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# SOLUTIONS

Success Strategies for Users of Thomson Reuters Software

# ON TARGET

## Successful practices achieve benchmarks

Troy Patton, CPA
Patton & Associates, LLC
Indianapolis, Indiana

# SOLUTIONS

Success Strategies for Users of Thomson Reuters Software

## IN THIS ISSUE



**COVER:** For Troy Patton, CPA, Indianapolis, Indiana, the ability to work anywhere is just one of the many features of CS Professional Suite that convinced him to switch from another vendor in 2001.

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# TECHNOLOGY FOR HIRE

Looking for qualified employees who are efficient, accurate, well-organized and available 24/7? Well, look no further. We have the ultimate staff for hire: advanced solutions that can increase your firm's productivity and enhance client service.

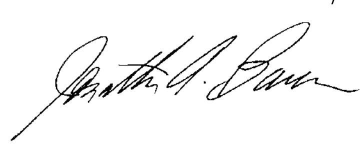
In today's accounting profession, qualified candidates are few and far between, and although there are positive signs like the increased number of accounting graduates in 2007, it's a trend that is expected to continue. Another trend within the tax and accounting profession is the slow adoption of advanced technologies. Together, these issues could prevent many firms from growing to their full potential.

So instead of searching for additional staff at a higher cost to your firm, a different approach may be in order—a technology approach. To accomplish this, firms must take full advantage of their existing software by learning how Thomson Reuters' technologically advanced applications work together as an integrated system—then decide how to best customize these solutions to maximize productivity. Because all of the products and services within the CS Professional Suite are integrated, you can greatly increase workflow efficiency, reduce redundancies, achieve greater cost savings, and in turn, eliminate the need to increase staff—all while growing your firm.

We're excited to help you take full advantage of the solutions you've chosen and will be with you every step of the way to help your firm become more proficient. From our annual Users' Conference (which takes place in less than two months), to year-end training, to our customized consulting services that are targeted directly to your learning and implementation objectives—we offer an extensive list of training options to help you maximize the value of your system.

In this issue of *Solutions*, you will see firsthand how accounting professionals just like you have used our solutions to overcome staffing shortages and how they have built successful practices using technology as a foundation. With the CS Professional Suite serving more than 50,000 firms nationwide, we have many great success stories to share.

Although there are challenges facing our profession, know that you have technology as a highly efficient staff member and us as your trusted partner. And both are dedicated to the successful future of your firm.



**Jonathan A. Baron**
*President, Professional Software & Services,*
*Tax & Accounting business of Thomson Reuters*

## SPEED TAX PROCESSING WITH THE NEW FILECABINET CS SOURCE DOCUMENT MODULE

Integration with the new optional FileCabinet CS Source Document module enables UltraTax CS users to achieve faster tax processing through the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. For firms with a centralized up-front scanning tax preparation process, this new functionality can save additional time and cost by shifting the responsibility of source document scanning and data entry from the professional preparer to a non-accountant or administrative staff member.

UltraTax CS users (who also have FileCabinet CS) can submit 1040 source documents that have been scanned into FileCabinet CS to the FileCabinet CS Source Document module for OCR processing. Then certain tax documents are identified and tax data is captured, which is then exported into UltraTax CS for tax processing. When ready to prepare a client's tax return, staff need only open the UltraTax CS client where information from the Source Data Entry utility joins other datasharing data to be accepted in UltraTax CS input screens.

Thomson Reuters is proud to lead the profession in advancing the use of OCR technology. 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.

## THOMSON REUTERS TAKES 2 OF 5 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARDS AND AN HONORABLE MENTION

At this year's Technology Innovation Award ceremony, Thomson Reuters earned dual accolades for product excellence. Both Engagement CS and PPC SMART e-Practice Aids — Risk Assessment earned top honors. Thomson Reuters was the only company to take two of the five total Innovation awards, which is a significant achievement for the Tax & Accounting business unit.

Of particular interest was the integration between these two products. As an all-inclusive paperless engagement management solution, Engagement CS offers direct integration with PPC's SMART e-Practice Aids, enabling tax and accounting professionals to dynamically generate custom audit programs based on their assessment of audit risk.

Thomson Reuters also received an Honorable Mention for its GoFileRoom ES product. Honorable Mentions are presented to products not receiving an award but which possess significant innovative potential.

This year marks the fifth annual Technology Innovation Award ceremony hosted by The *CPA Technology Advisor*. The Innovation Awards were announced at a reception in Los Angeles at the 2008 California Accounting and Business Show & Conference.

For more information on Engagement CS or to view the full press release announcing the dual win, please visit us at **CS.ThomsonReuters.com**. For more information on PPC SMART e-Practice Aids — Risk Assessment, please visit **PPC.ThomsonReuters.com**.

## PARTNER SUMMITS 2008— A NEW CONCEPT IN ENLIGHTENMENT

Tax and accounting visionaries from across the country advanced from inspiration to a 90-day implementation plan at our new Partner Summits 2008. The first of their kind, these exclusive two-day forums were introduced by Thomson Reuters to provide partners in tax and accounting firms with a new way to achieve long-term goals.

In a consultative atmosphere that stimulated learning and discussion, partners met with other colleagues to attend presentations, socialize, and network—and every participant walked out the door with a customized plan for achieving their vision. Topics included laying the groundwork for managing a business of the future, improving client interaction and services with CS Professional Suite, and developing a specific action plan to achieve on-going success. Featured presenters included M. Darren Root, CPA. CITP, and President of Root & Associates, LLC, and Sandra L. Wiley, COO and Senior Consultant with Boomer Consulting. Thomson Reuters expert staff,

# JOIN US IN TEXAS FOR THE 28TH ANNUAL CS USERS' CONFERENCE

## REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

The Lone Star State is the setting for this year's CS Users' Conference, taking place November 5-8 at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas. The conference offers more than 60 workshops—including CS Professional Suite training and a variety of practice management and technology sessions, as well as keynote addresses by nationally recognized speakers. The valuable information, entertaining events, and rich networking opportunities help to make your experience both productive and fulfilling. Visit **CS.ThomsonReuters.com/UC** to register or for more information. You can also register and request a printed program by calling a CS Customer Service Representative at **(800) 968-0600** and pressing 1, then 5.

## SAVINGS & DISCOUNTS

The registration fee is $1,095 for the first person registered from your firm. And even though the early registration period has ended, you can still save up to $150 with these discounts:

- **Additional Firm Attendees**—SAVE $100
- **Previous Attendee Discount**—SAVE $50 (if you attended our 2007 Users' Conference)

## BOOK YOUR ROOM TODAY

Reservation requests must be received by October 3, 2008, to qualify for the special conference room rate and to ensure room availability. Discounts are based on availability. The Gaylord Texan is also extending the special group rate for three days before and three days after the main program dates of November 5-8, 2008.

Make your reservation by calling the Gaylord Texan Resort and Conference Center at **(817) 778-2080** or toll-free at **(877) 782-7897** and asking for the CS Users' Conference group rate. You can also visit us online at **CS.ThomsonReuters.com/UC**, then click the **Travel** link.

Samantha Mansfield and John Colson, also offered presentations. Partner Summits took place during the months of July and August in four locations, including Chicago, IL, Denver, CO, San Diego, CA, and Boston, MA.

Thomson Reuters is excited to offer this new VIP opportunity for discussion and sharing of relevant topics. Partner Summits are additional examples of our commitment to help our users achieve their vision.

## ANNOUNCING SEAMLESS INTEGRATION BETWEEN PRACTICE CS AND GOFILEROOM CS

Full integration between GoFileRoom CS and Practice CS equates to immense time savings. Product integration enables you to quickly print documents—such as letters, reports, invoices and statements—to GoFileRoom CS for immediate access through the GoFileRoom Documents portlet. Within the portlet, you can set options and criteria that determine what information from GoFileRoom CS is listed. In combination with Practice CS, the central hub of your firm, you can enjoy up-to-the-minute views of staff, client, and firm information and activity.

From the Practice CS Client Dashboard, you can specify criteria that will pull documents specific to the client you have open. With access from the Firm, Staff, and Client dashboards, this portlet offers a snapshot view of documents in GoFileRoom CS—without ever leaving the Practice CS workspace.

Once you enter your GoFileRoom CS login credentials, Practice CS will store them for automatic login each time you access the system. Additionally, you can configure Practice CS to allow for auto-indexing of any documents going to GoFileRoom CS. Practice CS brings together

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# RECRUITING AND RETAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

"The next generation is not shy about asking for what they want from a prospective employer, and they do their homework," says Rebecca Ryan of Next Generation Consulting. "For example, when they come to their first interview at your firm, they've already checked you out on Vault.com, and have an idea what their starting salary should be from Salary.com."

Training is important to the next generation. Some firms think a new hire is only going to stay with them a few years, making it difficult to demonstrate the payoff from investing thousands of training dollars. Ryan thinks a better way to leverage your training investment is to think of it in terms of phases. In phase one, a new hire receives basic training. After a year, you'll know if this newbie is a good fit for you, and you'll have a better idea of the more specific kinds of training that will work. "I heard recently from a 23 year old who'd been with her organization for one year and wanted to leave, because she didn't perceive any growth opportunities," says Ryan. "But after one year, her supervisor came to her and said, 'I really value you, and here's a three-year plan of training, experiences, and projects I think you'd really enjoy.' The employee was bowled over, because her supervisor had put so much thought into her growth plan. She's staying—even without a promotion."

There's no doubt that technology plays a huge role in the lives and attitudes of the next generation. "Remember, this is the first generation that grew up understanding that Apples have memory. If you're not keeping up, you come across as a dinosaur," says Ryan. This is also the generation that grew up with the Internet, blogs and social networking sites, and they are carrying those tools over into the workplace. "We're just completing a survey right now of how the next gen uses these tools at work and personally," says Ryan. "But I can say this for now—Facebook is worth a look. Young people grew up on it. If partners are resistant, at least require recruiters to have Facebook profiles in order to keep this avenue open." (To find out more about the survey results, which had not been tabulated at press time, go to NextGenerationConsulting.com.)

***Rebecca Ryan is the founder of Next Generation Consulting, Madison, Wisconsin, and the author of the 2007 book,* Live First, Work Second: Getting Inside the Minds of the Next Generation.**

"I always start with retention," says Sandra Wiley, COO of Boomer Consulting., Inc. "Unless you have retention,recruiting doesn't matter." The new generation is impatient, quick to get bored by jobs that don't challenge them, and likely to change jobs often. "The trick is to get them to change jobs internally, rather than feeling they have to leave the firm after you've invested in their training," says Wiley. "Employees in this generation ask, 'what can I learn next?' Lots of firms are starting to accommodate this need by setting up learning ladders, a step-by-step process that allows them to grow and measure their progress."

Training needs to take account of the technology young people have grown up with. Young people grew up in an online world, and they take for granted being connected and the flexibility and information access it makes possible. "This is the Facebook and MySpace generation. They grew up with social networking sites, and community is important to them. They are looking for the same kinds of networked relationships in their professional life. LinkedIn is bringing some of this to the business world. Plaxo is another. Within the accounting profession, our firm has the Boomer Knowledge Network, AICPA has its PCPS, and Thomson Reuters has the ARNE2 online forum. Blogs are becoming more important, too—such as the Ernst & Young blog for their own women staff that proved so popular they made it public."

"The tools are different today," says Wiley. "These are young people who may not always know yet how to do the work, but they know how to get the answers. They have different learning styles. We have to adapt to their individual styles. One cookie cutter solution won't work."

Smaller firms have a great natural advantage in appealing to a new generation of employees, according to Wiley. An integrated, paperless workflow just makes sense to young people, and they'll be restless in an environment that doesn't have it. In a small firm, there's less inertia of the past, and one determined champion can make it happen. Technology results in productivity gains, but it also impacts recruiting and retention. "Technology can be a huge benefit for accounting firms—if they'll take advantage of it," Wiley concludes.

***Sandra Wiley is COO and Senior Consultant with Boomer Consulting, Inc., Manhattan, Kansas. She is a certified Kolbe™ trainer and assists clients in building teams, managing employee conflict and hiring staff. Wiley also directs Boomer Consulting, Inc.'s annual Human Capital and Learning Symposium™.***

# ON TARGET

# SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES ACHIEVE BENCHMARKS

For Troy Patton, there is only one way to run an accounting practice–efficiently. The Indianapolis, Indiana, certified public accountant is so passionate about this mission that he conducts one-day seminars to teach accountants how to acquire, run, and grow their practices. An important element of Patton's success was his decision to switch to Thomson Reuters' CS Professional Suite.

"A key component to the success of any accounting practice is getting the proper realization from the staff," he says. "In other words, how much is the practice billing out and collecting for each associate versus how much the firm is paying them. There aren't a lot of good software programs available to determine this, but Thomson Reuters has one of the best products on the market."

## TRADITIONAL PRACTICE

Patton & Associates, LLC is a certified public accounting firm offering all the traditional services, which accounts for about half of the practice's revenue. The remainder comes from consulting, business valuations, and asset management.

Patton graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in 1992 and started with a national accounting firm before going to work for one of their clients. The practice's management was doing a leveraged buyout, which Patton could have been a part of, but he wanted to stay in public accounting and started his own firm in 1996.

The operation grew to 10 offices and 80 associates when Patton sold it in 2004. He stayed on briefly before opting to start his own practice again. At present, his firm has nine associates serving 250 individual clients and 175 businesses.

"Our focus is different from my original practice," Patton says. "We work with a lot of dental practices on the CPA side, and are doing a lot of consulting. For the size of our practice and all the different things we do, it's critical that we run very efficiently."

## SWITCH TO CS PROFESSIONAL SUITE

Patton got involved with Thomson Reuters products in 2001.

"We were with another software vendor and were having issues," he says. "We needed better management of the practice. When we switched to the CS Professional Suite we saved 680 man hours in the first tax season."

Patton credits the efficiencies gained with Write-Up CS, UltraTax CS and Virtual Office CS.

"Those three programs streamlined everything," he explains. "Write-Up CS integrates unbelievably well with UltraTax CS, which I consider to be one of the best tax software products on the market, especially when working with multiple states. The apportionment schedule is on one screen, where most other programs don't have this capability."

Virtual Office CS offers several advantages.

"Staffing is a big issue," Patton says. "As we continue to expand we want people to have the flexibility to work from home or the office. Recently I was in Chicago for two days, and when I logged in it was just like I was in the office. I can do anything and everything from anywhere. And, talk about realization, those 680 hours we saved the first year allowed us to do a lot more work with the same number of staff. That year we acquired another practice with $280,000 in revenue, didn't add one staff member, and didn't work nearly the overtime."

Virtual Office CS saves time for firms with multiple offices. By using it in conjunction with FileCabinet CS, the practice is virtually paperless. If Patton needs to review a return from another office, he can pull it up immediately on his computer. Or, when he's at home, after he put his two children to bed, he can go on line and get right to work.

"I don't have to put anything on a disk or a separate hard drive," he says. "I just log in and I'm finished; it's that simple. Virtual Office CS really streamlines everything and creates huge efficiencies. It is an unbelievable product; no one else has anything like it."

The move to Thomson Reuters software also benefits clients.

"Client portals provided through NetClient CS allow timely back and forth communication and interaction," Patton says. "Our clients want us to be their virtual controller. They embrace the technology because it's simple to use."

## PUT ME IN, COACH

Patton was on the wrestling team in college. He learned the sport from his late father, which is the reason he named his consulting website CoachPatton.com. Central to the services offered on the website are the concepts of utilization (the number of hours worked by staff in a year) and realization (the percentage of those hours that are billed at 100 percent). Patton stresses the importance of using integrated software like the CS Professional Suite that facilitates tracking these important benchmarks.

"The majority of accounting practices I work with don't understand utilization and realization," Patton says. "The very first thing we look at is utilization versus the realization. There are 2,080 hours in a year, and we look at how many of those hours were fully billed. The staff should be at least 80 percent billing in terms of realization. We've found that firms using Thomson Reuters products are achieving this. Firms that aren't using them run at a rate between 52-60%. In a case like this, the problem with a staff member who is paid $40,000 a year is that he or she is only bringing in $80,000. The figure should be more like $120,000."

Patton also finds that software integration with these firms is a cumbersome process.

"The products in the CS Professional Suite help measure utilization and realization benchmarks with the click of a button," Patton says. "Second, the integration of Fixed Assets CS, Write-Up CS and UltraTax CS increases realization. Now the accountant can do a $400 corporate tax return in 30 to 40 minutes. I know from the experience at my practice that if I can bill each staff member an additional $25,000, why wouldn't I pay a little more for better software? It's a return on investment six times over or more."

Patton cautions that it's not just one factor that makes a practice efficient; it's having a complete package.

"I look at a practice from a holistic view rather than individual components," he explains. "I've run across accountants who just use UltraTax CS, and I tell

them if that's what they are doing they also need to have Write-Up CS. Not doing this is like looking at a practice with blinders on. They tell me that because revenue is only $80,000 in the tax area they don't want to spend more on other software. But when you start putting the pieces together the realization can nearly double. Many accounting practices are skeptical about switching software, but Thomson Reuters products really made me a believer that this is the way to go."

# ANOTHER NOTCH

## Practice CS takes firm to the next level of technology

As Larry Cumpston closes in on retirement, one of his goals is to make sure his accounting practice has the highest level of technology. Six years ago at a Thomson Reuters users' conference he listened as L. Gary Boomer, CEO of Boomer Consulting Inc., talked about software integration.

***Larry Cumpston***

"That really woke me up about staying on the cutting edge of technology," Cumpston says. "The CS Professional Suite takes away the duplication of data entry. When we put information in UltraTax CS it automatically goes into Practice CS. Everything is tied together and we are more efficient."

Practice CS was the finishing touch for the firm. The decision was made in September 2007 to convert by the end of the year.

"In today's economy it's important to be able to manage a practice," Cumpston says. "On my computer screen I can look at how much time we have in a project and what every client owes us. We can bill a completed tax return today and not wait until the end of the month. For example, we mailed June bills to clients on July 3. I've talked to other firms and they say it takes them months to get out a bill. We think it's important to send out bills as soon as possible because we've never had a client pay us who didn't get a bill. This is a big help for cash flow."

Lawrence Cumpston & Associates, St. Paul, Minnesota, started 25 years ago with Cumpston, his wife, Lisa, and a part-time accountant. Today there are 25 associates serving 600 individual clients and between 500 and 600 businesses. For 2008, revenues are projected to be $2.8 million.

Approximately 75 percent of revenue comes from the transportation industry, primarily trucking companies. Annual revenue for clients ranges from $100,000 to $100 million.

### MOST ADVANCED PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

With real-time functionality, Practice CS is the central hub for the firm's information. The staff can get an up-to-the-minute look at workflow, client status or firm information at a glance.

"Our productivity has increased dramatically with Practice CS," Cumpston says. "I can see on a daily basis what everyone did yesterday, and that's important. Looking back, we should have gotten this system sooner. We think it makes our business work and look better; I know we manage it better."

So, what is the return on investment with Practice CS?

"I can feel how the dollars and sense of technology pay off, but I can't put it in hard dollars," Cumpston says. "I see our people are more efficient and chargeable, but it's difficult to quantify. As accountants, we want to quantify everything, but sometimes we can't. We didn't have good reports before, so we don't know. I just know Practice CS works better."

## FINAL PIECE

CPA Dennis Watson has been with the firm 11 years and is accounting manager. He was instrumental internally for getting Practice CS up and running.

"Practice CS is the final step in the integration of all our software systems," he says. "We started with tax preparation with UltraTax CS and moved to financial statement processing. With FileCabinet CS our office became paperless. The final piece was a project management and time entry system."

Without an integrated system, it's difficult to measure utilization and realization because the practice doesn't have information available on a timely basis.

"With Practice CS, what happened yesterday is available today," Watson says. "We plan to sit down every quarter with associates and go over their chargeable and non-chargeable time for the past three months. We're learning a lot about what we're doing."

The system saves a lot of time tracking project status.

"Before Practice CS," Watson says, "we'd set up a budget and when we found out a month later we blew it we didn't know what was going on. Now we can see which area in the process we're getting hung up on. For example, one of our problems was not planning a project better at the front end. We'd be doing field work during the planning stage. Then we'd get back to the office and realize we needed more information. With the activity reports available with this system we can better analyze where our inefficiencies are."

Practice CS has the firm working smarter, not harder.

"We have more capacity to get work done on a timely basis," Watson says. "We're looking for more work with the same number of people. Until we got Practice CS we weren't capturing information about our workflow and getting data on a timely basis to show us what was happening."

*Dennis Watson*

## BENEFIT ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE

Cumpston's daughter, Krissa Cumpston, is the practice's business administrator. She sees several advantages to Practice CS.

"Practice CS makes sure we are up to date," she says. "Every morning the previous day's time has to be entered by 10 a.m. Associates can even enter this from home with remote access. I can see how many hours were worked and the billable percentage. This makes it easier to stay on top of issues. I used to perform this task individually on spreadsheets and would input everyone's time at the end of the month. We weren't up to date on the work that was being done for the client, if associates hit their quota of hours, or how much money was spent on a project. Now I'm always in touch with the work that is going on, and it's so much easier to access information."

Practice CS enables Krissa to quickly and automatically record time and expenses, create customized invoices and statements, record and track accounts receivable transactions, and create detailed reports and summaries.

"Our old billing system was a dinosaur," she says. "Practice CS is like having a cherry on top for the billing side. For example, I can group people into families; the options are endless."

*Krissa Cumpston*

Watson adds, "In theory, the payback with the software is working fewer hours to complete the same projects. On the other hand, we can build the practice with more clients and projects, and serve them better by offering more services than just preparation of tax returns and financial statements. And, we can do all this with the same amount of staff. Our Thomson Reuters software is well worth the investment. There are fewer headaches for me from the management side during tax season, and we can keep the staff more billable. Krissa has time to do other things and is able to mine data from the system to help us better manage what's going on."

## HELPING HANDS

Cumpston realized implementing the practice management system would require some work. His first step was to contact the CPA firm of Lawhorn & Associates, P.L.L.C., Knoxville, Tennessee.

"Jeff and Jason Lawhorn are good friends," Cumpston says. "Dennis, Lisa and I traveled to their office to see the system in action. They spent a day with us explaining how Practice CS works. They really helped us."

Next was two days of in-house training with a Thomson Reuters' University expert trainer.

"We are also a member of Boomer Circles and have attended all the CS Users' Conferences for the last six yeas," Cumpston says. "We couldn't have accomplished what we've done without training and Dennis Watson's leadership here in the office."

Watson helped design the setup of Practice CS so the firm could get the information that tells them whether or not they're doing enough planning.

"There were no big surprises when we got the system going," he says. "We decided what we wanted and how the information would be generated. We worked with Thomson Reuters to make it happen. They understood what data we wanted from the system."

## NEWS LINE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

all aspects of your practice to provide a fully integrated work environment, and when partnered with GoFileRoom CS, efficiency is further elevated.

For more information on these or any product within the CS Professional Suite, please contact a CS Account Representative by email at **CS.Sales@Thomson.com** or by phone at **(800) 968-8900**.

## ANNOUNCING EIGHT NEW ON-DEMAND TRAINING CLASSES

In order to gain the most from your software purchases and continue your professional education, we have added eight new On-Demand Training classes to those already available from our website, **CS.ThomsonReuters.com**. These new offerings include classes on NetClient CS, Planner CS, Practice CS, Payroll CS, and Write-Up CS. Also included are topics ranging from general application use to training on specific software features.

On-Demand Training for CS Professional Suite users consists of several 50- to 70-minute web-based courses designed to help you get the most value from your software. Available 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 provides 24/7 class availability for staff. For your convenience, courses are broken into short 10-minute segments to allow for breaks.

To view a list of available On-Demand Training sessions or to purchase, visit **CS.ThomsonReuters.com/Training/OnDemand**. For questions, contact a CS Account Representative at **(800) 968-8900** or email **CS.Sales@Thomson.com**.

## ULTRATAX CS

**QUESTION:** Why are assets for my Fixed Assets CS client not listed for the same client in UltraTax CS?
**ANSWER:** There are several potential reasons why the assets are not listed in UltraTax CS. Use one or more of the following solutions to troubleshoot the issue.

- Verify that the client IDs match: Open the Fixed Assets CS and UltraTax CS clients and choose File / Client Properties to view the IDs.
- Verify that the Fixed Assets CS data locations match: In both programs, choose Setup / System Confirmation and click the Data Locations tab to view the designated Fixed Assets CS data location.
- Verify that the assets are assigned to the appropriate activity in UltraTax CS: If they are not, open the appropriate Asset tab, choose Edit / Reassign Assets, and select Unknown or All Activities from the Activity field. In the pane on the left, select the assets you want to reassign and click the Select button. In the Reassign to group box, select the category (activity, situs, or association) and value where you want to reassign the assets, and click the Reassign button.
- Verify that the year ends match: Open the Fixed Assets CS client, choose File / Select Period to Process, and verify that the highlighted year end matches the year end for the assets listed in the UltraTax CS client's Asset tab.

**QUESTION:** Why did UltraTax CS produce a federal asset report for my client's return when there are no assets listed in the Asset tab?
**ANSWER:** The assets were assigned to the wrong activity. To reassign the assets:

1. In the Asset tab in UltraTax CS, choose Edit / Reassign Assets.
2. Select Unknown or All Activities from the Activity field so that the appropriate assets appear in the list.
3. In the pane on the left, select the assets you want to reassign and click the Select button.
4. In the Reassign to group box, select the category (activity, situs, or association) and value where you want to reassign the assets.
5. Click the Reassign button to move the selected assets to the new activity, situs, or association.

**QUESTION:** Why are the minister/clergy housing allowances that I entered on Screen W2 transferring to Form 1040, line 7?
**ANSWER:** Minister/clergy housing allowance information must be entered in Screen Clergy, which is in the Taxes folder. In Screen Clergy, enter the type of allowance in the "Type of housing provided for services" field for the taxpayer or, if applicable, the spouse. Then enter the appropriate amounts in the "Actual parsonage expense" and "Fair rental value of home" fields.

**Note:** To view the calculation, press CTRL+F to switch to Form view and click the Clergy folder to view the Clergy Worksheet Page 1—Percentage of Tax-Free Income worksheet.

## WEB SERVICES

**QUESTION:** Is there a way to make my NetFirm CS password permanent? And can I change the frequency of when my staff must change their portal password?
**ANSWER:** Yes. Although we strongly recommend that all users change their passwords at regular intervals, the firm administrator can change the frequency with which NetFirm CS requires users to change their passwords. To do so, the firm administrator must log in to NetFirm CS, click the Utilities tab, and then click the Passwords navigation link on the left side of the page. Under Global Password Management, choose the appropriate frequency and then click OK.

**QUESTION:** Are there guidelines for creating strong passwords?
**ANSWER:** Yes. Passwords for NetFirm CS logins must contain at least seven characters, at least one alphabetic character (uppercase or lowercase), and at least one numeric character. We recommend that you adhere to the following best practices for creating strong passwords.

- Use a mix of uppercase and lowercase characters.
- Use special characters such as !, @, or #.
- Replace letters with similar-looking characters. For example, replace S with $, O with zero (0), the word "and" with &, and the word "up" with ^.
- Do not use your login name, email address, or first, middle or last name.
- Do not use common words that could be found in a dictionary. Password-cracking programs can run through millions of possible word combinations in seconds.
- Do not use repeating characters or keyboard strings. For example, do not use aaaaaa1, 111111a, asdfasdf1, or a1234567.
- Do not share your password with anyone.
- Do not write your password down.

## WRITE-UP CS

**QUESTION:** What is the most efficient way to clear a range of checks in Bank Reconciliation?
**ANSWER:** Among the several commands in the F3 context menu available from the Checks & Other Debits tab of the Bank Reconciliation window are the commands Clear Ranges of Checks and Rapid Clear. Use the Clear Ranges of Checks dialog to clear one or more ranges of check numbers. Open the Rapid Clear dialog for heads down entry of checks and debits from the bank statement. As you enter the check number and amount, the program looks for exact matches among outstanding checks, and if one is found, marks it as cleared. Any mismatched items appear in a subsequent dialog

where you can choose to apply them to uncleared items.

**QUESTION:** One of my financial statements is missing the balance from one of my accounts. How do I get that account to be included in the statement?
**ANSWER:** Most likely the account balance is missing from the statement because it's missing from an account group (or from the range of accounts) specified for that row. To fix this issue:

1. Open the Financial Statement Editor, select the statement with the missing balance, and click the row number to highlight that entire row.
2. Make a note of which account group has been specified for that row (in the Amounts field in the Row Properties section of the Financial Statement Editor).
3. Open the Setup / Account Groups dialog, select that account group, click the Edit button, and add the missing account to the definition for that account group. After saving the correction to the account group definition, the next time you preview or print the statement, it will include the balance for that formerly missing account.

## PAYROLL CS

**QUESTION:** A specific employee is not showing up in payroll check entry in Payroll CS. Why not?
**ANSWER:** One of two situations can result in this issue.

**Situation 1:** The pay items selected on the employee record do not match the calculation profile currently selected for payroll check entry. For example, the Default calculation profile (selected from the Data Entry Options dialog for payroll check entry) has a setting of "All single-frequency employees," which means an employee will be included in the drop-down list for selection only if all payroll items for that employee (specified on the Earnings tab of the Setup / Employees window) share the same frequency (as specified in the Employees / Pay Item Properties dialog). To take another example, if you have specified a payroll frequency for the selected profile, only employees with pay items matching that frequency will appear in the employee list within the Payroll Check Entry window.

To verify which calculation profile is currently selected and the specific settings for that profile, press F3 from the Payroll Check Entry window, choose the Options command, and then (on the Data Entry Options dialog) click the Edit Profile button.

**Situation 2:** The employee has been marked as inactive—You can determine whether an employee has been marked as inactive from the Personal/W-2 tab of the Setup / Employees window. The Inactive Date field should be blank for an active employee.

**QUESTION:** My client has employees with pay rates below the new minimum wage. Is there an easy way to update the setup for all employees to meet the new minimum wage requirements?
**ANSWER:** Yes. The Employee Pay Rate Changes dialog (accessible from the F3 context menu for the Setup / Employees window) enables you to quickly update to a new federal or state wage rate for any of the client's employees who are currently below the new minimum wage rate. Enter the range of rates to be changed as well as the new rate. For example, to update employee records for the new increase in the federal minimum wage, enter **5.85** and **6.54** in the first two fields to denote the rate range to be changed and then enter **6.55** in the third field to specify the new rate. If the change does not apply to all employees, click the Select Employees button to specify payroll departments and/or specific employees for whom the change should be made.

## TRIAL BALANCE CS

**QUESTION:** My firm is licensed to use both the Trial Balance CS and the Write-Up CS software, but for one of my clients I'm only using Trial Balance CS. How can I make that a monthly (rather than annual) client?
**ANSWER:** To designate a Trial Balance CS client as a monthly client, you must also select the General Ledger module as part of the client setup. From the CSA main window, choose File / Client Properties, click the Add/Remove Module(s) button, mark the "General Ledger module" checkbox, and click OK. The Trial Balance tab on the Client Properties dialog changes to say "General Ledger," and you will now be able to specify the appropriate processing periods for the client (monthly, for example). Note, however, that you will no longer be able to enter balances into the Unadjusted Balance column of the Trial Balance window. Instead, you will need to either enter those amounts in the Transactions window or import them using the Utilities / Import / Spreadsheet command (which creates a journal entry for the balances).

**QUESTION:** Why am I asked to run Desktop Setup every time I switch from using the network version to the laptop version of the software?
**ANSWER:** You will see the prompt to run Desktop Setup whenever you have different versions of the software installed. (You can verify the version number of the Creative Solutions Accounting Platform software from the Help / About CSA dialog.) To correct this issue, you should run the Laptop setup from **X:WINCSI/CSA/Laptop/setup.exe**, where X represents the letter of your network drive.

***Tip:*** To ensure that you are running the latest version of the software on your laptop, you should make it a habit to run the Laptop setup each time before you take your laptop out of the office.

## ENGAGEMENT CS

**QUESTION:** Our firm wants to start using the Check In/Check Out process. What should we do to be properly prepared?
**ANSWER:** Follow these steps:

1. On the server installation of Creative Solutions Accounting (CSA), set up everyone with a staff ID and make sure the latest version of the software is installed on the network server.
2. Check all computers that will be going out into the field to ensure that the CSA Platform version installed on each laptop is the same version that is installed on the server.
3. To perform a laptop installation, browse to the server location where CSA is installed (typically, X:\WINCSI\CSA). Also, make sure all local computers have the same staff setup used on the server. The very first time the laptop installation is run, it copies the required global files from the server to the local machine. However, if the laptop installation has been run previously, you'll need to back up the global files from the server installation and restore them to the local installation of the program. To do that:
   a. Choose File / Backup / System Data.
   b. Double-click both the WSW.SYS and CSA.SYS files to select them, and then click the Backup button.
   c. Finally, open the program on the laptop, choose File/Restore / System Data, select both files, and click the Restore button.

**QUESTION:** I've been using Trial Balance CS but have just purchased a license for Engagement CS. How do I get it installed?
**ANSWER**: If you have any of the CS Professional Suite Accounting Products software already installed on your computer, open CSA, choose File / CS Connect, mark the Retrieve Licenses checkbox, and then click the Call Now button. Apply the licenses when prompted to do so. When you create a new client (or modify the client properties for an existing client), you will now see "Engagement CS" as an available option in the Add/Remove Module(s) dialog.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS CS

**QUESTION:** I am moving my Financial Analysis CS software to a new server. I know that I have to re-install the program, but can I just copy the database to the new location?
**ANSWER:** Financial Analysis CS uses an SQL database that is maintained by a running service on your server, so you should NOT attempt to merely copy the database from one location to another. Instead, you must use the commands within Financial Analysis CS first to back up the database and then, after installing the software on your new server, to restore the database from your backup location.

## CLIENT BOOKKEEPING SOLUTION (CBS)

**QUESTION:** My client needs to add another checkbook in CBS. How should we establish the beginning balance?
**ANSWER:** In the Checkbook data entry window, have your client enter the beginning balance by selecting Adjustment from the Type field and then entering the beginning balance in the Amount field. All transactions entered as adjustments in CBS are not exported back to Accountant's Assistant.

**QUESTION:** I have misplaced my client's export file. Is there a way to get another copy of it?
**ANSWER:** Using the same machine where the export was originally performed, open the client in CBS and complete these steps.

1. Choose Utilities / Administrator Utilities.
2. On the Archive Folder Maintenance tab of the dialog, click the Current Company option and mark the Export Files checkbox in the Program-generated files group box.
3. Double-click the appropriate export file to select it and then click the Send via Internet button, the Email button, or the Copy button, and then follow the prompts.

**QUESTION:** Client Bookkeeping Solution does not appear as a command on the Utilities / Accountant's Assistant menu from the CSA main window. How can I fix that?
**ANSWER:** You must select both the General Ledger module and the Payroll Compliance module when setting up the client in CSA.

## FIXED ASSETS CS

**QUESTION:** Can I assign assets to a new group or location without opening each asset?
**ANSWER:** Yes. You can reassign multiple assets en masse to any association, state, or activity.

1. Choose Edit / Reassign Assets.
2. In the pane on the left, select the assets you want to reassign and click the Select button.
3. In the Reassign to group box, select the category (activity, situs, or association) and value where you want to reassign the assets.
4. Click the Reassign button to move the selected assets to the new activity, situs, or association.

**QUESTION:** How do I enter a short year for a company that is closing to a new fiscal year?
**ANSWER:**

1. Choose File / Select Period to Process.
2. In the Select Period to Process dialog, click the Close to Next Year button.
3. Choose File / Client Properties and, if needed, change the current fiscal year end date.
4. Click the Short years tab.
5. Enter the ending date for the prior year in the Most Recent field.
6. Click OK.

# SOLUTIONS



## FILECABINET CS

**QUESTION:** My firm does both accounting and tax work. Is there a way to filter the Drawer list to see only the clients for whom we do accounting work?

**ANSWER:** Yes. You can use the new Drawer List Presentation Options dialog to sort and focus your Drawer list, making it easier to locate drawers and to navigate through your documents. To limit the Drawer list to only those drawers that include documents in a CS Accounting Products folder:

1. Click the Sort/Focus button above the Folders window and mark "Focus drawer list" checkbox.
2. Click the Unmark All button, mark the CS Accounting Products checkbox, and click OK. (The first time you focus the Drawer list, FileCabinet CS may need additional time to build the database. Subsequent changes to the focus of the Drawer list will appear more quickly.)
3. To view the entire Drawer list again, click the Sort/Focus button again, clear the "Focus drawer list" checkbox, and click OK.

**QUESTION:** How can I simultaneously view two documents that are stored in FileCabinet CS?

**ANSWER:** You can now open two instances of FileCabinet CS at the same time, with each instance on a separate monitor (if you use dual monitors). This allows you to view one document in one instance of FileCabinet CS and another document in the second instance of FileCabinet CS.

## PRACTICE CS

**QUESTION:** Can I edit the standard reports in Practice CS to add or remove information?

**ANSWER:** Yes. In the 2008.1.2 version of Practice CS, we added the ability to customize reports, labels, and letters. To open the Custom Formats screen, choose Setup / Custom Formats. For a walkthrough on customizing reports, choose Help / Practice CS Help Topics. In the Contents frame, click the Viewing Practice CS guides in PDF topic, where you will find a link to the Practice CS Custom Report Formatting WalkThrough.

**QUESTION:** How can I edit and/or transfer multiple time and expense entries from one client to another?

**ANSWER:**

1. From the Actions menu, choose Time & Expense Entry.
2. Click the Overview tab.
3. Filter by Client / Single / Client ID
4. Press CTRL and select the line items you want to edit.
   **Note:** You can only edit time entries that have not been approved, posted, or billed.
5. Right-click a selected item and choose Edit Selected Time & Expense Entries from the context menu.
6. Select Client from the first drop-down list.
7. From the second drop-down list, select the client ID to which you want to transfer the time entries.
8. Click OK.

**Note:** This procedure can also be used to edit Sheet Date, Staff, Entry Date, Engagement, Activity, Rate, Hours, Comment, Biller Note, Units, Price, and Amount.