

Case study



Growing an innovative accountancy practice with GI Outsourcing

Bringing innovation to an accountancy firm and breaking away from the norm of a firm that focuses on compliance services is no easy task.

It is one that the Partners at Sussex-based Carpenter Box know well having packed their shelves with accolades in recent years for the distinctive and innovative approach that sets the firm apart from the competition.

Part of the firm's innovative approach is its use of a dedicated resource model (DRM) through GI Outsourcing that sees offshore members of the GI team assigned full-time to the firm.

"As a growing practice, it's reasonably difficult to recruit as quickly as you need to and the process of hiring new staff can take some time. You have the interview and screening process and then you have to wait for the successful candidate to complete their notice period.

"It is really difficult to match that to the peaks and troughs of resource requirements," says Nathan Keeley, Partner and Head of Cloud Accounting at Carpenter Box.

The firm's use of outsourcing began quite slowly, preferring to find a quality provider than simply opting for the lowest cost.

"We initially entered into outsourcing as a light touch when we were really busy. We needed to get some extra support to either

allow us to either recruit the right people or to service the clients better in terms of delivering within the deadline and the requirements they had."

After trying several providers, Carpenter Box settled on GI Outsourcing, beginning with an ad-hoc pay-as-you-go arrangement to manage bottlenecks.

However, the firm quickly took the view that it could derive greater value from GI Outsourcing's services by moving to a DRM arrangement with one dedicated member of staff at GI.

"By moving to a DRM, you are effectively easing bottlenecks by taking on a new employee. While, of course, they aren't formally an employee and are based in another country, that's how I would view it," says Nathan.

"Culturally, we want the look and feel of our DRM team to be part of our wider Carpenter Box team. We want them to feel like an employee, even though they are not. We ask them to complete the same timesheets that our employed staff do, for instance."

The firm goes to significant lengths to make its DRM team feel like part of the wider team. When the firm takes on new members of its DRM team, they are given Carpenter Box email addresses and the same induction process that direct employees are given.

“To get the best from the DRM team, the team ethic is really important to us and the team sitting thousands of miles away needs to feel supported,” says Nathan.

“Having this process in place and having worked with the DRM team for some time, it is now easy to slot in new DRM team members as and when they are needed.”

Nathan sees outsourcing as a natural step for growing accountancy firms, noting that an incredible range of services are outsourced across the economy, from farming bananas to manufacturing clothing. It is sensible to outsource where it is the most efficient way to get the work done.

Carpenter Box has a range of exciting plans in the pipeline which may benefit from its ability to quickly add resources through GI Outsourcing. This includes a sport, new media entertainment specialist service line that is growing quickly and an outsourced finance function arm that deals with bookkeeping and management accounts, as well as cloud and digital work.

Nathan says “Being able to add on resources when you need them is vital to being able to scale-up new services at pace.

“We have the peace of mind that if we acquire a new client for outsourced finance function work that demands 20 hours a week, we can very quickly get a DRM team member in place through GI Outsourcing.”

He adds that one of the reasons why the firm’s relationship with GI Outsourcing works so well is having a UK-based team of account manager on hand to deal with any issues or concerns that arise there and then without delays arising from time differences.

He says “I know that if I send an email about an issue at 3pm, I’ll have had a reply by close of play the same day because the account management team are here in the UK.”

Nathan has been surprised by the speed with which Carpenter Box has scaled-up relationship with GI Outsourcing over the last six months or so, being up to three in the DRM team and plans to take on more in the year ahead.

“GI Outsourcing has proved to be able to find the right people to meet our needs and communication with the team has been great. We have found a lot of benefits from outsourcing when compared to recruiting, especially when the need for resources is urgent.”

To find out more about how GI Outsourcing can support your firm,
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