



## SMART GROWTH PAYS OFF

CS Professional Suite allowed  
Christine Pavlik to dramatically grow  
her practice without adding staff.

**Christine Pavlik,  
CPA, Business Advisor**

Pavlik Associates, LLC  
Elkton, Maryland



## Solutions

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**COVER:** Christine Pavlik, a CPA in Elkton, Maryland, had an opportunity last year to acquire another practice and more than triple her number of clients. There was a catch—she didn't want to add staff. By switching to CS Professional Suite she increased her efficiency to the point that she could handle the additional clients with no additional staff.

Solutions is published by Thomson Tax & Accounting, 7322 Newman Boulevard, Dexter, MI 48130; (800) 968.8900. Printed in the United States. Copyright 2008 Thomson Tax & Accounting. Vol. 6, No. 1.

## OUR TRANSITION TO THOMSON REUTERS — Same Focus, Strengthened Foundation

As many of you know, as tax season came to an end, our company began a new chapter. On April 17, Thomson acquired Reuters and became one organization—Thomson Reuters. This is an exciting change for both companies. Together, we are the world's leading information services and news company—providing intelligent information to a wide range of business and professional customers in a variety of industries around the globe. But as customers of Thomson Tax & Accounting, you may be asking “how does this affect me?” Or maybe even “what is the scope of the Reuters business and why was the company of interest to Thomson?”

Well, let's start with the first question. The transition to Thomson Reuters will have little impact on our tax and accounting products and services, although we are looking at several areas where we may be able to leverage some of the Reuters offerings. Over the next year, the change you will definitely see is a transition to Thomson Reuters in regards to our branding efforts. But please be assured that our focus will remain the same as it has always been—providing the professional accounting market with innovative products and services, and supporting our customers with the highest level of service possible.

As for the second and third questions, many of you may best know Reuters as a media or news company. But in fact, although Reuters News reaches over one billion people daily, it is only a part of Reuters' overall business—about 10 percent. The larger segment of Reuters' business is made up of products and services that supply the financial markets with information and trading products. These products and services provide market data, such as share prices and currency rates, research and analytics, as well as trading systems that allow dealers to buy and sell such things as currencies, commodities, and stocks and bonds. Reuters also provides analysis of almost 50,000 companies, as well as debt instruments. Many of these products and services are highly complementary to the Thomson Financial business.

In addition to complementary products and services, the potential for a global company with the ability to leverage the financial strength of Reuters in Europe and Asia with the strength of Thomson Financial in North America was a driving force in this acquisition. Thomson Reuters is now the world's number one provider of financial information, supported by one of the world's best known media businesses.

Although this change may be more substantial for the financial customers of Thomson Reuters, as technology advances and information becomes more digital, global, and 24/7, parallel needs emerge among knowledge-based industries. And being part of a larger company serving a variety of professional industries will afford Thomson Tax & Accounting an opportunity to share resources, information, and technology tools with our colleagues across the company—and across the globe. So, on a broader level, all customers will benefit from this combination because our foundation will be strengthened, offering increased opportunities for new products, knowledge-sharing, innovation, and international expansion.

But again, be assured that no changes will take place in regards to the products you know and trust. You will still receive unparalleled customer service and support from the same representatives you always have. With integrated product suites including paperless and workflow systems, personal client portals for communication and collaboration, and support for virtual offices, technology is the solution to overcome the challenges of the rapidly changing tax and accounting profession—and we will continue to provide you with the latest.

So, now that tax season is behind you, but still fresh in your mind, it's a great time to think about the future of your firm and how you can employ truly advanced technologies to help you gain the process efficiencies necessary in today's accounting world. By spending some time now thinking about workflow improvements, you can enjoy huge productivity gains when busy season ramps up again next year.

In this issue of *Solutions*, you will see first-hand how customers utilize our advanced technologies to implement workflow improvements and best practices at their firms. You will also see how we are not only involved in developing the products and services, but in helping you use our products and services to your best advantage through increased integration, ongoing training, and exceptional support. These are the ideals we built our business on from the start—and you can be certain they will continue to be our focus in the future.

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

## JOIN US IN TEXAS FOR THE 2008 USERS' CONFERENCE

### Register Early and Save

The 28th Annual CS Users' Conference takes place November 5-8, 2008, at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. Register now and receive up to \$200 in discounts, plus free financing with our "50% Now, 50% Later" promotion.

Improve your firm's productivity while having fun in the Lone Star State. Choose from more than 60 workshops—including CS Professional Suite training, a variety of practice management and technology sessions, keynote addresses by nationally recognized speakers, and more.

### Register Early and Save Big!

Register early and knock off up to \$200 on the base registration fee of \$1,095.

- **Early Bird Discount**—Register by August 29 to SAVE \$50
- **Previous Attendee Discount**—SAVE \$50 if you attended our 2007 Users' Conference
- **Additional firm attendees**—SAVE \$100
- **50% Now, 50% Later**—Register by May 30 to take advantage of this FREE financing option (pay 50% when registering and the balance by October 3)



### Online Registration Begins Mid-June 2008

Go to [CS.Thomson.com/UC](http://CS.Thomson.com/UC) in mid-June for more information, including a program with workshop descriptions and schedules. You can also register and request a printed program by calling Customer Service at (800) 968-0600, press 1, then 5.

### Book Your Room Now

Special room rates at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center are available, and are subject to availability. For additional

details, or to book your room, go to [CS.Thomson.com/UC](http://CS.Thomson.com/UC) and click the travel information link.

### Stay at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Win Great Prizes!

When you book your room at the Gaylord Texan, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of the following great prizes:

- Wii
- Digital Camera
- Ipod Shuffle
- AMEX Gift Card
- An upgrade to a Deluxe Luxury Suite

## NEW SPANISH CLIENT DOCUMENTS IN ULTRATAX CS

The ability to edit and print client letters in Spanish will be available in the December 2008 release of UltraTax CS. This new feature offers convenience for Spanish speaking clients, who will appreciate receiving information in their native language, while offering firms the opportunity to improve their client relationships.

This new technology will be available on the UltraTax/1040 Federal and some 1040 State products, as well as the 1120S shareholder letter, the 1065 partner letter, and the 1041 beneficiary letter. For the near future, we will concentrate on states with the largest Spanish speaking populations. Based on demand, other states will be considered for inclusion at a later date.

Thomson Tax & Accounting will be one of only a few providers to offer this specialized Spanish enhancement. Spanish Client Documents in UltraTax CS is another example of our commitment to develop advanced technology that not only helps our users, but also meets the specific needs of their clients.

## ON-DEMAND TRAINING—LEARN AT YOUR OWN PACE

As schedules get busier and travel expenses creep higher, more firms are looking for training options that allow staff to continue their professional education at their convenience, or to help seasonal employees get up to speed with your firm's software quickly.

A cost-effective and convenient choice for CS Professional Suite software users is On-Demand training. These 45- to 105-minute web-based courses are just \$99 each for six months of unlimited use by your firm—with the option to purchase again at the end of the six-month period. The online format allows you to easily access courses via our website, which means that any time the content is revised during your usage period, you'll have immediate access to the updated material.

Because courses are available for use 24/7 and can be accessed as often as needed by anyone in the firm, it's easy to train staff individually or as a group, at a pace that suits your firm's workload and schedules. Each course is broken down into easily digestible

chapters that are approximately 10 minutes long. You have the ability to pause, fast forward, reverse, and skip or return to chapters as needed.

If you close a course and come back later, it even keeps track of which chapters you've accessed so you can easily pick up where you left off.

The On-Demand schedule is targeted to a range of expertise levels, with courses covering topics on Practice CS, UltraTax CS, Engagement CS, NetClient CS, Write-Up CS, and Payroll CS. Among the eight additional offerings that debuted in April are client management in Practice CS; payroll setup, direct deposit, and paperless payroll in Payroll CS; bank reconciliation fundamentals in Write-Up CS; and more.

For a listing of available On-Demand training sessions or to purchase, go to [CS.Thomson.com/Training/OnDemand](http://CS.Thomson.com/Training/OnDemand). For questions regarding On-Demand training, contact your CS Account Representative at (800) 968-8900.

## EVault OFFERS EXPERT DATA PROTECTION

If your firm is looking for a reliable provider of backup services, you might want to consider EVault. Since 1997, thousands of financial service companies have been choosing EVault for expert, intuitive solutions that control costs and keep their data secure, compliant, and easy to manage and recover.

EVault's patented technology and infrastructure ensures that your data is completely safe. With EVault, data is backed up to one of their secure Tier III & IV data centers; there are no tapes or physical transport involved—EVault's online, disk-to-disk backup eliminates unreliability and human error and ensures quick backups.

For ease of use, EVault's managed service automatically backs up your entire company's data, including your central office, remote locations, and even laptops, so there's no need for additional IT resources. EVault also makes it easy to comply with regulatory requirements, and FIPS-approved 256-bit AES encryption shields data in transit and in storage—with no "back door" to let anyone view protected information. Finally, EVault solutions fit perfectly because they're custom made for your company.

If you would like more information about EVault, visit [EVault.com](http://EVault.com). You can also call Tony Vyhanek at (312) 291-3015, or email him at [Tony.Vyhanek@evault.com](mailto:Tony.Vyhanek@evault.com). EVault is a Thomson Tax & Accounting preferred partner.

## PRACTICE CS: ANNOUNCING NEW CUSTOM FORMATTING

We're pleased to announce that the highly anticipated custom formatting capabilities of Practice CS will be available in our upcoming June 2008 release. If you have been waiting for this enhancement, then you will be pleased at the level of sophistication and usability this feature provides.

Custom report formatting is built into Practice CS to give you the flexibility needed to produce reports and communications quickly. With easy-to-use custom formatting options, Practice CS allows you to create and modify existing standard formats, including

content, layout, and appearance. It also allows you to create new customized invoices, statements, reports, labels, and letter formats to meet the needs of your firm and clients. These new templates can then be saved, reused, and transferred from one database to another.

One of the most notable new tools in the software, the Custom Formula Editor is exceptionally valuable—developed for the custom formatting capabilities in Practice CS. This feature enables you to add calculated fields to custom formats, making it easy to modify calculations that are critical to analyzing information and processes.

Practice CS brings together all of the key information and resources you need to manage your firm. And with the new custom formatting features, the customized data you need will be just a report away.

## MYPAY SOLUTIONS—OFFERING SAVINGS AND CONVENIENCE WITH PAYPARTNERS PAYCARDS

In a plastic-driven consumer culture, the pay card is becoming a popular alternative for paying wages—offering several advantages to both employers and employees.

The pay card process is a simple one: each payday, an employee's net pay is loaded via Direct Deposit onto a pay card. This method eliminates the need for paper checks, which streamlines the payroll process and reduces employer costs.

Once the card is loaded, employees can immediately access their funds by using the pay card as a debit card, or by using it to withdraw cash at any ATM. While the employee may pay a nominal fee for some transactions, pay card fees are considerably less than those charged by payday lenders, check cashing services, or other alternatives for unbanked employees. This is an important advantage for those who are part of the estimated 24 million-plus households in the U.S. without a traditional checking or savings account.

myPay Solutions offers a pay card option with the PayPartners PayCard, a debit card supported by the convenience, acceptance, and security of the MasterCard network. Thanks to its MasterCard branding, the PayPartners PayCard is accepted at

more than 5 million locations worldwide for debit purchases, as well as more than 35,000 surcharge-free Allpoint Network ATMs throughout the U.S.

It's easy and cost-effective for employers to set up and use the PayPartners PayCard service. There are no fees as long as they have Direct Deposit service, which is required in order to load the cards. While the PayPartners PayCard is currently available only to myPay Solutions users, it will also be offered as an option to Payroll CS users by Q3 of 2008.

For more information on the PayPartners PayCard or myPay Solutions, contact a myPay Solutions Representative at (800) 968-8900 or visit us online at [CS.Thomson.com/mypaysolutions](http://CS.Thomson.com/mypaysolutions).

## PRACTICE CS: NEWS PORTLET ADDED

Are you interested in receiving the latest news, information, and tips about your Practice CS product? Then look no further than your own desktop and the new Practice CS News portlet. The News portlet offers information about product releases, CS Connect updates, future content plans, tips and tricks, available tools to help you maximize your Practice CS software, and more.

This portlet also provides access to the Practice CS Pulse—a polling feature that enables you to provide valuable feedback on numerous topics, which helps us with future product development plans.

This portlet can be accessed directly from Practice CS in seconds. Simply go to any accessible Practice CS dashboard, click the Select Portlets link in the top right corner of the screen, check the Practice CS News portlet option, and move the portlet to the portion of your screen where you would like to view it.

Connect to the News portlet to stay informed about all things relating to Practice CS. And don't forget to provide us with feedback while you are there by taking part in our Practice CS Pulse polls.

For more information on Practice CS, or any CS Professional Suite product or service, please contact an Account Representative at (800) 968.8900, email at [CS.Sales@Thomson.com](mailto:CS.Sales@Thomson.com), or visit our website at [CS.Thomson.com](http://CS.Thomson.com).

# HOW DO YOU MARKET YOUR SERVICES AND GROW YOUR PRACTICE?

## BY CONSTANTLY BEING AWARE OF MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Our small two-partner firm with a staff of four has experienced two years of 20-percent-plus growth in revenues. We believe the growth we have experienced is based on several factors:

- 1. Technology:** At the beginning of 2006 we began using Thomson's Virtual Office. This, along with other technologies, has given us an advantage in how we use our time and the flexibility we have in performing our work—either in the office, at home, at the beach, or in the client's office. We have made it a point to inform our clients of this technology.
- 2. Developing core competencies and practice areas:** We have developed new practice areas in peer review and business valuation that complement our existing practice. As we develop business relationships we are able to “advertise” by word of mouth. Because clients are satisfied with what we have done for them; they feed referrals to us. Our service area is now statewide and even multi-state.
- 3. A good balance between work and life:** We believe that life and work don't have to compete but can be integral to each other.

We understand that if we are active in our community and seek staff who also are active, then we have multiplied our contacts in the community, which generates referrals. Most importantly, we enjoy it.

- 4. Constant awareness of marketing opportunities:** In everything we do, we let our clients, our friends, our peers, and our community become aware of who we are, what we do, and that we are interested in their referrals. Several years ago we became aware that many clients and friends thought we had all the business we wanted—in other words, that we were not interested in accepting new clients. Simply letting your clients know that the best compliment they could give you is a referral. This may be the best form of advertisement.

**J. Anthony Sessoms, CPA**  
Denning & Sessoms, PA  
Clinton, North Carolina



## CONSISTENT BRANDING AND REFERRALS BASED ON BEING A TECHNOLOGY LEADER

The #1 way we grow our business is via client referral. We try to set ourselves apart from other firms in town by using technology to improve the interactions between our firm and our clients' accounting needs. We stand out as a technology leader; we never do the “same-old, same-old.” Our clients recognize this and refer us to their associates and friends. We use portals and interactive client accounting software to show clients how our technology is different.

With that said, we also run a regular set of advertisements in a high-end city magazine that talks about how we are not your typical accounting firm. We employ a branding person who makes sure that everything that has to do with how the public perceives our office—i.e., our brand—is consistent. Consistency is the key. Our firm has

grown tremendously since we began a firm-wide consistent branding strategy five years ago.

Networking is also important. I have made it a point to network and have regular lunches with all the key business leaders in our community. I ask that our staff members also get involved in the community. Allowing others to get to know us on a personal level makes a big difference. We send referrals and we get referrals.

**M. Darren Root, CPA.CITP**  
Root and Associates, LLC  
Bloomington, Indiana



## HIRING AN ACCOUNTANT WHO KNOWS MARKETING ALSO HELPS

We're a small firm with three partners. Our year-to-date revenue is up about 45 percent from last year. Part of that is from an acquisition, but we're still up 15-20 percent aside from that—due mainly to marketing our firm and our services.

In addition to our three partners, a fourth accountant handles taxes and is also responsible for marketing. Not only is she a good accountant, she's also a past president of our local chamber of commerce and has always had a high, active presence in the community. Our community presence is important. Honestly, I think we get the best referrals from presence marketing.

We use a Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA) advertising program in our local weekly newspaper. They're rather novel ads for accountants, aimed more at creating awareness of firm than specific services we provide. For example, our tax season featured a headline that said, “Tax time — the one time of year an accountant is popular,” with

nothing else other than our logo and contact information. To fill in the details about our services, we recently completed a series of brochures about our service, all with a consistent look and brand identity. We've also developed a 1/3-page, two-sided version that we can use as a mailer to new residents and new businesses.

The most important component, one that reinforces our marketing, is attitude. Our people love what they do. Our administrative assistant has a smile you can hear over the telephone. Clients know and appreciate it when they are served by people who care about what they do.

**David C Stenseth, CPA**  
Stenseth Samuelson & Boese, Ltd.  
Woodbury, Minnesota







**CS PROFESSIONAL SUITE ALLOWED CHRISTINE PAVLIK TO DRAMATICALLY GROW HER PRACTICE WITHOUT ADDING STAFF.**

# Smart Growth Pays Off

Last summer Christine Pavlik, CPA, reached a crossroads in the brief history of her small accounting firm. In the duplex where the practice is located, the neighbor was an accountant who wanted to retire. Pavlik had an opportunity to more than triple the number of clients by acquiring the practice, but didn't want to add staff. She understood that to accomplish the acquisition the right software had to be in place. Enter Thomson Tax & Accounting's CS Professional Suite.

Pavlik admits she "just fell into" a career in accounting. In college, she worked in accounts payable at a restaurant. After graduation, she spent time with a couple of accounting firms handling clients in the construction and restaurant industries. She developed a niche with small businesses doing consulting and tax planning.

**"CS Professional Suite allowed me to dramatically grow my practice with only two employees."**

Four years ago Pavlik decided it was time to go on her own. Pavlik Associates, LLC, Elkton, Maryland, is a one-CPA firm with two assistants. Pavlik's husband, Arnold, handles the IT side of the business.

The full-service firm handles tax preparation, tax planning, bookkeeping, payroll, business consulting, and audits. Pavlik is also a financial consultant. Clients range from startups to multi-million dollar businesses, including farms, trucking companies, restaurants, real estate agents

**“I don’t want to work 80 hours during tax season. I have children and want to be able to see them, and I want my staff to have a life as well.”**

and investors, insurance companies, and retail businesses from clothing to auto parts.

Last summer, at the time she acquired her neighbor’s practice, Pavlik had 125 clients; now there are between 350 and 400. She had been an ATX user, but she knew that she would have to change to a fully integrated software suite.

“I knew I could not maintain 400 clients in Outlook, or do all the bookkeeping, accounting, and write-up in QuickBooks,” she says. “I knew I was going to have to change to a software product that was more robust. The former practitioner had the help of another person, and they worked a lot of hours. I don’t want to work 80 hours during tax season. I have children and want to be able to see them, and I want my staff to have a life as well.”

### **Integration is critical**

Pavlik’s new system would have to be integrated and state of the art. She knew the right product was available, it was just a matter of which one she would pick.

“I researched all of them,” she says. “I started with the AICPA Journal of Accountancy. Every year they do a review of tax products. I had already worked with some of the products and knew I didn’t like them because they couldn’t handle what I wanted to do. Other systems were expensive and didn’t cover everything I needed. I wanted write-up, tax preparation, and client management. Those were the three I had to have, and they had to be integrated. Some systems claim to be able to do it, but not the way Thomson Tax & Accounting does it. I attended one of their training sessions and saw the products in action. It worked, and I knew that was what I needed. That was last summer.”

CS Professional Suite products owned include Practice CS, UltraTax CS, Write-Up CS, Trial Balance CS, Planner CS, Financial Analysis CS, and FileCabinet CS. After tax season she will add Fixed Assets CS.

“I can see what every client is doing quickly and easily,” Pavlik says. “If there are attached files, memos, or comments, they are right there in the document management system. I can add custom fields, and the reports are great. I can say for a fact that I couldn’t get that level of detail from any other software because I’ve worked with enough of them. The CS Professional Suite has the best



*Christine Pavlik with husband Arnold, who handles the IT part of the practice.*

client management database I have come across, and it doesn't mess up my computer like other client management databases can do. It interacts with Outlook and the calendar. It's the only software I've seen that actually does what it says it's going to do."

Pavlik's office has been paperless since shortly after the practice began, but the acquisition of the former practitioner's clients posed new challenges.

"The files for our new clients were not paperless; I've got 20 years of paper for them. We're converting all those records, and FileCabinet CS is what enables us to do it," she says.

### Support and training

Pavlik offers nothing but praise for Thomson's help in getting her system up and running.

"My sales representative was incredible," she says. "She was patient, understanding, and supportive, and she helped me with financing. It was a very difficult time because of everything that was going on with the new firm and new software. She was always giving me ideas from other practitioners she works with. I've dealt with a lot of support from other companies, and Thomson is the best team I've ever worked with. They are always there and are friendly and courteous. And, they know what they're talking about."

Pavlik was especially pleased about how quickly she and her staff became proficient with UltraTax CS.

"We picked it up by the October 15 tax deadline," she says. "Looking back, I can't believe I actually chose to switch at that time because I was involved with a handful of clients I'd never worked with. It was crunch time, and I had decided to use new tax software. But it was amazing how smoothly the process went. Sure, we spent some time on the phone with Thomson's support personnel, but they were great and got us

through. That was when I really started seeing how the CS Professional Suite products work together. They integrated the way Thomson said they would. It was everything I knew could be done, and the integration really worked."

### Enhanced business

CS Professional Suite enhanced the way Pavlik wanted to do business.

"I knew there was an efficient, productive, and technologically advanced process for running an accounting firm," she says. "For me, it was a



Assistants *Thedra Gittings* (left) and *Kim Przybylski* (right).

**“The CS Professional Suite  
has the best client  
management database  
I have come across...  
It’s the only software I’ve  
seen that actually does  
what it says it’s going to do.”**

matter of finding the right software and company that would allow me to do that. In this day and age, it should not take the time it used to take to do tax returns, financial statements, planning, analysis, or anything like that. And with CS Professional Suite, it doesn't."

"As CPAs, we're not just paid to process numbers, but also to think about the numbers—to look at what they're saying, using our experience, education, and knowledge," she says.

"Thomson products allow me to spend less time on routine, repetitive tasks. That's more time I have to spend on analysis that improves my clients' businesses or personal situations. I am their financial partner, not just a tax preparer. The integration spawned all of what we've done."

When Pavlik switched to the CS Professional Suite, she made an investment in the future—an investment that has paid off amply.

"CS Professional Suite allowed me to dramatically grow my practice with only two employees," she says. "These products also save time; we're not pulling 80 hour weeks during tax season. While we were nervous about the transition, it worked out great. It was absolutely the right decision. I would not have been able to take on that many more clients with any products other than those from Thomson Tax & Accounting."

# DRIVEN BY

**BALDWIN & ASSOCIATES, PLLC, IS A BIG BELIEVER IN HOSTED SOFTWARE DELIVERED BY VIRTUAL OFFICE CS.**



*Alan Long, CPA*

**A**ccounting firms are embracing the concept of hosted software that runs on third-party servers—a concept that's also known by the less user-friendly name ASP software. It's like having most of the advantages of a PC with fewer of the drawbacks. Advantages include:

- Automatically updated software that is always current and requires no installation of updates.
- Strong security backing.
- Easy file sharing across different platforms.
- Little or no need for dedicated in-house IT staff.
- Easy 24/7 availability from any computer with broadband Internet access.

Thomson Tax and Accounting has also embraced the hosted software concept and is a leader in running software on its servers for accounting firms and their clients. The full line of CS Professional Suite tax and accounting software and select Microsoft products are available in the Virtual Office CS environment for

accounting firms. NetClient CS provides similar advantages for the firms' clients.

## **Growing with technology**

Alan Long and Myron Fisher have been in the accounting profession together for 18 years. They have been partners the last 10 years, and are long-time users of Thomson Tax & Accounting products. They are firm believers in hosted software, and rely on Virtual Office CS in running their firm during a period of rapid growth. "We've always considered technology an important component to our firm, and Thomson products help drive that," Long says.

Four years ago, Long and Fisher merged with Baldwin, Upchurch & Foley to form their current firm, Baldwin & Associates, PLLC. Located in Richmond, Kentucky, Baldwin & Associates is a full service accounting firm performing audits, tax preparation, and business valuations. There are 400 to 500 business clients with sales

# TECHNOLOGY



*Myron Fisher, CPA/PFS*

ranging from \$50,000 to \$25 million. The firm has four partners, seven professional staff, five para-professionals for monthly bookkeeping, four part-time tax preparers, three support staff, and from two to four co-op students. One of the firm's partners, Bill Upchurch, is responsible for the firm's business valuation practice. Lisa Foley, partner, oversees the firm's management advisory service practice.

"We do a lot of governmental work, including 401(k) audits," Long says. "We are very involved in the construction industry, and conduct reviews and audits for not-for-profit operations and nursing homes. In fact, we are the chief financial officer for some not-for-profits. We've enjoyed a lot of growth since the merger, about 40 percent."

In 2000 Long wanted Windows-based write-up software, and Thomson's products rose to the top. However, he continued to pick and choose products instead of settling on one platform. He got

**"Over the years I've come to look at peer reviews as not just a compliance-type situation, but also an opportunity to bring best practices to the table."**

reviews also enhances the quality of the firm.

"Over the years I've come to look at peer reviews as not just a compliance-type situation, but also an opportunity to bring best practices to the table. Not only does the firm being reviewed get best practices from us, but a lot of times we get best practices from them.

We get to see how other firms do their accounting work. We share work papers with each other, and we've adopted theirs if they work better for us. In a peer review, if all we're doing is meeting a client's requirements, then they don't have the right peer reviewer. That peer reviewer should be someone they can talk to about the problems in the profession. Such as, the difficulties they're encountering and how they tackle them."

An important part of peer review is best practices in the area of technology, including going paperless. Baldwin & Associates illustrate concepts with the help of Virtual Office CS.

FileCabinet CS in late 2001 because he liked the paperless concept. Next was UltraTax CS, and Engagement CS came on board after that tax season.

"We became a Thomson office because no other products talked to each other," he says. "On the day of merger I was at a peer review conference in California. On that Sunday I set our new office up with Virtual Office CS from my hotel room in San Diego. So, when everyone rolled in Monday morning our system was up and running."

## **Peer reviews are a big part of the business**

The firm performs 20 to 25 peer reviews annually. Some take five hours and are done in-house, while others could take up to 50 hours and are conducted at the client's location.

"I consider our work in the peer review area to be a mutual benefit to the firm we are working for and our firm, as well. It increases our firm's awareness of quality control, which should provide a higher level of compliance with professional standards within our firm," according to Fisher. Fisher is involved in up to seven reviews a year. Long does 15 reviews a year and teaches peer review classes. Peer reviews provide a source of revenue for the firm, and another niche service to offer. Conducting peer



“When I ask if they’ve considered going paperless they say they’ve talked about it, but are not sure how to go about it,” Long says. “So, we’re sitting there in their office with an Internet connection. I don’t have any research tools or books with me because I access everything from the Internet. I pull up our website and show them how I access this information. ‘Here is Engagement CS; take a look at our files. Here is how our audit files are organized. Here is how we retain information.’ Firms then ask us to help implement those systems. At a minimum this is a value-added service we provide. They could use other software, but we recommend Thomson Tax & Accounting.”

Fisher highlights the advantages of Thomson products.

Firms can also benefit from integration across Thomson products. “Many small firms use PPC guidance, and have for years,” Fisher explains. “Thomson products integrate very well with PPC. Firms also use RIA research on Checkpoint. All three are under one umbrella, and they interact very well. As a result of the integration, workflow efficiencies can increase significantly in firms.”

### Clients embrace web-based concept

The partners also recommend the advantages of hosted software to their clients, via Thomson Tax & Accounting’s NetClient CS. The partners say being able to offer this technology separates Baldwin & Associates from the competition, and they leverage this competence with their clients.

They find that clients like the ease of not having to drop off or mail documents. And, they don’t have to perform computer backups.

With Client Bookkeeping Solution, Thomson is doing the backups. If a client’s computer crashes, the data is still there.

They also talk about NetClient CS with their peer review clients. Long adds, “When I talk to firms about the NetClient CS, many times they reply that their clients wouldn’t do this; they don’t want to transmit files and data online. My next question is, have they asked them? I think they’d be surprised. Accountants assume they know what their clients want. There have been a whole lot of times in my career when I’ve learned that I didn’t know what my clients wanted because I never asked them.”

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“When presented properly, business clients have no problem with the relying on technology,” Fisher explains. “We are working on getting our

services summarized so we can market them more effectively. We want to give clients a brochure or fact sheet. If we just rely on explaining what we do every time, sometimes the details get lost in the explanation and their expectations may be different than what we said.”

### Adding value with technology

An accounting practice involves more than just serving clients and managing the firm from day to day. It also involves managing an asset and increasing its value over time.

Fisher says, “When I encounter a practice that isn’t keeping up with technology, I ask if they consider their firm to be an asset. If they answer yes, then I reply that technology is an important part of that asset and should be managed as such. I think a firm is devaluing the asset if they are not considering the use of technology as an enhancement to their practice.”

## ULTRATAX CS

### Q: Can I generate letters in UltraTax CS to remind clients that they have estimated payments due?

**A:** Yes. You can use the Data Mining feature to create letters for a variety of purposes, including alerting clients that estimated payments are due. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Choose Utilities / Data Mining.
2. In the Data Mining dialog, choose 1040 Individual from the Client Database field and click Continue (Step 2).
3. In the Print Selection dialog, click the Letters tab, highlight the appropriate estimate reminder, and click Continue (Step 3).
4. In the Search Selection dialog, choose the appropriate estimate search from the Search field and click Continue (Step 4). For example, to print letters for all clients with second quarter estimates coming due, choose "ALL 1040-ES 2nd quarter estimate clients" from the list and click Continue (Step 4).
5. After UltraTax CS performs the search, the Search Results dialog lists the clients whose returns met the criteria. After reviewing the results, click the Continue button (Step 5).
6. Use the Print dialog to determine where the letters will print, select the desired clients, and set other options related to this print job. Once you have specified the appropriate settings, click the Print button.

### Q: Is there a report that shows how many returns of a certain entity I completed so I know whether or not I should get the unlimited license next year?

**A:** Yes. The Client Totals report offers a comprehensive review of the number of returns completed for each entity. To view or print the Client Totals report, follow these steps:

1. Choose Utilities / Reports, and then click Client Listing to open the Client Listings dialog.
2. Mark the Client Totals option and then click Continue.
3. Use the Select Clients for Report dialog to indicate which clients you want to include in the report, then click the Preview, Print, Export, or To Cabinet buttons to choose whether to view the report on screen, send it to your printer, save it to a file, or send it to FileCabinet CS (if licensed).

## FILECABINET CS

### Q: I've heard that FileCabinet CS is moving to SQL. What should I do?

**A:** First, there is no requirement to move to SQL. The 2007.1.0 release of FileCabinet CS offers the option to move to SQL, which means you can store drawer data in a database to take advantage of the performance, control, scalability, and reliability that SQL offers. FileCabinet CS supports Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Express (SSE). Storing documents in Microsoft's database format rather than Microsoft's Structured Storage file format can increase efficiency in both filing and retrieving documents.

For more information on SQL and installation instructions, please visit our website at CS.Thomson.com and read the following Knowledgebase article: *K15552837 – FileCabinet CS Data File Format*.

### Q: Do you have any hardware suggestions for firms transitioning to a paperless office?

**A:** Although Thomson Tax & Accounting does not advise firms on hardware or hardware maintenance plans, we do offer helpful articles on our Knowledgebase. If you are transitioning to a paperless office, we encourage you to read the following Knowledgebase article: *K91298462 – Hardware Considerations for the Paperless Office*.

## FIXED ASSETS CS

### Q: When exporting data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, is there a way to specify the type of data to export and the order in which the columns should appear in Excel?

**A:** Yes. By creating a custom report, you can choose the information that you want included (either in a printed report or exported to an Excel spreadsheet) and the order in which the data should appear.

To create a custom report, follow these steps:

1. From the Setup menu, choose Custom Reports.
  2. Click the Add button.
  3. Enter a description for the report and (if desired) select a template upon which to base the report.
  4. Click Continue.
  5. In the Custom Report Layout dialog, highlight the desired items and click the Select button to choose the columns to include in the layout.
- Notes:**
- Use the Select Category field to switch among different types of items to include in the report.
  - Use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to change the order of the columns in the report or spreadsheet.
6. Click Continue.
  7. Choose the appropriate options, click OK, and then click Done.

To use the custom report specifications (including the location of columns and the presentation options) to export the specified data into an Excel spreadsheet, follow these steps:

1. From the Utilities menu, choose Export Asset Data.
2. In the Custom report layout field, select the custom report you created.
3. In the Format group box, click the XLS (Excel) option.
4. In the File group box, click the Change Location button, navigate to the location where you want to save the spreadsheet, and click OK.
5. Enter a name for the spreadsheet in the Name of file to be created via export" field.
6. Click the Export button and then click Done.

**Q: Is there a way to change which three associations appear at the top of the Asset Detail dialog for an asset?**

**A:** Yes. In Fixed Assets CS, the first three active fields in the Association field order list in the Association dialog appear in the same order at the top of the Asset Detail dialog. Any other association fields you are using appear in the Associations group box in the Other tab. To change which associations appear at the top of the Asset Details dialog, follow these steps:

1. In the Asset List window, choose Setup / Associations.
2. The Association field order list displays the association fields in their current order. To move a field in the list, highlight the field name and click the Move Up or Move Down button until the field is one of the top three in the list.
3. Repeat step 2 until the fields are listed in the desired order, and then click OK to return to the Asset List window.

## WEB SERVICES

**Q: Is there a way my clients can track the status of their tax refund using Web Builder CS?**

**A:** Yes. Clients can visit your website and easily select federal or state entities to determine the status of their returns.

To add Refund Tracking to your Web Builder CS site, follow these steps:

1. Log in to Web Builder CS.
2. Click the Site Editor link.
3. At the bottom of the Site Editor page, click the Add Page button.  
A new page (labeled "General") appears at the bottom of the list.
4. Open the Page Type drop-down list and select Track Refund.
5. Click OK when warned about changing the page type.
6. Click the Generate Site button to save your changes.

Web Builder CS returns you to the Site Manager. To edit or view the new page, click the Page Editor link, locate the Track Refund page in the list, and click the Edit or View button. To view Help about editing the page, click the Tips icon at the top of the page.

**Q: Can I set up NetFirm CS to notify me when an updated file is uploaded to File Exchange, when files are transmitted to Document Presentation, or when Web Employee users change their W-4 information?**

**A:** Yes. Follow these steps:

1. Log in to NetFirm CS as an administrator, click the Utilities tab, and click the Notification navigation link.
2. In the Notification page, click the Edit link for the appropriate alert type.
3. In the Edit Notification Recipients page, move the NetStaff CS or NetClient CS users who should receive the notification to the Users selected pane.
4. Click OK to save your changes.

## WRITE-UP CS

**Q: I am having trouble with my bank reconciliation. Is there a way I can narrow it down to see where I am out of balance?**

**A:** Yes. To address bank reconciliation issues efficiently, we recommend you use the Bank Reconciliation Troubleshooter available on our Knowledgebase. This diagnostic tool can help you determine why your bank reconciliation is not balanced. Simply use the search terms Bank Reconciliation Troubleshooter or search for solution number K35437064.

**Q: My financial statement totals are incorrect. How can I determine where these numbers are coming from?**

**A:** While previewing a financial statement on your screen, you can drill down to view transaction-level detail for any amount in the statement. In the Print Preview window, place the mouse pointer over an amount in the statement. The mouse pointer will change to a small hand. Click the left mouse button to drill down to the next level of information. Depending on the amount type, you may see additional links (in blue type), which you can click to drill down to a deeper level of source information.

**Q: Do I have to bring in inactive employees or vendors when importing data from QuickBooks Pro via Accountant's Assistant?**

**A:** No. In Accountant's Assistant, open the Setup / Miscellaneous Information dialog, and simply mark the checkbox not to import inactive employees or vendors.

## TRIAL BALANCE CS

**Q: A recent User Bulletin indicated that a tax reconciliation has been added to Trial Balance CS. What is the purpose of this feature?**

**A:** The Tax Reconciliation feature enables you to create Tax Adjustment journal entries posted to tax codes. These entries can be used to record and reconcile differences between Net Income per Books (Adjusted Net Income) and Net Income per Tax Return (Tax Net Income). The Tax Reconciliation window is available for 1120, 1120S, and 1065 clients, but not for consolidation clients. When you enter and post tax adjustments in the Tax Reconciliation window, the program creates adjusting journal entries by tax code. These journal entries create tax balances that can be exported to a tax program. For more information on the Tax Reconciliation feature, search on Tax Reconciliation from the index of the CSA Help browser.

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**Q: Is there a way to enter Adjusting Journal Entries that will recur each period or year?**

**A:** Yes. When adding the entry, select Recurring from the drop-down list in the Special Types field. This will flag the entry as a recurring entry so that each time the period is advanced, the program recreates the entry and posts it to the current period.

**Note:** This feature is available only from entries made from the Adjusting Journal Entries window, not from the Trial Balance window.

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## ENGAGEMENT CS

**Q: When creating a Custom Excel Workpaper, is there a way to save my design as a template so I can reuse it with other clients?**

**A:** Yes. After you've finished specifying the column selection for the Custom Excel Workpaper, click the Save Template button. Then whenever you want to retrieve the template, select the appropriate template from the pull-down menu.

**Q: Some of my documents are listed in red text in the Tree View window, and a "2" appears in the Warning column. Why?**

**A:** The "2" warning indicates that the document was changed after it had been signed off by the reviewer. To clear the warning you will need to delete the original reviewer signoff and recreate it.

1. Highlight the document and choose Edit / Workpaper Properties.
2. Highlight the reviewer signoff and click Remove.
3. Click Add to add back the reviewer signoff.

**Q: What are the proper procedures for sharing the trial balance while processing a multi-staff client?**

**A:** To edit the trial balance, you must be assigned to the trial balance. Choose Tasks / Assign Trial Balance, select your name from the list, and click OK. Next, choose Tasks / Access Trial Balance. At this point, you can make any edits to the trial balance data. If another staff member then needs to take control of the trial balance, you must first release control of the trial balance by choosing Tasks / Release Trial Balance.

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## PAYROLL CS

**Q: Why does the Tips Deemed to be Wages calculate based on \$5.15 instead of my state minimum wage?**

**A:** Tips Deemed to be Wages is the amount of reported tips that are considered wages for IRS Form 8846. The program completes a sepa-

rate minimum wage verification when the check is saved to ensure that the federal or state minimum wage is reached. This is done using the amount specified in the Client minimum wage field on the Calculating Payroll tab of the File / Client Properties dialog. If that field is not filled in, the program automatically uses the amount from the Federal minimum wage field on the Setup / System Configuration / Payroll Tax Information / Federal Tax Information dialog.

**Q: I need to change the hourly wage rate for several employees. Is there a faster way to do this than editing the rate for each employee individually?**

**A:** Yes. Choose Setup / Employees and then choose Edit / Employee Pay Rate Changes. In the dialog that opens, enter the new wage rate to apply universally, or you can select the specific employees for whom the new wage rate should apply.

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## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS CS

**Q: I retrieved client and industry data, but I still cannot run industry comparative reports. Why?**

**A:** You have not linked the client data to its corresponding industry data. To do so:

1. Choose Setup / Clients, select the client from the list, and click the Edit button.
2. Enter the appropriate six-digit NAICS code in the Industry Code field.
3. Click the Financial Data tab.
4. Use the Link to Industry Data fields to specify the year and data set to link to the year currently displayed for the client. You can link each year of client data to a different industry year and data set.
5. Click Enter to save the updated links between the client and industry.

**Q: In Write-Up CS and Trial Balance CS, I've made changes that have altered my client's balances. I have attempted to retrieve the information again, but the changes are not reflected in the balances in Financial Analysis CS. Why?**

**A:** The original integration file that was created from Write-Up CS and/or Trial Balance CS has not been updated. You can update this file by opening the client in Creative Solutions Accounting and choosing Utilities / Transfer Data to Financial Analysis CS. Then re-open the client in Financial Analysis CS and retrieve the updated balances. You will need to repeat this process whenever balances have changed in Creative Solutions Accounting and need to be updated in Financial Analysis CS.

## CLIENT BOOKKEEPING SOLUTION

**Q: Can I export any reports from CBS to Microsoft Excel?**

**A:** Yes. When previewing a CBS report, click the envelope icon in the toolbar to open the Export dialog. In this dialog, you can choose from many different file types for the export, including the XLS file type for Excel spreadsheets.

**Q: I am setting up a new client that will use CBS Accounts Receivable. Is there a quick way to populate the CBS program with invoice items or customers?**

**A:** Yes. The spreadsheet import function available in CBS provides a quick way to populate your client's database with existing customer information and invoice items. Choose Utilities / Spreadsheet Import. For detailed information on the spreadsheet import process, search on Import Spreadsheet Data from the index in the CBS Help Topics dialog.

## PRACTICE CS

**Q: Can I export client information from Practice CS?**

**A:** Yes. Choose File / Export / Clients and mark the Other checkbox to export information about selected clients to an XML file. The XML file can be opened in Microsoft Excel, where the client information can be used for a variety of purposes. You can export staff information in the same manner by choosing File / Export / Staff.

**Q: I use datasharing to keep client names and addresses consistent across all CS Professional Suite applications, but sometimes our staff changes client information in UltraTax CS or CSA. With Practice CS, can I verify that all client information is up to date without opening each client individually in the Clients Setup screen?**

**A:** Yes. To update Practice CS clients with the name and address changes that were entered in other CS Professional Suite applications, click the arrow next to the Sync button on the toolbar and choose Sync Datasharing. Practice CS checks for changes made in other CS Professional Suite applications and prompts you to accept, postpone, or reject the changes.

**Note:** Sync Datasharing may take several minutes to process, so we recommend that you schedule a convenient time to complete this task. You will not be able to perform any work in Practice CS while the synchronization is running.

## CS Professional Suite<sup>®</sup>

Client CS™	Financial Analysis CS™	Payroll CS™	ToolBox CS®	Virtual Office CS™
Engagement CS™	Fixed Assets CS™	Planner CS™	Trial Balance CS™	Web Builder CS™
FileCabinet CS™	NetClient CS™	Practice CS™	UltraTax CS™	Write-Up CS™

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