

WORKING & UNWINDING in Waikoloa



**Ryan
McCowan,
CPA, CITP**
Greene & McCowan, CPAs
London, Kentucky
— Page 6

**2007 Creative Solutions
Users' Conference Presenter
Ryan McCowan with Amy,
Whitney and Ashley**



Solutions

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COVER: Thomson Tax & Accounting Users' Conference presenter Ryan McCowan relaxes at the Hilton Waikoloa Village between sessions with (from left) his wife Amy and daughters Whitney and Ashley. He credits technology, productivity and workflow for his firm's success. The conference seminar he conducted was called "How to manage a Tech-Savvy Firm."

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PROCESS INNOVATION: Beyond Applications

As tax and accounting professionals, we all seem to have certain traits in common—attention to detail, intense drive, and strict adherence to policies and procedures. These characteristics are crucial to maintaining the highest standards of integrity in a highly regulated profession. Yet these same traits, coupled with the familiarity of traditional accounting methods, may also tend to slow our adoption of new and innovative processes that can result in incredible benefits for individual firms, their clients, and the profession as a whole.

Today's accounting firms must look beyond applications and focus on innovative processes to truly realize significant productivity gains and keep pace with the leaders in the profession. And although new technology is the key driver in process innovation, it does not have to be the only driver.

A frequently used term in the accounting profession today is "workflow." Unfortunately in many firms, the term means simply placing a new technology over an existing, antiquated process. Although technology can assist, process innovation is truly unleashed by completely re-thinking existing procedures, and then considering automation with advanced new technology.

Letting go of the "we've always done it that way" mindset and embracing the digitization of the profession—which includes integration, paperless and the web—will allow firms to supercharge their level of process innovation. And an institutional obsession with process improvement will be the culture of firms that can expect to drive their growth in excess of the norm. In the accounting profession, like any industry or profession, the rate of innovation will be what separates high-growth firms from the rest of the pack.

Not so long ago, the only option for preparing and delivering tax returns was a duplicate data-entry and paper-based process. Today, if firms adopt new tools and operate in a digital environment, the process is completed with far less effort, at less cost, and delivered more timely. Those firms that have adopted web-based client organizers, e-filing and digital product delivery methods will never return to the paper-driven process. And why limit new efficiencies only to tax processing? Why not look at all of the day-to-day processes in accounting firms the same way?

For example, FileCabinet CS enables accountants to securely store virtually any docu-

ment digitally, so they can access, view, or email them instantly. Firms that utilize FileCabinet CS are virtually paperless. They save an enormous amount of time, money and storage space—all from implementing a new process. And I'm sure they would not go back to life before FileCabinet CS. Moreover, adding technology to manage all digital communication and collaboration both internally and externally within the firm would result in even more efficiency. New paradigms in practice management such as Practice CS are designed to provide just such efficiencies.

In the accounting profession, there are two types of firms. "Step-change" firms are those who implement new processes and technology in a discontinuous way, generally one advance at a time, taking a "step" at a time in hopes that they will gain efficiencies. "Process-oriented" firms make process innovation a way of life by continuously re-thinking their processes and being open to change. True process-oriented firms realize that process innovation is not a single or periodic event—it's everything you do, every day.

I challenge each of you to analyze the way you conduct your work each day. If you cling to how you have done things in the past, even though you might add technology in hopes of driving efficiencies based on "the way you've always done it", your firm will not advance. Instead of relying on conventional methods and applications, examine your processes. Changing your view in this way can result in staggering benefits for your firm.

To remain competitive, accountants should be responsive to the innovative products made available through technological advancements and look beyond the conventional methods inherent in the profession by focusing on true process innovation. Thomson Tax & Accounting can provide the product and service innovation you need to transform your processes, resulting in major time savings, a reduction in non-billable time, increased efficiency, and ultimately higher profitability. Driving process innovation is the foundation of our business.

Jonathan A. Baron
President, Professional Software & Services,
Thomson Tax & Accounting

THOMSON TAX & ACCOUNTING RECEIVES FIRST-PLACE HONORS—RESULTS FROM THE STATE TAX ADMINISTRATORS' ANNUAL SURVEY ANNOUNCED

We are excited to announce that Thomson Tax & Accounting received top honors in two categories within the State Tax Administrators' 2007 annual survey of tax software vendors. Survey results were presented at NACTP's (National Association of Computerized Tax Processors) Annual Meeting in August. We received first-place honors in two of three categories: Best Overall Vendor and 2-D Barcode. We also received second-place honors for e-filing. Tax administrators from 28 states participated in this year's annual survey.

Tax software vendors are judged on several criteria for both the Best Overall and 2-D Barcode recognitions. State tax administrators assess the quality of tax form design and accuracy and timeliness in relation to a vendor's submission for approval for final delivery to customers.

Taking first place in two out of three survey categories further reinforces Thomson Tax & Accounting's commitment to working closely with government agencies to provide our customers with best-of-breed software. You can access the full press release on this story by visiting us at CS.Thomson.com.

NEW FILECABINET CS SOURCE DOCUMENT MODULE OFFERS TIMESAVINGS WITH OCR

Optical character recognition (OCR) technology is a key transition technology that we believe can help to streamline workflow for some of our users. Our new FileCabinet CS Source Document module offers UltraTax CS users an alternate approach to the tax preparation process that will not only save data-entry time, but also save preparation time that requires a professional.

For the upcoming 2007 tax season, we are offering a new FileCabinet CS Source Document module to 100 select firms as a limited pilot release, with a full commercial release planned for the 2008 tax season. This first generation module brings OCR func-

tionality into FileCabinet CS and UltraTax CS to enable identification of certain tax-source documents and capture of tax data, which can be integrated into UltraTax CS for tax processing. Designed for firms with a centralized, up-front scanning tax preparation process, the module enables these firms to save additional time by shifting the responsibility for advance source-document scanning and data entry from the professional preparer to a non-accountant administrative staff member.

The FileCabinet CS Source Document module is another example of our commitment to develop advanced technology that helps our users be as efficient and cost effective as possible. Pilot firms are encouraged to use administrative staff to scan tax-source documents prior to professional preparation of the tax return. These firms should also want administrative staff to verify the accurate "reading" of the data from the source documents into UltraTax CS. If interested, contact your CS Customer Service Representative at (800) 968-0600, or email CS.Service@Thomson.com.

ON-DEMAND TRAINING COURSES DELIVER 24/7 CONVENIENCE

In September of this year, CS Professional Suite On-Demand Training went live on CS.Thomson.com. This new option for convenient and affordable online training hit the ground running with users wanting more. Michael Morales (Scherrer Hernandez, San Juan, PR) was so satisfied with the purchase of his first two classes, that he purchased a third class a week later. "Our staff can take the courses at their own pace whenever and wherever they want, and keep track of their progress on their own My Training page. And you can't beat the price," stated Hernandez.

At only \$99 per course, On-Demand Training offers an inexpensive and convenient way to get your staff acquainted with CS Professional Suite software. Each course provides users with an introductory overview of product capabilities—within a self-directed training experience. And because the courses are web based, they can be

accessed by anyone in your firm, at any time, and from anywhere an Internet connection is available. Ranging in length from one to two hours, the courses remain active online for a full six-month time period, and are automatically updated with content revisions.

On-Demand Training supports our commitment to provide a variety of training options that help you make the most of your software investment and be as efficient as possible. To review the entire library of On-Demand Training and register for courses, visit CS.Thomson.com/Training/OnDemand.

NEW ONLINE 401(K) OFFERS EASY, AFFORDABLE 401(K) ADMINISTRATION

Payroll service providers looking to expand their services will soon have an easy, cost-effective way for their small business clients to offer employees a 401(k) plan. Thomson Tax & Accounting has partnered with The Online 401(k), a web-based retirement plan solution built to address the 401(k) needs of small businesses.

The Online 401(k) fully integrates with Payroll CS, simplifying day-to-day plan management with seamless data transfer capability.

In an era when the responsibility for retirement planning falls squarely on the shoulders of individual employees, The Online 401(k) allows small business owners to affordably offer their employees a 401(k) plan benefit. For accounting firms, the capability to administer their clients' 401(k) plans introduces a new source of revenue, allowing them to increase client retention and compete with payroll giants such as ADP, Paychex, and Fidelity.

Initial design and set up of The Online 401(k) is a simple 30-minute online process. Once the system is set up, Payroll CS automatically creates a 401(k) information file each time payroll is run, which is then sent to The Online 401(k) for account updating.

Key features of The Online 401(k) include affordable flat fee structures based on number of employees, live customer support, the ability to hold online enrollment "meetings," online account access, a separate

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Smart ideas shared at the Creative Solutions 27th ANNUAL USERS' CONFERENCE

HOW TO MANAGE A TECH-SAVVY FIRM

Paula Moerbe

*James, Rickmeier, Boyd & Farrell
Waco, Texas*

With 90 associates, the accounting firm of James, Rickmeier, Boyd & Farrell, Waco, Texas, may not be the typical user of Virtual Office CS. However, the firm is seriously considering adopting this program.

"We're very departmentalized," says business support department manager Paula Moerbe.

"I'm totally behind integration. We use NetClient CS in a very big way. I don't give potential clients the option not to use this program because it offers them so many benefits. They can look at their bank account balances, all their checks and accounts receivable—anything they want whether they're in town or on a cruise in the Greek Islands. It doesn't matter."

NetClient CS has been a profitable investment for the firm. In the last three months the department generated \$50,000 in revenue.

"If we did not have NetClient CS, we couldn't have grown like we've grown," Moerbe says. "Here's an example: we had a client whose CFO wasn't reconciling bank accounts. They came to us to rectify the situation, but with the program they were using (QuickBooks), they couldn't see the information. With NetClient CS they can see bank reconciliations and know exactly what's outstanding. They can see their checkbook online. It basically provides the client with complete accessibility to their entire account. As far as our firm is concerned, it's better for us to offer something that our clients can see and understand rather than do it with software in-house and keeping it here."



EXPERIENCE THE COMPETITIVE EDGE WITH CHECKPOINT®

Tricia Rhame

*Thomson Tax & Accounting Research & Guidance
Orlando, Florida*

Because Checkpoint is a research product, it integrates with the UltraTax CS system to link both programs to research information on whatever topic is selected in UltraTax CS.

"Accountants can use Thomson Tax & Accounting products from two separate arms (Checkpoint and UltraTax CS) to do tax returns and easily find research information right from the return," Rhame says. "From their computer screen, they can jump out to Checkpoint and get an answer, explanation or more information, not just from our editors, but linking out to other source material."

Checkpoint not only links to a variety of research information, but also populates the data to reports and letters.

"This can be incorporated into client letters or printed with Engagement CS," Rhame says. "The information goes right into the client's binder. There is no disconnect; everything can be done at once. Checkpoint makes the tax and accounting product a desktop solution."

When research changes, accountants are alerted to how this affects the tax return and client.

"Checkpoint is set up to do the alert automatically," Rhame says. "When the UltraTax CS system is set up, Checkpoint is built in. It tells the system to notify the accountant when something happens. Or, they can customize the system. For example, if a specific piece of information changes, they will be alerted. Checkpoint sends them an email when they log in. This keeps accountants up to date no matter what they do. They don't have to worry that they missed something."





FIRM PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Charles Tzinberg

*Tzinberg, Goldenberg and Dowdy, a Stone Carlie Co.
Glen Carbon, Illinois*

Implementation of software and processes can improve the efficiency of any firm. The goal is to get clients using other programs (QuickBooks) to switch to Client Bookkeeping Solution.

“This is a big issue for all of us,” Tzinberg says.

“Most of us don’t like other programs and would much rather use CBS because it’s foolproof. Other programs

allow clients to do whatever they want, whether it’s correct or not. We can end up spending hours and hours unraveling something they did in that program that CBS would not allow them to do. We tell clients that CBS integrates seamlessly with the software we use. We can import from the other programs, but it’s not true integration.”

According to Tzinberg, the perfect client is someone who uses CBS-ASP and his firm does their payroll.

“With CS Professional Suite products, we have access anytime, anywhere to the same data and can have a much better conversation with the client,” he explains. “We don’t have to do any importing or keying in; we just review their entries.”

This is the 18th Creative Solutions Users’ Conference Tzinberg has attended.

“My favorite part is interacting with other users,” he says. “This conference in Hawaii is the first conference for many of the attendees. Going to hands-on demonstrations and workshops is great, but talking to each other is another wonderful aspect. There’s always a lot to learn from each other.”



Sharing Ideas at the Users’ Conference

Aloha to the 27th Annual Creative Solutions Users’ Conference.

While the sun has set on this year’s conference, the knowledge gained will continue on in firms across the country. Convening at the Hilton Waikoloa Village™ in Waikoloa, more than 600 participants enjoyed informative workshops, product demos, keynote speeches, and one-on-one interaction with Thomson Tax & Accounting expert staff—not to mention special events, including the Polynesian Pa’ina Hawaiian Luau.

The conference began with a welcome reception Wednesday night, where attendees and staff had a chance to mingle and gear up for the next few days of learning, sharing, and fun. On Thursday morning, Jon Baron delivered a powerful keynote address—highlighting the importance of process innovations beyond applications. Over the next few days, attendees enjoyed networking with colleagues from across the country—all within a noncompetitive, friendly environment. Other keynote speakers included; Gary L. Boomer, CEO of Boomer Consulting, and Rebecca Ryan, founder of Next Generation Consulting.

Users left the Creative Solutions Users’ Conference with practical, productive ideas and information that can be implemented within their firms. Overall, the 2007 conference started and ended with high levels of energy and we anticipate the 2008 conference will be just as successful. The next Users’ Conference will take place November 5-8, 2008, at The Gaylord Texan on Lake Grapevine in Grapevine, Texas. We hope to see you there.



THREE KEYS TO INNOVATION

FIRM'S SUCCESS IS BASED ON TECHNOLOGY, PRODUCTIVITY AND WORKFLOW

When CPAs Ryan McCowan and Steve Greene started their firm in 1998, the goal was to build a practice based on technology, productivity and workflow. For the small London, Kentucky, firm the results are impressive.

Besides the two partners, there are two payroll staff members and an accounting clerk. The firm processes 3,000 to 3,500 payroll checks per week and 12,000 W-2 forms per year, and there is still room for growth.

“Everything we do is based on productivity,” McCowan says. “We provide a better quality of service to our clients by utilizing technology and workflow efficiency and moving to the Internet. Knowing the goals we had, the only products on the market that come even close to providing us with what we needed is the CS Professional Suite. Products like Virtual Office CS and NetClient CS are the only tools available to take us where we want to go.”

On their own

McCowan graduated in 1993 from the University of Kentucky with a degree in accounting. He worked at a medium-sized firm in London until 1998, when he went on his own with one of that company's partners, Greene.

Greene & McCowan, CPAs, work with local small businesses in markets ranging from coal mining to banking with annual sales of \$100,000 to \$30 million. The firm prepares about 800 tax returns for businesses and individuals, processes 60 payrolls, and serves as a fractional controller for about 30 small businesses.



We provide a better quality of service to our clients by utilizing technology and workflow efficiency and moving to the Internet.



“As a contract controller,” McCowan says, “we actually help clients run their business. We prepare tax returns and get financial statements to the bank. Our niche is McDonald’s franchisees. We work with 12 operators and 65 stores in four states.”

Payroll specialists

Payroll preparation is an example of the firm’s commitment to innovative workflow. All elements of the payroll workflow are carefully examined. How is information received? What can be done to make the process more efficient? What is the best way to get information back to the client?

In its early years, the firm worked with data entry worksheets for each employee and key-punched the information. Today, with the latest technology, payroll specialists receive information from a McDonald’s operator with 17 stores electronically, directly

from his computer system. The firm converts this data, pulls it into Payroll CS, and processes a payroll for 600 to 700 employees in 30 minutes.

“My brother and I helped create a bridge program to allow the client’s information to come into CS software,” McCowan says. “We do payroll for a local bank with multi-city locations, and the process is completely paperless. We receive their information in an Excel® spreadsheet and process payroll for up to 300 employees in less than 20 minutes. The bank receives the reports online through their portal with NetClient CS. Their employees use Web Employee to look at their pay stubs and W-2s and to change W-4s.”

The same concept is applied to write-up and tax preparation. The firm always looks for ways to get information electronically.

“With write-up we use Client Bookkeeping Solution,” McCowan says. “It

is hosted on NetClient CS, so we can access information at any time. When a client is finished at the end of the month, we pull the information off the hosted site and electronically reconcile bank statements, which are also incorporated in CS Professional Suite. Then we print financial statements to FileCabinet CS and upload them to NetClient CS portals. Again, the process is paperless, efficient and productive. A lot of our efficiencies come from working directly with the businesses and having the ability to integrate information.

“Software integration is by far the primary advantage of Thomson Tax & Accounting,” he continues. “When we’re running payroll, the journal entries will completely integrate with the accounting package. The same is true when we’re preparing tax returns; the information will be integrated with the client’s accounting package.”

How to Manage a Tech-Savvy Firm

At the Creative Solutions Users’ Conference, Ryan McCowan conducted a workshop titled “How to Manage a Tech-Savvy Firm.” His theme was that technological innovation is the key to the future of the accounting profession.

“Technology is what will make your practice flourish and be successful,” he says.

When it comes to software, for McCowan, less is more.

“If I can get rid of certain software, I will,” he says. “That’s why integration is the key. Hosted/managed software is best, and for me it starts with Virtual Office CS, where there is no need for backups. When I was doing my own backup procedures I had tape drives, DVDs and a mirrored hard drive and I still didn’t feel safe. The main reason I went to this technology was from a disaster recovery concept.”

And then there are updates.

“I have not put an update on my computers since 2001 thanks to CS Professional Suite software,” he says. “The time savings is fantastic, and there are tremendous gains in productivity by not tying up myself or other team members.”

For McCowan, Thomson Tax & Accounting software is the only choice.

“There is no other software on the market that is fully integrated like the CS Professional Suite, hosted through NetClient CS and NetStaff CS,” he says. “And that benefits our clients, too, because they can take advantage of this same technology.”



Clients are receptive

Most clients are very receptive to this technology. McCowan and Greene explain what they need to do with regard to workflow for better productivity.

“When we come into a new situation,” McCowan says, “we tell clients how we work. If we’re doing their payroll, we get them to enter the information online. If we’re doing accounting work, they’ll use Client Bookkeeping Solution—ASP with the NetClient CS environment. We’re going to run our business ourselves; we don’t let clients run it.”

McCowan recounts a story about a client who wasn’t ready to jump on board with new technology.

“Then one day his bookkeeper left,” he says. “The client didn’t know the passwords and couldn’t access any information. Unfortunately, we see this happening all the time. On the other hand, with our technology we can take over on an interim basis to



manage a client's accounting system. Then we'll help them hire the next person so this will never happen again."

Other tools

Besides software, there are other tools to boost efficiency. McCowan closely examines how the office is organized. How close are people to printers? The firm operates from a converted two-story home, and it would make no sense for the printer to be on the second story, forcing the payroll clerk to go up and down steps all day. In addition, every desk has a personal scanner and dual monitors. This allows the staff to use multiple applications and view client documents at the same time.

"There are basically two choices," McCowan says, "use one monitor and print a lot of information, or be more efficient with

a second monitor to preview that information. I personally use two wide screen monitors turned vertically. That way I don't have to scroll down to see an entire financial statement. We just installed a new phone system that allows us to do a lot with communication efficiency. We're taking the whole idea of workflow and productivity and expanding it to all areas of the practice."

Quality of life matters, too.

"Tax season is a busy time for CPAs, and spending 14 hours in an office everyday is ridiculous," McCowan says. "Last year we decided all of us should leave at 5 p.m. Of course, we take work home, but I didn't want my young family to suffer. We'd eat supper together, visit, and I'd help my twin 11-year-old daughters with their homework. With Virtual Office CS, it doesn't matter whether I'm at the office or at home. I have the same set up in

From left to right: Ryan McCowan, Sherry Whited, Lynette Gast, Wanda Mills and Steve Greene.

both places. At home I'm more comfortable and relaxed. Last year my quality of life greatly improved for myself and my family."

McCowan has attended every Creative Solutions' User Conference since 1998, and has taught seminars for five years.

"Through my work with Thomson Tax & Accounting," he says, "I talk to a lot of accountants throughout the year. Technology may seem like a large investment, but I tell them it will pay itself back if used correctly. I know, because our return on investment is tremendous."

BASIC EQUATION

SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS MEAN PROSPEROUS FIRM

Don Zehner understands very clearly what it takes to have a prosperous accounting firm—successful clients.

“We take very seriously the success of our clients,” says the partner of Zehner, Maloy & Associates, CPAs, LLC, Logansport, Indiana. “If they are successful, we’re extremely successful. Because we serve smaller communities, people know right away whether or not we’re competent. If we are part of our client’s success, others are watching. Our name comes up because we’ve made a difference in their business. Nothing spreads our reputation better than successful clients.”

The firm, which Zehner purchased in 1988, works in traditional areas of accounting such as tax preparation and small business consulting. There are about 3,500 clients; 95 percent are businesses with annual sales of \$20 million or less.

There are 10 associates in Logansport. An office in Plymouth, Indiana, opened in 2003 and has three associates. Since 1996, the firm has employed six virtual associates spread across the state.

Rely on UltraTax CS

The firm’s goal is to gain efficiency each year, and Zehner points to Thomson Tax & Accounting’s UltraTax CS as a key component.

“UltraTax CS is an exceptional program because there are several different ways of inputting information,” he explains. “For example, we’ve had people complain about completing a Schedule D, where they have to list all the sales of stocks or bonds. We understand the information interchange designed into this



Staff from left to right: Tina Nicoll, Zina Birnell, Chris Healey, Amy Myers, Lisa Brugh, Jon-Myckle Price, Don Zehner, Tom Faust, Chuck Lewallen, Tiffany Maloy, Ryan Muller, Marc Maloy, Cindy Birnell, Justin Kuhn, Dave Hinkle. Not pictured: Jason Potthoff, Shelly White

program and can make life much easier for our clients. We are able to do a 'cut and paste' from brokerage statements and move the information into Excel. Then we realign the columns and import the data into Schedule D using UltraTax CS. We've had a number of clients with 1,000 transactions or more that we completed in 15 to 20 minutes. Thomson gives us the tools, and they understand the objective from an accounting standpoint. I call it a handshake relationship with all the other software on the market, whether it's brokerage or bank statements."

"We work simply and efficiently in one step so we're not doing things over and over. We can group information in the CS Professional Suite and it transfers automatically to an individual or business tax return. We use that feature extensively with every engagement because of the efficiencies we gain," states Zehner.

Zehner has been through 27 tax season battles, and has seen it all. He remembers the days when clients dropped off a box full of information and he would spend hours and nights assembling it and working on the tax return.

"UltraTax CS and other Thomson products have literally changed the entire way we do business," he says. "Today we try to get clients organized ahead of the process so our appointments are actually to review information. We're able to talk about the ramifications of establishing an SEP for a small business, or analyze the cost and options of a particular deduction. With Thomson products, we can talk in terms of last year, today and the future, with all the information on a screen in front of the client."

In past tax seasons, everyone in the firm had two monitors with their computer. For the coming year, all associates will use three monitors.

"We tested this for one tax season before we rolled it out for everyone," Zehner says. "With three monitors, we're able to look at current and prior year information in UltraTax CS, where we're inputting and processing information. One staffer told me a fourth monitor would be nice for communications such as email and instant messenger. In addition, we use scanning and imaging devices to maintain 95 percent of our documents, so we're virtually paperless."

Clients are extremely receptive to the firm's use of the latest technology.

"I've found I can't prejudge who will be the most receptive to technology," Zehner says. "A few years ago we had a husband and wife in their mid 70s who wanted us to provide tax returns on a CD. They didn't want paper copies. At our office, in FileCabinet CS we have an average of 11 years of image data for every client. For some, we go back to 1961."

Zehner tries to get clients to stop thinking in terms of the rates his firm charges, but instead how they benefit from the firm's technology. He tells them something like this:

"Have you seen professionals who have difficulty finding your file when you call them on the telephone? You are paying twice when you deal with them: first, for their inefficiency and second, because you lose productivity when they can't respond in a timely fashion. With our firm's technology, a telephone call is answered with your electronic file on screen before you finish telling me how your day is going."

Great relationship with Thomson Tax & Accounting

Zehner first got involved with Thomson Tax & Accounting in 1985 while he was with another firm. The previous tax season had been a disaster when the firm used a service bureau. The owners instructed him to find a product that worked.

"I reviewed a lot of software companies and Thomson Tax & Accounting won out," he says. "I was 26 years old and microcomputers were just coming on board. I understood accounting by training and computers by desire. Thomson Tax & Accounting made a nice



blend of the two because they thought in terms of accounting. I didn't know it at the time, but our initial relationship with them may have been one of the most important keys to our success today. I've been with them ever since."

The ability to view multiple forms, past tax history and projections for future years is another advantage of Thomson products.

"They understand the vision of our profession and how we need to communicate to clients, giving them a lot of information accurately in a concise timeframe," Zehner says. "We can do projections quickly and easily for withholding, an expectant child, or losing a dependent

after graduating college. We use these tools to help clients avoid a cash crunch, and they love us for that. That's where Thomson's products are critical.

"We have clients in several states," he continues, "and we offer the same services that someone gets sitting in our office. In fact, we have a program where they can actually see our screen. Our clients know we are on the cutting edge of technology, and our software vendor is, too. Thomson has done a nice job integrating their products; there are no borders."

NEWS LINE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

employer site for tracking and reporting, and a wide range of investment choices.

The Online 401(k) integration debuted in Fall 2007. For more information, contact The Online 401(k) (www.theonline401k.com) at (877) 775-4015 or sales@theonline401k.com.

CREDIT CARD PROCESSING IN CLIENT BOOKKEEPING SOLUTION® (CBS)

The new credit card processing feature in CBS allows you to process and manage customer payments made via Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express. Using a supported Magtek credit card swiper, you can read credit card data directly into CBS instead of typing it yourself and possibly making a transcription error.

After you set up an account with InterceptEFT, you will be able to use CBS to submit payment records to InterceptEFT for settlement. CBS will also record the status of the submission. Using your InterceptEFT account on their website, you can confirm settlement, view and download reports, and more quickly receive your payments from the credit card companies. There are many other advantages to using credit card processing in CBS with InterceptEFT, including:

- CBS credit card processing users with an established Internet connection never need to purchase or use any additional software for file transmission. All transmissions of electronic files are made directly from your CBS Accounts Receivable software to InterceptEFT.

- InterceptEFT provides daily file confirmations, transaction reports, detailed statements of transaction processing, and free technical support.
- InterceptEFT offers a special pricing package to CBS Accounts Receivable users.

For more information about establishing an account with InterceptEFT, or for a more detailed description of Credit Card Processing, please review the *CBS Accounts Receivable Guide to Credit Card Processing* PDF located in the Help | PDF Guides | Credit Card Processing menu option within CBS.

YEAR-END TRAINING— BE PREPARED FOR BUSY SEASON!

Prepare for the busy tax season by attending one or both of our Year-end Update and Productivity Training classes for UltraTax CS or CS Professional Suite Accounting. In these classes, we will introduce you to many timesaving tips and show you how to maximize the value of your software to ensure an efficient and productive year-end and tax season.

Year-end training sessions began in November and run through mid-January 2007. To check dates and locations, simply view the class schedule online at CS.Thomson.com/Training. Classes are lecture-style, run one full day, and are eligible for 7 hours of CPE credit.

- **UltraTax CS**—We will show you what's new in the 2007 UltraTax programs, such as how to perform a like-kind exchange using the time saving wizard, and provide numerous tips to maximize

your productivity with the software.

- **CS Professional Suite Accounting**—You will learn how to improve year-end closing procedures and payroll processing. You will also see how to electronically file 940/941/944, W-2, and 1099 information with the SSA and IRS, as well as other helpful time saving shortcuts.

We also offer convenient web-based classes for those who cannot attend any of the regional sessions. Please note that a high-speed Internet connection is required for web-based classes. For a schedule of web classes, please visit CS.Thomson.com/Training or contact a CS Account Representative at (800) 968-8900.

DRAG-AND-DROP FEATURE ENHANCES WORKFLOW IN ENGAGEMENT CS

To further enhance the workflow process in Engagement CS, a new drag-and-drop feature has been added. This feature enables you to place individual or multiple workpapers into an engagement using standard Windows drag-and-drop functionality. External work papers such as Microsoft Excel, Word, Adobe PDF, Outlook emails, and more, can now be added to any engagement by simply dragging the document into the Engagement CS tree. From there, you will use the familiar steps of naming, assigning a reference number, assigning to a staff member, and selecting how the document should be treated during roll-forward.

For more information on Engagement CS or any CS Professional Suite product or service, please contact a CS Account Representative at (800) 968-8900.

CLIENT BOOKKEEPING SOLUTION (CBS)

Q: When I am using check stock with multiple checks per page, can I set up CBS so that it does not mark the unused checks as void?

A: Yes. With CBS version 2007.1.1 or higher, you can mark the checkbox labeled “Do not void unused check stock when printing multiple checks per page” in the Checkbook Setup Options dialog. To open this dialog, choose Checkbook / Setup, and then click the Options button.

Q: Is there a way to detect if someone is fraudulently printing checks from CBS?

A: Yes. With CBS version 2007.1.1 or higher, you can generate the Unsuccessful Checks Audit report. This report lists all checks selected in the Select Checks That Did Not Print dialog and that are available to reprint.

Q: Can I email invoices or statements to my customers directly from CBS Accounts Receivable?

A: Yes. With CBS version 2007.1.1 or higher, you can email invoices and statements to your customers if you have a MAPI-compliant email program installed on your computer. For more information on setting this up, please search on “Email:emailing statements and invoices to your customers” from the Index tab of the CBS Help Topics dialog.

PAYROLL CS

Q: What's the easiest way to include a non-cash fringe benefit on the W-2 (such as personal use of an automobile) that has not been reflected on a payroll check?

A: Choose Setup / Employees, click the Personal/W-2 tab, and select a payroll item with the appropriate tax treatment and W-2 box selection in the Other W-2 item field. Enter the appropriate value in the Other W-2 amt field. If an appropriate payroll item does not exist, or to verify the setup, choose Setup / System Configuration / Payroll Tax Information / Pay Items (or Deduction Items) to add or review existing payroll items.

Q: How can I verify the number of W-2 and/or 1099 forms that I need to order?

A: With v.2007.1.1 or higher, the minimum number of forms required can be calculated using the new Global W-2/1099 Ordering Worksheet, which you can open from the Utilities / W-2 Form Processing (or 1099 Form Processing) dialog. Be sure to select the correct year, clients, and form types, and then preview or print the worksheet. Keep in mind that this worksheet calculates the absolute minimum number of sheets you need to order, so be sure to order extra forms to account for printing errors and firm practices such as using client separator pages.

ENGAGEMENT CS

Q: What is the easiest way to add documents to an engagement?

A: Engagement CS v.2007.1.1 or higher has the ability to drag and drop documents from Windows Explorer, Outlook, or your desktop into a selected Tree View folder in the engagement workspace. The New Engagement Document—Properties page of the Create Workpaper wizard opens automatically when you drag the selected item into the engagement workspace. Use this page of the wizard to add a unique workpaper name and reference. You can also move multiple documents into the engagement using this feature. This is especially useful for users of PPC's eTools and Smart Practice Aids who have assembled engagement documents outside of the engagement.

Q: I've been using Engagement CS for some clients for years now, and my Tree View Window in the engagement workspace is becoming cluttered with my prior audits. Is there any way to clean this up?

A: With v.2007.1.1 or higher, you can archive and restore selected engagements within Engagement CS. An archived engagement is removed from the Tree View window in the engagement workspace, increasing program performance and the useable space in the tree view. You can easily restore a copy of an archived engagement to the Tree View window at any time if you need to print prior-year documents or review previous financials.

WRITE-UP CS

Q: With large location/department clients, it's often difficult to remember which GL accounts to use when entering checks. Is there a report that can be printed to assist with data entry on Location and Department clients to know what number the various locations are?

A: Yes. The Location and Department Listing option available with v.2007.1.1 or higher lists the location/department description and numbers. To preview or print this listing, choose Setup / Chart of Accounts and then choose Enter Locations and Department Descriptions from the Edit or F3 menu. Each tab of the Locations and Departments dialog includes a Print Preview button that opens the listing in a preview window; click the Print button to send a copy of the listing to your printer.

Q: Can the program let me print reports as well as payroll and vendor checks to a PDF file?

A: Yes. With v.2007.1.1 or higher, you can print a report to a PDF file by selecting it in the Print Reports dialog, marking the “Store image in” checkbox, selecting the File option from the drop-down list, and clicking the To File button. You can choose where to save the file, and you can even choose to protect it with a password. This new feature does not require you to be licensed for FileCabinet CS. The same feature is available when printing payroll or vendor checks.

TRIAL BALANCE CS

Q: Can I bring over my client's grouping schedule assignments when consolidating clients?

A: Yes, when you consolidate by Account Balances Only with the Grouping Schedules selected as the group type and the Retain Existing Accounts option is not selected. If this is an existing consolidation, then you will need to reconsolidate and remove the option for Retain Existing Accounts. Otherwise, any changes made in the consolidated client will not be altered.

Q: Is there a way to print the location and department names on reports instead of the generic Loc 1 or Dept 1?

A: With v.2007.1.1 or higher, column headings on the Trial Balance Worksheet Report and Trial Balance Report now list the description for each location or department when printing each in separate columns. This affects both Trial Balance CS and the General Ledger module versions of these reports. Because the area of the report heading is limited, you may need to abbreviate the location/department descriptions to fit them into the available space.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS CS

Q: I want to create some industry reports in Financial Analysis CS, but I'm not yet able to obtain industry data from RMA for 2007 yet. Why not?

A: RMA typically releases current-year data in Q4. If you cannot obtain 2007 industry data, it has not yet been published, but should be available by the end of year.

Q: I have financial data that I want to put into Financial Analysis CS, but it doesn't reside in Write-Up CS or Trial Balance CS. I know I can manually enter the data into Financial Analysis CS, but that's time consuming. Is there any other way to enter my data?

A: Yes. With v.2007.1.1 or higher, you can import financial data for clients and/or industries from a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet into Financial Analysis CS. For details, search on "Importing a spreadsheet" from the index of the Financial Analysis CS help browser.

Q: Is there any easy way to map my Trial Balance CS grouping schedule codes in Financial Analysis CS?

A: For grouping schedule codes with categories already assigned in Trial Balance CS, a default mapping has been added to aid the account-mapping process when transferring the data to Financial Analysis CS v.2007.1.1 or higher. Also, when you add new clients to the program via transfer from Creative Solutions Accounting or via the spreadsheet import, Financial Analysis CS automatically maps account groups, grouping schedule codes, and subcodes to the appropriate categories when the descriptions match exactly.

Q: I use rounding in my financial data within Trial Balance CS. How does Financial Analysis CS handle any rounding differences when I transfer client data from CSA?

A: With v.2007.1.1 or higher, an "Auto-adjust Out of Balance Amount" checkbox has been added to the Setup / System Configuration dialog to handle rounding differences due to whole-dollar presentation of amounts in Financial Analysis CS. This checkbox is marked by default and prompts the program to automatically assign any out-of-balance amount (up to five dollars) to the Retained Earnings category when adding or updating client financial data.

PRACTICE CS

Q: I have many unapplied payments in Receipt and Adjustment Entry. Is there a way to automatically apply all of these payments at once?

A: Yes. You can right-click in the Entry or Overview tab of the Receipt & Adjustment Entry screen and choose Apply All Open Credits from the context menu. When you choose this menu command, Practice CS automatically applies all open payments and credit memos to the oldest balances first.

Q: I need to edit an invoice, but Practice CS is prohibiting me from doing so because there is a payment applied to the invoice. How can I determine which payment is applied to the invoice?

A: Review the Accounts Receivable Applications report to see all payments applied to an invoice. On the Layout tab of the Print Reports screen, choose Debit items from the "Applied to" drop-down list. You can then filter the report by client and date range to access information for a particular invoice. This report shows each payment applied to that invoice. If you select Credit items from the "Applied to" drop-down list, you can see a list of invoices to which a particular payment has been applied.

Q: Is there a way to see exactly what time was billed on a particular invoice?

A: Yes. On the Invoice Journal report, there is a new option to include invoice detail. If you mark this checkbox on the Layout tab of the Print Reports screen, you will see the overall invoice information as well as each line of time included on the invoice. The detail includes the WIP amount, billed amount, and adjusted amount on each line of time. If you are looking for a specific invoice, you can use the Detail line and Filtering fields in the Selection tab to filter the information on the report. You can also include detail when printing the Invoice Journal report from the Review tab of the Billing screen by clicking the down arrow on the Journal button and selecting With detail from the drop-down menu.

Q: I entered a few lines of time to the wrong client. How can I transfer this WIP?

A: In Time & Expense Entry, select the lines of time entered to the wrong client, then right-click and choose Edit Selected Time & Expense Entries from the context menu. In the Edit Selected Time & Expense Entries dialog, choose Client from the first drop-down list, and then select the correct client from the second drop-down list. If you would like an audit trail for the transfer, you can click the plus sign to the right of the client information, and then select Comment from the drop-down list in the second row. In the Comment field, you can note the date and ID of the original client.

FIXED ASSETS CS

Q: When I open a client in Fixed Assets CS, it opens in the latest period for the client by default. Can I change the period in which the client opens?

A: Yes. Choose Setup / System Configuration, click the Options tab, mark the Open clients in the processing period last worked in checkbox, and click OK.

WEB SERVICES

Q: I received an email message stating that my client completed his remote payroll. However, it will not import when I try to retrieve it. What should I do?

A: This situation occurs when the client clicks the Complete Payroll button and then goes back in to the payroll. The client must click the Complete Payroll button again before you will be able to retrieve the payroll. The only other option is for the NetFirm CS administrator to mark the payroll complete. (We recommend that you contact the client to verify that they have indeed completed payroll entry before performing this procedure.) To mark the payroll complete, log in to NetFirm CS, click the NetClient CS tab, click the Remote Payroll navigation link, mark the Complete Payrolls checkbox for the appropriate client, and click OK.


Q: I experienced a problem in a Virtual Office CS application. Now, every time I try to start the application, it seems to go back to the same place. How can I be sure that I am not connecting to an old session?

A: This behavior is generally caused by an Internet disconnect between your office and the server. Either the server or your workstation believes it is still connected to the Virtual Office CS session. To force the connection to close, locate the Program Neighborhood Connection Center icon in the System Tray (typically in the lower-right corner of the screen near the time). The icon appears as a white or gray box with a red and black “i”. Double-click the icon to open the Program Neighborhood Connection Center dialog. Highlight the line that reads EG-CSIMF-**** (where **** is a letter and two to

three numbers), and click the Logoff button. Re-open the application in Virtual Office CS.

FILECABINET CS

Q: How can I filter the Drawer list in the Folders window to show only drawers that contain 2007 UltraTax CS returns?

A: With the November 2007 release of FileCabinet CS, you can filter the Drawer list based on folder contents. To do so, click the Sort/Focus  button above the Drawer list. In the Drawer List Presentation Options dialog, mark the “Focus drawer list” checkbox. In the Drawer with selected folders list, scroll down to view the UltraTax CS checkbox, click the plus button to expand the UltraTax CS folder, and mark the checkboxes for all 2007 returns. Note that if you have assigned drawer statuses (Active, Inactive, Defunct) to your drawers, you can also filter the Drawers list by status. Click OK to filter the Drawer list by drawers that contain 2007 UltraTax CS returns.

Q: When I send documents from FileCabinet CS to email recipients, my Outlook signature is missing. How can I include my Outlook signature on messages sent from within FileCabinet CS?

A: Microsoft Outlook does not include signatures when emailing from other applications such as FileCabinet CS. To add an Outlook signature, you need to choose Insert / Signature from within Outlook after you have created the message in FileCabinet CS. With the November 2007 release of FileCabinet CS, you can also set up and include email signatures in FileCabinet CS. To set up one or more email signatures, choose Setup / User Preferences, and click the Email Options tab. When you choose File / Send to / Email Recipient and mark the Include email signature checkbox, any signatures that you have created are available in the adjacent drop-down list.

Q: How can I embed multiple PDFs, Word documents, Excel documents, and other objects into a single FileCabinet CS drawer?

A: When you choose Object / Create from File, you can hold down either the SHIFT or CTRL key while clicking the files you want to embed. In the Copy Multiple Embedded Objects dialog that opens, you can embed all of the selected objects with their current names in the same location, or you can choose the drawer, object name, and folder for each embedded object separately.

ULTRATAX CS

Q: Can I email a tax return to my client directly from within UltraTax CS?

A: Yes. Choose File / Print Returns and mark the Client Copy checkbox in the Print Returns dialog. How you proceed from here

depends on your email program.

- If you use a MAPI-compliant email program (such as Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express), click the Email PDF option, then click the Email button at the bottom of the dialog. UltraTax CS creates the PDF and automatically sends it to the client via email.
- If you use a web-based email program (such as Hotmail or Gmail), you need to create the PDF file of the return first and then manually attach it to an email message. To generate the PDF file, click the "PDF to file in" option, specify the location in which you want UltraTax CS to place the file, and click the Assemble button at the bottom of the dialog. Then create the message in your email program and attach the PDF file to the message as you would attach any other file.

Regardless of the type of email program you use, the PDF file that your client receives via your message is always password-protected. By default, the password is the client's tax identification number, but you can change the password by choosing Setup / Client Communications and clicking the Password button.

Q: Is there a way to add a text notation such as "DRAFT" or "CLIENT COPY" to a tax form?

A: Yes. New with 2007 UltraTax CS, Watermarks can be set up to print on any Government, Client, or Preparer collation by selecting Setup / System Configuration / Print Options and then setting up the desired wording of the Watermark under the Watermark button. Watermarks can be set to print on certain collations by default and also set to automatically print on the Government copy when electronically filing. You can also set them up to print differently for each collation and set them up to be selected manually under the File / Print Returns window.

Q: I need to include additional detail to a line item on the tax return, but the field does not have an attached statement in which I can enter this detail. Is there a way to add a statement to a data-entry field?

A: Yes. You can add a custom statement to a field by positioning your cursor in the field and choosing Edit / Custom Statements. In the Custom Statements dialog, enter a title for the statement, then use the drop-down list to select the type of data you want to include in the statement. When you add a custom statement to a field for one client, it is automatically available for all clients.

CS Professional Suite™



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