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When Darrell Layman first started his tax practice in the rural town of Cuba, Missouri, the technologies in use by accounting firms and other professionals looked a bit different than those that today's firms have come to rely upon. In the early 1980s, few firms had personal computers, of course, and all client services resulted in

paper-based documents that were either mailed to the IRS or stored in the firm's file

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In the three-plus decades since, he has built his practice, Layman CPA (www.laymancpa.com), by following the development of technologies for accountants and has adopted many of the proven best-practices of highly successful firms across the country. In doing so, he has built a Next Generation Accounting Firm that may be based in rural Missouri, but has clients nationwide and around the world. The firm includes a variety of client services ranging from tax planning and preparation, to small business accounting, payroll and business consulting.

At the core of his practice, he has implemented the comprehensive time management system from [BigTime Software](#) that helps to not only manage client engagements, but also integrates with virtually all of the other technologies his firm uses for client service. This cloud-based system ties all of these core processes together, providing Darrell and his team with access to important client data and resulting in a single database that eliminates the headaches of redundant data entry.

Finding the Right System

Over the years, Darrell had tried many practice management systems from different vendors, but even the systems from so-called integrated suites ended up being less productive and effective for his firm. "They just didn't offer the integration we needed, and data often had to be entered several times in different places," he said.

He started using BigTime three years ago when it was offered by Intuit for accountants using the Lacerte tax system. The product is now independent of that company, but continues to offer tight integration with that and other professional tax programs. The system includes dashboards for managing activities, powerful filtering tools, and strong reporting functions.

Darrell says that BigTime's integration with other programs is also a key factor in boosting his productivity. "BigTime's primary purpose is managing time and measuring productivity across the firm," he says, but we also use it heavily for

engagement tracking, and the system directly integrates with Office 365,

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further out. This gives us the edge we need to be more productive and profitable, and give our clients the results they expect.”

[\[Read the 2015 review of BigTime.\]](#)

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