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**ACCOUNTING**

## Change Is In The Air

Gail Perry • Jun. 12, 2019



Did you ever have to move and change schools when you were a child? I only had to do it once, but I just met a new friend who went to 13 different grade schools. I can't begin to wrap my head around that. This person understands change like nobody else I know. At the same time, I'm working with a tax client who has lived in the same house for more than 50 years and is contemplating moving to a retirement community. The idea of making such a big life change is overwhelming to her – so much so that I'm not sure she'll be able to make the move.

Why is it we're so resistant to change? In our work lives, we define change as switching to a new computer program, changing from office to remote working, dealing with clients via text and video chat instead of phone calls and letters, asking Alexa to turn on our lights instead of walking across the room and doing it ourselves. None of this is difficult, it's just different. And yet sometimes it feels like *nothing will ever be the same again* when we're asked to make yet another change.

Maybe change will be frustrating, or even a little difficult, but usually the changes we make are for the better: faster, more effective, more secure, more accessible. How often do we make changes that are for the worse? Whether it's a matter of learning new skills, adding new services to your client offerings, moving to new office spaces, adding flexible hours for our staff – the end result is the same: we're better for having made the change.

And yet, we kind of hate making changes.

The reviews in this issue cover a variety of tax software solutions, and I'm writing about change because to switch to a new solution would be a big change. Many people whose opinions I respect suggest accountants should hold off on making computer software changes at the moment, that the software solutions themselves are in a state of flux, and we should wait until we know exactly what we want and can find a solution that is exactly what we need. I think that makes sense. But not when it comes to tax software.

If you're using a tax software that gives you headaches, this is exactly the time to make a change. You've got time right now to consider the available options, demo the products, discuss the pros and cons with your staff, make a choice, get your client history loaded into a new program, and have everything in place before next tax season begins.

The benefits of the change, one would hope, will include a smoother tax season next year, better workflow, happier staff, happier clients, a bit of time saved, maybe a bigger bottom line – what's not to like about any of that? The downside, if you want to call it that, is that you're going to have to invest some time right now to make all of that happen.

As a tax accountant who is considering doing this myself, I can totally empathize with the overwhelming feeling of this change process being too difficult to manage, but I'm trying to keep my eye on the benefits I'll be reaping next spring. Meanwhile, it's late – Alexa, turn off the lights.

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