

AC Mole & Sons

AC Mole targets two decades of efficiency with IRIS Accountancy Solutions

Established in 1902, AC Mole & Sons is an accountancy practice that prides itself on being ahead when it comes to technology

With offices in Taunton and Bridgwater, AC Mole & Sons has nine partners and 50 staff, ranging from qualified accountants and tax advisors to tax and accounting technicians, all supported by just six administrative staff. It has several thousand clients representing a wide range of industry sectors throughout the country.

Time for a change

As with any successful practice, technology is integral to ensuring key processes are streamlined for efficiency and profitability. This is why, some 30 years ago, the practice standardised on Radius, then the market leading accountancy practice software.

Fast-forward to 1992 when Paul Aplin was appointed tax partner and head of practice IT. One of his first IT tasks was to assess the firm's infrastructure. He was quick to note the inefficiencies of the now outdated and expensive Radius software. Aplin explains, "The assessment showed that we were paying well over the odds for something that was not delivering what the firm really needed."

The start of a long relationship

During a thorough evaluation of other accountancy software packages, Aplin discovered IRIS, a comparatively new brand on the market.

After seeing a demonstration of the IRIS application Aplin and his colleagues were impressed. Aplin said, "It was light-years ahead of everything else we'd seen or used. There was no hard sell and didn't need to be - the accounts package sold itself. We could see immediately that it would save us significant amounts of time at all levels in the firm."

Having exceeded AC Mole & Sons requirements, IRIS became the firm's preferred supplier of accountancy software the following year. Since then, neither IRIS nor AC Mole & Sons have looked back.

The current picture

Almost 20 years on, and through many technological and legislative changes, the relationship with IRIS remains strong. For example, AC Mole became the first practice to file an electronic tax return in 1997. In 2010 it became the first practice to file a company tax computation with IRIS using the new HMRC-mandated iXBRL standard.

The practice remains at the forefront of technology. Today, it has flat screen LCD monitors and PCs at every desk. The two offices are connected over a secure, dedicated network running two servers, one designated solely to running the IRIS Accountancy Suite.

Driving efficiency throughout the practice The team predominantly uses IRIS Accounts Production, IRIS Personal Tax, IRIS Time & Fees and IRIS Business Tax.

Aplin credits the highly integrated nature of the IRIS solution as the major driver of efficiencies throughout the practice. He said: "All client information is entered once and held in a single, centralised database. It means that every module automatically uses the latest client

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information. Before IRIS, or if we'd opted to use several different products to meet specific practice needs, we'd have had to update the information in each one manually, a never-ending task. With IRIS, we're able to save ourselves significant time as well as cut down on errors."

Aplin estimates that, without IRIS Accountancy Suite, he would need to employ twice as many administrative staff in order to keep the business running as efficiently as it does today. The savings in secretarial and other non-chargeable time have been substantial.

Aplin claims that the cost savings that AC Mole & Sons continues to receive through using IRIS helps the practice to offer excellent service at very competitive rates. "IRIS has transformed the way that AC Mole & Sons is staffed. It has taken away the drudgery of producing schedules, computations and cutting and pasting accounts and freed up significant amounts of time for staff to deliver value added services." explains Aplin.

The savings in secretarial time have been considerable: accounts and schedules that were once typed are now computer generated and IRIS AutoMail is increasingly used to deal with routine letters.

IRIS keeps AC Mole HMRC-compliant

In addition, the automatic software updates that IRIS provides for the complete IRIS Accountancy Suite ensures every module is on top of the latest statutory and legislative changes from HMRC.

AC Mole & Sons identifies that keeping on top of legislation is integral to the business and requires dedicated support from IRIS. Aplin explains, "We have to be absolutely confident that what we produce complies with new legislation and meets filing deadlines. It is vital that we have a software provider that we trust to enable us to do this.

For nearly 20 years, IRIS has ensured that we have transitioned painlessly through major changes, well ahead of official deadlines. IRIS has always actively listened and delivered the software we need to run efficiently."

Conclusion

Today, Aplin stands firm on the decision he made almost 20 years ago, "I have watched IRIS grow from a relatively small company, to the number one accountancy software provider in the UK. Often, with growth, the personal touch is lost. That has not been the case with IRIS. We still feel we are dealing with people who understand what we need and they consistently deliver tools that help us to save time and money."

Aplin concluded: "AC Mole & Sons has grown considerably since we first used IRIS. Having integrated accounts, tax and practice management software has been a significant factor in enabling us to achieve that growth."