in a bin is effectively open to anyone. Hence, it's imperative that certain protocols should be followed while disposing of data.

No Pen Drive etc.

Storing data on a pen drive brings with it the convenience of carrying your work and being able to dive into it at a moment's notice. However, one can completely overlook the cross contamination of malicious code that can spread when you plug the pen drive into an outside device that is infected with malware and then use the same pen drive on your device. Right off the bat, storing sensitive client data on pen drives must be avoided as much as possible.

Use of Citrix, RDP for employee's login.

The use of Citrix and RDP provides secure access to applications deployed on-premises, in the cloud, or delivered as SaaS. COVID-19 has also forced businesses to view virtualisation and working from home as a deep-seated reality.

CORIENT
Customer Oriented Company

TOP 5 PRODUCTIVITY TIPS TO RUN YOUR ACCOUNTING FIRM

Economist Paul Krugman wrote "Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run it is almost everything". A country's ability to improve its standard of living over time depends almost entirely on its ability to raise its output per worker." This is also true for businesses and organisations. The more effectively a business uses its resources, the more profitable it will grow. Accounting firms are no exception to this maxim. In an environment with ever- growing competition and the rise of AI and automation, what strategies can accounting firms use to grow profits? Keep reading to find out.

Outsourcing.

Getting smarter with resourcing can make all the difference! It means hiring the right fit for the firm at the right price. Outsourcing is one such strategy. It gives you access to a larger talent pool and with the right mix of onshore and offshore staff, your firm can increase its productivity as well as increase cost savings. It gives you an opportunity to focus on the business development and your core competencies. A reliable accounting service provider can prove to be a dependable partner to scale the business on demand without you worrying about looking for temporary resources during peak seasons.

The benefits of outsourcing apply to firms of all sizes.

Segregation of Departments – BK/Payroll/Year End.

When accounting firm owners wear multiple hats, there may come a time when the revenue of the firm plateaus. This happens because with lack of specialisation comes lower productivity. In order to build a scalable accounting firm, it's of the utmost importance that it is not people- dependent but process- dependent. When you break down the business of your accounting firm into its various components or processes, it becomes easier to manage the business and you can put systems in place for each process. Thus segregation of departments leads to increased efficiency, elimination of duplicate efforts, increased ownership by the staff, reduced human errors and better internal controls.

Use of practice and task management software/ tools

Practice management software saves time, costs and reduces the time needed to manage clients. Different firms will look for different things in their practice management software. While some might need a workflow built in some will need a CRM. A good practice management software should enable you to manage clients, work, collaborate and track progress of the work. Let's look into some practice and task management softwares in detail.

a) GoProposal.
GoProposal is a pricing and proposal software specifically designed for accountants. It helps users to speed up proposals and fee reviews instantly while also making letters of engagement and service schedules.

✅ **Pros**
- Everything is in one place – Pricing, Proposals, Letters of engagement and sign up.

- Existing clients can be put through the tool and it ensures that the payment is coming through as per the latest pricing and on schedule.
- Enables decision making regarding the terms of payments.
- Can be integrated with GoCardless, QuickBooks and Xero including others.

❌ **Cons**
- Scope of improving the dashboard further.
- Though it is preferred by small and mid-tier firm, sole practitioners might be hesitant on account of pricing

b) Onkho.
Onkho is a fully integrated client care system for accountants. It enables you to plan your workloads more efficiently, never miss deadlines and communicate more effectively with your clients.

✅ **Pros**
- Platform specifically developed for small accounting firms by accountants in practice.
- A fully-featured CRM system
- Insights to report on anything from the status of jobs to up-selling and cross-selling opportunities.

❌ **Cons**
- The pay as you grow plan may not find favour with all practitioners.

c) Monday.com.
Monday.com is a cloud-based project management tool that has its core strengths in how it visualizes work that needs to get done.

✅ **Pros**
- Allows use of Gantt Charts and allows you to create unlimited boards
- Allows to customize the forms and conveniently track the deadlines.
- Impressive visualization

❌ **Cons**
- Lack of strong task dependencies

Use of other software such as Dext and AE

a) Dext. The new name for Receipt bank is Dext to reflect the capabilities of the software that go beyond receipt management. It makes business finance easy and helps track, read and store expense receipts on the go and more.

b) AutoEntry. AutoEntry is an automated data entry platform. It has efficiency enhancing features like document scanning, item capture, smart analysis and processing, auto-publishing and document storage.

Use of Management Reporting Software - Futrli, Fathom, Spotlight and Syft.

Management reporting software can help you customize KPIs for each client based on their industry, size and goals which can be analysed to make better decisions and also help to drive conversations with clients.

a) Futrli. Futrli is a cloud based forecasting and reporting tool. It has 3 way forecasting and KPI dashboards.

b) Fathom. This business information and reporting software transforms accounting data into management reports to offer deeper insights, it's great at explaining variances to budget and setting out cash flow in an easy to understand manner.

c) Spotlight. This is a great plug and play software that makes generating reports easier, given its relatively fixed reporting structure which makes customization comparatively limited.

d) Syft. Syft can be best integrated with Xero, QuickBooks online or Sage accounting. It includes features such as automated commentary, branded pdf reports, consolidations, AI-powered insights engine, forecasting, budgeting and benchmarking vs. industry peers.

THE INSIDE STORY

Quarterly Update

1

Corient has taken a big step in further strengthening its training department and launched a cloud-based Learning Management System for its team. This will take care of continuous development of team members' skills and their professional development. We are also running a Leadership program for our managers based on Stephen Covey's '7 Habits of Highly Effective People

2

While Corient has traditionally been providing bookkeeping and accounting services to accounting practices, we have now started providing admin support as well. This covers activities like new client set-ups following an agreed checklist (including set up on respective systems), MLR checks, issuing Engagement Letters, drafting Confirmation Statements for Client Manager approval, standard e-mails for client approval, ad hoc data work for marketing activity, and assistance with raising sales invoices.

3

The top-level management at Corient took the initiative and ran a campaign of vaccinating our employees privately. More than 60% of the employees participated and have been vaccinated.

4

Our existing clients love our work and have proved it by referring several new clients. We have started working with 18 new accounting practices during the last quarter, helping them to streamline their workflow and achieve their goals.

5

Corient is proud to have helped one of our African-based clients with their Xero bank feed integration. Though Xero is the accounting software of choice in several countries, bank feeds are not available in some countries. However, our client, the accounting firm wanted to develop bank feeds so that they could roll out Xero use faster to their clients. Our talented team successfully took up the challenge and developed bank feeds by developing app and browser automation. Data from the bank is extracted daily and automations used to upload it to Xero. The project resulted in significant savings to the accountant, enhanced the ability to roll out Xero faster to clients and popularised Xero with their clients.

CORIENT
Customer Oriented Company

LATEST ON THE BLOCK

Corient has launched its new service – Corient Technologies – and we are excited to present the new website **www.corient.tech**. After successfully delivering many IT projects for accounting firms, we felt the need to extend this service formally and reach out to many more practices. We want to help firms enable technologies to grow their practice.

Corient develop the solutions accounting firms need, using custom application and API development & integration. Our talented team will connect mobile apps, web store, accounting systems, shipping fulfilment, ERP/CRM services, merchant payment services, support tickets and many more - Corient can connect them all. To us, it is more than automation. It is giving entrepreneurs more confidence in growing their business.

Services Include

Custom Application Development

API Development and Integration

IT support and services

Robotics and Artificial intelligence

Outsourced development team

Xero integration

OUR SUCCESS STORY

Background of the Client

Our client is based in the North of England and specialises in taxation, management accounting, and other advisory services. The firm also has an IT arm specialising in developing software. The practice set-up was complex, and the accountant wanted to mitigate the following challenges:

- As the inhouse staff lacked key knowledge, the partner had to carry out several activities himself.
- Several sophisticated tools and state of the art technology were being used to manage client relationships and invoicing, but their utility was limited due to delays in updating
- The partner struggled to provide adequate time to run the project resulting in underutilisation of the application; there was a shortfall in the desired benefits.

To overcome these challenges, Corient deployed staff with experience in several areas:
- Customer Relationship Management
- Data Cleansing
- Updating Data
- Liaison with internal and external stakeholders

Corient undertook the following work for the accountant:

- Updating CRM with new enquiries
- Follow through to ensure proposals are submitted on time
- Ensuring all fields are updated in CRM
- Weekly client pipeline reporting
- Client onboarding
- Client KYC and AML checks
- Setting up calls within teams for scoping, managing diaries, chasers
- Creating client folders
- Setting up bank feeds
- Bookkeeping for the firm and associated companies
- Raising invoices
- Credit control
- Filing Confirmation Statement
- Confirming accuracy of closing balances
- Preparing Management Accounts for the firm along with key KPIs
- Updating tax software
- Ensure returns are signed off by clients

As a result, the accounting firm and the partner are experiencing several benefits:
- The CRM application is always up to date and gives key insights about expected business
- Follow-ups are timely to ensure maximum proposal conversion
- KYC and AML checks are all up to date

Partners and staff focus more on client relationships and value advisory as they are freed from routine jobs

CORIENT
Customer Oriented Company

WHAT OUR CLIENT SAYS

"We have been working with the extended team at Corient since 2015. In the lead-up to our formal relationship with them we carried out a significant amount of due diligence, which included a site visit to their office in Mumbai. We were delighted with our findings and have been gradually growing our relationship with them since. It is great having their UK presence as this gives us peace of mind as well as accountability of service. The type of work Corient carry out for us is varied, from payroll and bookkeeping to fully outsourced services for clients. We have also used their services for some data cleansing assignments. The Governance and knowledge-sharing system we have as part of the relationship is key and we are regularly in two-way communication to ensure we, and our clients, are well serviced. In our continual drive to improve efficiencies, working with Corient has enabled us to offer some basic services to clients at a much lower cost base, which not only gives us timely and accurate information, but also the ability to analyse and add value to our clients."

- **Jane A, Accountant in London**

CORIENT TEAM AT
DIGITAL ACCOUNTANCY SHOW

Corient team had a great time at Digital Accountancy Show held on 1st September 2021.

CORIENT
Customer Oriented Company