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a person.

At the peak of the recession in 2009, having served as the director of finance and operations for the large (3,000+ member) Calvary Church (www.calvary-church.com), this CPA saw the opportunity to open his own practice, Kregel & Company CPA (www.kregel-cpa.com), with specialization in tax planning and business advisory services for professional service businesses and organizations equally committed to doing good in their sphere of influence.

During his six years at Calvary, Scott managed all financial and administrative functions of the church by providing staff leadership and management in the areas of finance, human resources, building operations, construction management and stewardship/fundraising, which included an \$11 million capital campaign. Prior to joining the church's staff, Scott worked as a tax manager at Kreischer Miller (www.kmco.com), one of the largest full-service accounting practices in the Philadelphia area.

Scott was already a member of the church, but it was the experience he gained while at this large practice that first drew the attention of Calvary's leadership, which offered him the position on April 16 in 2003.

"Although Pastor Meredith had offered me the position earlier, when he asked again it felt like the right time," Scott said. "It seemed like a good thing to do, with the opportunity to help others and work closely with people on things that are important to them." When he took the position, he also kept his hand in the public accounting space, retaining a few private clients for which he continued to provide tax and business consulting.

By 2009, Scott had the urge to once again return to public practice full-time, but this time on his own terms. And he found that not only was he ready, but he also had the

passion, commitment and confidence to open his own firm. The question, however,

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meets your idea of what *your* practice should be, including choosing the types of clients you want. And this is critical if you're looking for businesses managed by younger, more tech-savvy people.”

Of course, there's also the matter of sweat equity, since as the founder of the firm, drumming up clients would fall squarely on his back. While his professional networking skills brought some businesses to his door, he also relied upon technology to help position his new practice. This included social media like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but he says that developing a technology strategy was a core component of the firm's ability to achieve early success.

“I turned to BuildYourFirm (www.buildyourfirm.com) to help develop the firm's website, social media strategy and coaching in practice management,” Scott said. “This helped me create a website and a platform for providing fresh content, business-focused articles, planning tools and calculators that visitors find useful, and which can lead to them seeking the firm's services.” The site also includes portal functions that allow him and his clients greater collaboration options, including securely transferring files and accessing documents.

Another key element of the website's design was using strong search engine optimization techniques. SEO is essentially the science of online marketing, helping to make the site more likely to be found near the top of search results to a target audience. In Scott's case, this is small and mid-sized businesses in particular industries that are around the Philadelphia area. When they perform searches using key phrases that involve accounting, tax and business consulting, there's a good chance his Kregel & Company CPA website will be among the early results. They also use more traditional forms of marketing, including direct mail.

Has this strategy worked? The proof is in the books: Since its founding in mid-2009, the practice has grown to more than 50 business clients and more than 120

individual returns, with the bulk of revenue coming from tax planning and

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which leads to greater productivity and a better service and value to our clients.”

In addition to the firm's online marketing and social media strategies, Scott's technological savvy has led to the use of many web-based programs that allow for remote access, and he uses triple-screen monitors. He sees great opportunity in developing the practice with cloud-based technologies. The firm scored a 248 on the Productivity Survey (www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com/productivity), a free online tool from CPA Practice Advisor that helps firms assess their use of technology and workflow processes.

The online technologies he uses for work and marketing his firm also help him to spend more time with his family. “When I want or need to, I can stay and work from home or stay connected while traveling to visit out-of-town family. With the software and technology in place, I usually spend about 25 to 30 hours actually in the office.” Much of his time is spent with clients or working from coffee shops, and the actual amount of time he spends “working,” depends on how you count it, he says.

“Every time you're in a conversation with someone, you're projecting something about yourself and the firm. I am very aware of these interactions and work hard to communicate a warm, relational and professional image in each occasion. And I'm always checking email, researching and keeping up with strategies, and using social media. Night, day, all the time. It's a pace and lifestyle that works for me; it's how I'm wired.”

Originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, where his father was managing partner in a CPA practice with 50 staff members, Scott met his wife Amy while the two were at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. The two soon settled in Pennsylvania while she was finishing a graduate degree at Lehigh University. Scott later earned his Masters in Taxation from Villanova University in 2002.

When he and his wife aren't chasing down or transporting their three children, ages

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their dreams for their businesses. That's an important role that goes beyond just business, but into personal trust and friendship."

Infobox

Scott R. Kregel, CPA, MST

Founder, Kregel & Company CPA

Philadelphia, PA

www.Kregel-CPA.com

Productivity Score: 248

Practice Specialties: Tax Planning & Compliance; Business Advisory for Professional Service Firms

Education: BS, Taylor University; MST, Villanova

Social Networking:

Twitter: www.twitter.com/scottkregelcpa

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kregel-Company-CPA/120854664615457>

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/kregelcompanycpa

Blog: Srk.squarespace.com

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