

SmallBiz Accounts “makes the unprofitable profitable” using cloud-based technology from IRIS



SmallBiz Accounts

CUSTOMER PROFILE

A growing practice serving independent traders, small businesses and personal tax clients in the Paignton area of Devon

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

To expand the practice efficiently and profitably through the use of cloud technology

SOLUTIONS USED

IRIS OpenTax
IRIS OpenSpace

In the five years since Nathan Holmes set up SmallBiz Accounts, he has built a thriving client base from a standing start, mainly through word-of-mouth recommendation.

Nathan has an enterprising approach to using technology: “When employed previously in a large firm, it was a big bugbear for me that technology wasn’t used to drive efficiency. Often we seemed to be re-entering data without adding any real value. Running my own practice has given me the freedom to embrace technology and invest in it to increase my productivity.”

Nathan started as he meant to go on: solutions from IRIS have been the mainstay of his business from the beginning and he adopted IRIS OpenTax, cloud-based tax software delivered as a service over the web, on its release in 2013.



Available anywhere

Cloud-based solutions that can be accessed on clients’ premises



Enhanced collaboration

Gain client approval on tax returns online



Time-saving

Increases efficiency in processing client work



Reduce overheads

Helps SmallBiz Accounts to operate as a lean, competitive business



Paperless

Speedy communication without the pain and costs of hard-copy documents



Security

An easy yet secure way to exchange documents

“With IRIS OpenSpace now an integral part of IRIS OpenTax the workflow is seamless, meaning that I can send out a tax return to my client for their approval quite literally at the touch of a button. As I no longer have to download and email out documents, let alone post them.”

Nathan has also been keen to use electronic document exchange. Initially attaching documents to emails, he made the switch to IRIS OpenSpace, the secure cloud-based solution for sharing accounting documents with clients and gaining their sign-off there and then online. IRIS OpenSpace now forms an integral part of Nathan's workflow in preparing tax returns.

Saving on paper-related costs

Nathan says, “When you first start using electronic document exchange, it's a revelation. It's so much easier and cheaper too, without all the associated stationery, print and postage costs, which are rising all the time. “With IRIS OpenSpace now an integral part of IRIS OpenTax the workflow is seamless, meaning that I can send out a tax return to my client for their approval quite literally at the touch of a button. As I no longer have to download and email out documents, let alone post them, it's a great time-saver.” Nathan's clients, too, have happily accepted this modern way of working.

In running a busy practice, Nathan welcomes the automation within IRIS OpenTax that helps him to keep on top of his workload. Once a client has approved a tax return in IRIS OpenSpace, the status on the client summary dashboard is immediately updated. Files and documents sent by clients to IRIS OpenSpace appear on the client dashboard in IRIS OpenTax.

Nathan notes, “I receive an email notification and the status is updated in IRIS OpenTax automatically. Plus the software keeps a full audit trail, so that at any time I can see at a glance the status of returns.”

Nathan finds that using cloud based technology that is accessible from any device also brings greater flexibility: “I work with a number of elderly clients and when I make a home visit, I take my iPad with me so that I can access their records there and then to do their tax returns together using IRIS OpenTax. This has been another breakthrough moment.”

Competitive on price and service

Using technology to collaborate with clients and process their work with efficiency and agility helps Nathan to compete against larger practices in his area, two of which are among the UK's top twenty firms. He also notes, “The south west is a low-income, pricesensitive region and it's essential that I provide a competitively priced service for my clients. Using technology such as IRIS OpenTax and IRIS OpenSpace brings greater efficiency and means I can avoid putting my rates up. In working more efficiently, I can increase the volume of client work I handle, and hence sales and income. In short, the strategic application of technology makes the unprofitable jobs profitable.”

Nathan intends to remain a sole practitioner in order to give his clients a truly personal service. He finds using IRIS OpenTax linked with IRIS OpenSpace a great time-saver. At the time of writing, the annual busy season is fast-approaching. Nathan comments, “While there will always be the challenge of encouraging clients not to leave it till the eleventh hour to submit their records to me, using IRIS OpenSpace for document exchange means that I don't lose further time

by having to attach documents to emails or, even worse, having to post them out for review.”

Nathan also feels more in control of his business: “Together, IRIS OpenTax and IRIS OpenSpace make it easier to track the progress of returns, keep the momentum going and stay on top of my expanding workload. Using technology in this way is rather like having your very own personal assistant, without the overheads!”

Get started with IRIS OpenSpace and sign up for your 1GB free storage for UK-based accountants at www.iris.co.uk/openspace

Try IRIS OpenTax for free and only pay when creating returns to submit to HMRC www.iris.co.uk/opentax

“I receive an email notification and the status is updated in IRIS OpenTax automatically. Plus the software keeps a full audit trail, so that at any time I can see at a glance the status of returns.”

IRIS OpenTax features and benefits:

- **The flexibility to work from anywhere** – just fire up an internet browser and login
- **Eliminate time-consuming software installation and updates** - the software is always up-to-date and ready for you to use
- **Improve business resilience** - protect your practice from disaster or weather-related disruption, work from anywhere with an internet connection
- **Inherently secure** - your practice data is uniquely encrypted in its own database and your user accounts are protected with 2-factor authentication
- **Includes client and practice dashboards** that drive profitability, giving you everything you need to know about your practice or a client at the touch of a button
- **Eliminates time-wasting errors** – instant notification if the data entered will cause the return to fail the e-filing validation checks
- **Provides an instant update** on your client’s tax liabilities
- **Easy access to client information** - dashboard technology gives you a meaningful view at a glance
- **Live help** delivers the content you need wherever you are working in the application

IRIS OpenSpace features and benefits:

- **Save time** - no need to wait for the post, as documents are transferred immediately
- **Fast, efficient review and approval** e-Approval enables clients to approve PDF documents within minutes
- **Secure** - only the client and accountant can access the client’s documents
- **Easy to use** - documents are transferred at the touch of a button
- **Increased mobility** - clients can securely access their documents on the move using any browser
- **No software to install, run or maintain** - all the benefits without the overhead of software maintenance