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FIRM NAME: FINLEY & COOK, PLLC

LOCATION: SHAWNEE, OK

PRODUCTIVITY SCORE: 353

To say that Janet Golay travels a little is an understatement. As a partner with the firm of Finley & Cook, PLLC, she works in Shawnee, Oklahoma, overseeing more than 70 of the practice's approximately 115 staff. But technology has enabled her to perform her work from her home office every other week. Not her temporary home in Shawnee, but her home near Austin, Texas. In general, she says she spends a business week at the office in Shawnee, and then returns for the weekend, the next week and the following weekend to her Texas home.

"My husband and I consider Texas home; it is where we want to live and where we plan on settling after I retire," she said. But the 415 miles is not as far as it used to be, according to Golay, who uses instant messaging, e-mail, remote network access via virtual private network (VPN) and portals, and her cell phone to keep in touch with clients, staff and other contacts. As it happens, she is just making use of the technologies that the firm employs for its clients, both through its technology consulting arm and its business process outsourcing operations, both of which Golay oversees.

Finley and Cook specializes in providing accounting services to Native American tribes and oil companies, often performing the day-to-day actions of in-house accounting departments, including back-of-house activities such as managing revenues from casino gaming activities and other tribal enterprises like smoke shops, manufacturing, convenience stores and art galleries. Remote access and communication technologies are an integral component of this process, and the firm's effective use of them resulted in a Productivity Score of 353.

The Productivity Score helps assess an accounting practice's use of technology.

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Finley and Cook was founded in 1947, but Golay says the practice has really boomed since personal computers and accounting programs started to appear in the late 1970s. She joined the staff of Finley and Cook in 1977 as a clerk with no accounting background but soon started taking accounting courses and passed the

CPA exam on her first attempt. She has since completed her MBA, as well. She made partner in 10 years. It was in her initial position as an accounting clerk, however, that she discovered the great potential of technology to increase efficiency within a firm.

“We had very large heavy-duty reporting requirements, especially for a publicly traded oil client with 10K and 10Q reporting needs. We bought three Lanier word processors for about \$14,000 each, and it made a big difference. Then Finley and Cook was a very early adopter of PCs, which really enhanced our abilities.” Since then, she says the firm has always been on the lookout for productivity-enhancing technologies, and she oversees the technology focus of the firm, including its web site and its deployment of VPNs, digital dashboards, portals and the network.

The key to building this part of the practice, she says, is finding the right software and technologies for the client. But unlike many other technology consultants, the outsourcing services provided by Finley and Cook usually result in the firm being the end user of whatever system they help implement and support.

Despite overseeing a very technology-centric part of the practice, Golay says she isn't a “techie,” and that the aspect she most enjoys is project management. “Finding potential business opportunities and relationships and putting deals together, then building those client relationships is the

key. I focus on our commitment to our clients, providing them with the best

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a fine art and, most of the time, can perform accounting and bookkeeping for clients more effectively and efficiently than if they tried to do it themselves. We saved an oil company client \$750,000 in one year just through handling their accounting.” Now, that should make a client happy.

Finley and Cook will need a new Frog Kisser in about three years, however. Janet plans on retiring in 2008, joining her already retired husband Paul in Texas, and spending time focusing on her children and grandchildren.

Technology

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