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Public accounting firms are seeing how radical advancements in mobile technology have created a new way of working, and forward-thinking, savvy decision makers at accounting practices are using this to further their business by making their workforce more engaged. By doing so, they are now able to offer better service to clients – and a better work environment for their staff.

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for mobile telephone usage.

Writing a BYOD policy can be tricky though, as it's hard to capture all aspects of a trend that is so new and quickly evolving. However, as with any HR-authored policy that dictates business practice, it should align with, and support, the culture of your practice and its need to accommodate a future where BYOD is not just a trend, but standard across the accounting industry.

As the next generation of CPAs begin making up more of the workforce – those who were born nearly device-in-hand – the boundaries of the office environment will continue to vanish. To put this in context, a recent survey revealed that 74 percent of fully employed 20- to 29-year-olds worldwide consider BYOD to be common, and 55 percent say using their mobile device at work is a “right” rather than a “privilege.”

But BYOD goes beyond checking emails on a smart phone or using a laptop to work from a meeting room. It is about being able to work remotely and making use of time out of the office, whether it is during the travel to work, working off-site at a client location, or working from home to balance family and personal commitments with workload demands.

The flexibility of a BYOD culture enables staff to work from any location, without the need to take a company-owned laptop with them – but it only works if those tools are provided. Equipping tablets or mobile phones with mobile practice-management tools keeps staff connected to work, colleagues, and clients, helps managers stay on top of resources and engagements, and helps maintain work-life balance.

Streamlining business processes

Providing staff with the means to log-on from any location has a number of benefits to the business as a whole. Consider billing processes, for example. In the past many busy and on-the-go accountants delayed entering their hours spent on client work

or expenses incurred as cumbersome access to secure, office-bound practice-

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Using the mobile culture to your advantage

Allowing staff the freedom to work on a device platform that they are most comfortable with is a shrewd move for accounting firms to make. Consider a member of your staff who can use a preferred device to not only access information but also to provide it, from a client site, remote location, or even at home.

The message it sends, especially to industry peers, competing practices, prospective staff and clients, is clear: it says we are a practice that moves with the times, we are not afraid to embrace change, our staff are equipped for success, and we encourage an engaging place to work. These are all characteristics of a practice that is forward thinking and at the forefront of technology that also inspires loyalty and a happy working environment!

Claus Thorsgaard is Executive VP and General Manager of Professional Services for **Deltekt**, an enterprise software and information solutions provider for professional services firms, government contractors and government agencies.

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