

Freedman Frankl & Taylor

Based in Manchester city centre, Freedman Frankl & Taylor (FFT) provide accountancy services for businesses throughout the UK

Freedman Frankl & Taylor can offer clients more choice with IRIS payroll software

The firm has over forty years' experience as chartered accountants, registered auditors and specialist business advisors, serving a client base that ranges from sole traders through to international companies.

The firm provides a payroll service for 500 clients operating across different sectors. FFT manages every payroll-related activity, including processing payrolls, paying salaries, completing periodic returns and liaising with HMRC on the client's behalf.

FFT had been using DOS-based software from Superpay, but Tax Manager Peter Curt, who manages the firm's IT, had concerns that the product was not receiving sufficient development: "Although the product did the job and there was a roadmap for moving to Microsoft Windows, I didn't want to get to the day when we pressed a button and nothing happened."

IRIS "not a foregone conclusion"

FFT is a long-standing user of IRIS Accountancy Suite software from IRIS Software Group, having been a customer since the early 1990s. As Peter puts it, "We've used pretty much everything IRIS can offer for ever and have a good relationship with them."

While it made sense, therefore, to look at what IRIS could offer in the way of payroll software, Peter emphasises, "It was not a foregone conclusion that we would eventually choose IRIS. In fact, initially I was cautious about putting all our eggs in one basket. However, when we researched the market very thoroughly, looking at all the big players, IRIS payroll software emerged as being the most intuitive to use. I knew, too, that, with full Microsoft Windows compatibility, it would be future-proof."

FFT used the implementation of the firm's new payroll software as an opportunity to review and streamline its own processes, in order to gain maximum return from its investment. FFT now uses IRIS payroll software to process client payrolls ranging from a single employee to a 700-strong workforce.

Peter comments, "Providing payroll services is a responsibility - it's up to us to get the right money in employees' bank accounts, and IRIS payroll software helps us to do this reliably and efficiently."

Delivering meaningful reports to clients

FFT is now able to offer clients improved report writing. Peter explains the benefit for clients, "With IRIS payroll software, we can now offer our clients a choice of standard reports or completely bespoke payroll reports, designed specifically for them."

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We say, 'Historically, you've had this type of report. Now tell us what reports would really help you and we'll do it'. It all adds up to providing clients with an excellent service that meets their business requirements. If the requested report is particularly complex, we know that we can ask IRIS for help with the design. We're happy to invest in this support as offering this service has become a money-maker for us."

Peter adds, "Being able to provide meaningful reports is a very attractive service for businesses and I'm very enthusiastic about the possibilities. Once we have this improved reporting facility well established for our existing clients, we're definitely looking to go out there and find more payroll clients."

Cutting postage and stationery costs

IRIS payroll software offers the option to distribute payslips by email. FFT is seeking to gradually convert clients to using this method. Peter is clear about the benefits this brings to both the firm and its clients, "By being able to email payslips, we will save on the postage and stationery that servicing 500 payrolls entails, while the client saves time in not having to distribute payslips."

We tested this facility on our own payroll first, and found it much more efficient than moving pieces of paper around. Clients for whom we now provide emailed payslips are over the moon." Outlining the process, Peter says, "I simply request the employees' email addresses on a spreadsheet for quick import into the IRIS payroll software. It's a prime example of how this payroll system in particular makes it easier to import data without having to re-key it. It's just as easy to export data from the system, too."

Commenting on the flexibility IRIS payroll software offers, Peter says, "Once again, we can work in the way the client prefers. We can email our clients' employees their

payslips directly, using either their work or personal email address, as they prefer, with the HR contact receiving a summary.

Alternatively, the HR contact can receive all the payslip details and forward them on to employees - it's entirely up to the client and how hands-on they wish to be."

The challenge of RTI

A challenge on the horizon for any accountant preparing client payrolls is HMRC's forthcoming requirement for Real Time Information (RTI) reporting of pay, tax, National Insurance and other details. Rather than submitting these details at the end of the tax year through a P35/P14 return, employers will need to report data as or before each payment is made.

RTI goes live in April 2013. IRIS is already participating in the RTI trial and has a number of customers already making RTI submissions successfully. Peter is confident about what lies ahead, saying, "Having seen how IRIS was always ahead of the game on iXBRL, I'm sure we can trust IRIS to be more than ready for RTI, whatever changes are in the offing."

Solution summary

- *A future-proofed, Microsoft Windows-compatible payroll solution*
- *Easy import and export of data to and from spreadsheets*
- *Greatly improved report writing, with the ability to offer clients a choice of reports*
- *Cost-effective support from IRIS for specialist report writing*
- *Postage and stationery costs greatly reduced by the ability to email payslips from the system*