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positioned to meet the leadership challenges of the future? If so, congratulations! If not, it's time to get started!

Jim Boomer • Jun. 18, 2020



Managing a CPA firm has never been more complicated than it is today. Firms of all sizes are grappling with uncertainty and volatile economic conditions. Client and employee expectations are changing, and technology is rapidly commoditizing and disrupting many traditional firm services. Is there a magic solution that will bring all this into harmony and allow your firm to cruise calmly forward into the future? Unfortunately not. However, firm leaders can position themselves for success by aligning people, processes, and technology.

A shared vision for the future

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them to work effectively from wherever they might be – working remotely, non-traditional hours, or simply keeping up with their workload while traveling. Today, that kind of flexibility and technology isn't just a “nice to have,” but a requirement for firms that want to remain operational and competitive for top-level talent.

The best firms view technology as a strategic asset rather than an overhead expense. Yet the best technology in the world won't make much difference if the firm isn't committed to refining processes to take advantage of the opportunities technology presents. Technology and process go hand-in-hand. New technology makes new processes possible, while new processes can get the best return on investment from your technology budget.

Fortunately, the tools required to align people, process, and technology are available and affordable for firms of all sizes – whether you have one office with just a few partners and a small staff, or a multi-office firm with several hundred staff members and a diverse partner group. In both cases, however, partners must be willing to buy into investing in technology, following firmwide processes, and forgoing personal preferences.

Integrated technology and process

One way to improve results is to rethink traditional ways of doing essential functions. This applies to client services as well as internal functions, such as sales and marketing, scheduling, onboarding, budgeting and billing.

Most firms have a variety of systems for handling these different functions. Far too often, these systems aren't integrated, limiting the firm's ability to share critical information at the right time, and the firm missed out on a lot of opportunities as a result.

For example, without a CRM system, firms miss out on the benefit of a full view of all

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Identify opportunities for integration of systems, automation and streamlined processes and eliminating redundant data entry and tasks.

Executive decision support

For the firm to run efficiently, decision-makers need timely and accurate information. For many firms, getting information to support a decision means rounds of customized reporting to get the information the partners need, supplemented with spreadsheets where the reporting falls short or is suspect.

Streamlining reporting can have a significant payoff. Instead of going to multiple places to enter or update common information, do it once and let the applications share the data. Instead of drawing information from various sources and compiling it for reporting purposes, let the reporting application draw upon the information it needs. It will be easier to supply the right information presented in a clear and concise form. Best of all, performance metrics are available in real-time, which can be a powerful tool for accountability at all levels of the firm.

Has your firm committed to aligning people, processes and technology? Are you positioned to meet the leadership challenges of the future? If so, congratulations! If not, it's time to get started!

Firm Management • Technology

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