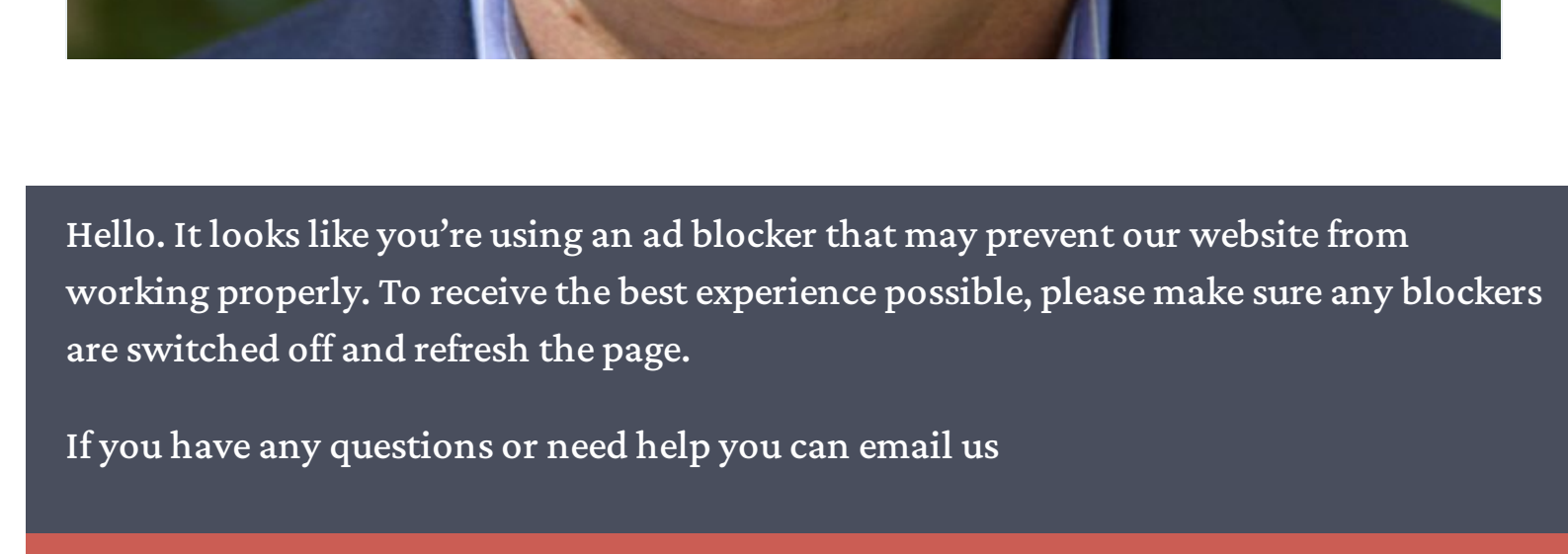


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Lou Fuoco, Fuoco Group, Certified Public Accountants and Business Advisors

The Fuoco Group isn't your average tax and accounting firm. On one hand, you have the quirky and out-of-the-accounting-box "shall we dance" marketing theme, and on the other you have a collective expertise that spans a broad accounting repertoire. But what really differentiates the firm is its mastery of the fine art of technology — having designed and implemented a streamlined, paperless internal system that allows Fuoco Group to operate (queue dance analogies) with grace and agility.

"We are a multi-office, multi-state firm, so we rely on technology to keep us connected and to keep work flowing, uninterrupted, through our offices," explained Lou Fuoco, CPA and managing director of Fuoco Group. "If we are going to provide our clients with exceptional service, we have to operate at peak efficiency internally."

That's the attitude of Lou Fuoco and all the firm's partners. Of course, across-the-board partner buy-in didn't happen on its own, and it didn't happen overnight. Before moving forward with the first round of system changes a few years back, Fuoco brilliantly secured the okay from all partners by educating and informing them of the value and necessity of implementing new technology and upgrading processes.

"You have to get the partners on board first; they have to be part of the process in order for change to occur with limited chaos," Fuoco asserted. "It starts at the top. We have to lead by example."

To date, the firm operates in a digital environment, and productivity is high. However, Fuoco has a vision for his firm and asserts that there is a lot more change to come.

“We are always focused on staying ahead of technology and best practice trends. It

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With that attitude, it is clear why Lou Fuoco has become the self-proclaimed office “cheerleader” and why his vision for the firm is vast.

“We have to provide the partners and our staff with best-of-breed tools that allow them to work and serve our clients efficiently. We also have to provide tools directly to our clients to ensure an exceptionally positive service experience. That’s why I continue to push the adoption of new innovations, like SaaS-based products and portals. I’m the cheerleader; that’s for sure.”

When the firm was launched in 2003, partners opted for an in-house Citrix server environment to run applications. Eventually, the firm moved data and software off-site to an independent data center.

“It was much more efficient that way,” Fuoco recalled. “Staff could access apps and data in a virtual setting, but we no longer had to invest time in maintaining the hardware.”

Other internal changes included implementing a voice over Internet phone system (VoIP), up-front scanning practices to support paperless processes, and other web-based communication tools.

“While all these changes have progressively fueled efficiency by supporting streamlined cross-office communication and workflow, there is so much more planned for the future,” Fuoco said.

He has a well-defined plan for the coming year. One major change involves migrating to CCH’s SaaS-based Global *fx* solution. A true SaaS platform offers automated software updates, shorter development periods and enhanced system speed.

The firm also has a large-scale social media plan in place — including creating a

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All of these changes will increase our presence, while also improving our image as a tech-savvy firm,” Fuoco said. But change will not stop there. He is also committed to providing clients with practical resources and tools that offer ultimate convenience.

“Our main focus is always the client. We want their experience with us to be consistently positive, which is why the new website will host private portals that allow clients convenient online access to their financial documents on a 24/7 basis. We are also implementing a section on our site exclusively to house helpful client resources,” Fuoco explained.

The firm also recognizes the need to continually educate its clients. “We plan to launch a blog and distribute articles that offer timely, helpful information — updating them on tax law changes and offering tips and tactics for business success, to name only a few.”

The vision is big, but with Lou Fuoco leading the charge, no doubt it will come to fruition.

It's All in the Planning

Change starts with a vision and a solid plan. The Fuoco Group seems to have all their ducks neatly in a row as they look to 2011 as the year of great change. Adoption of a SaaS platform for the firm's mission-critical software, a new website, blogs, social media sites, SEO, and a slew of other client-service enhancing initiatives will keep Fuoco Group in the vanguard of progressive firms.

Change is ever-present. There's no denying it. What is it that thought leaders say? “Firms are only ever one new technology away from being outdated.” This is why it is so important that firms stay ahead of technology trends, work consistently to identify new innovations and best practices, and maintain a clear vision for ongoing

success and growth. It's all in the planning, and Lou Fuoco knows that better than

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