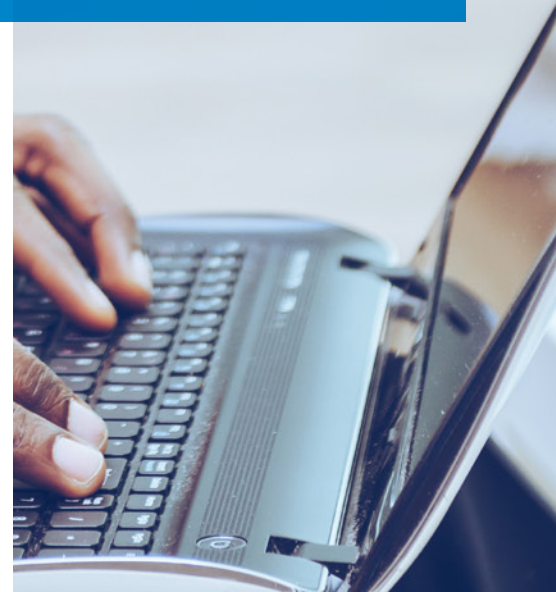
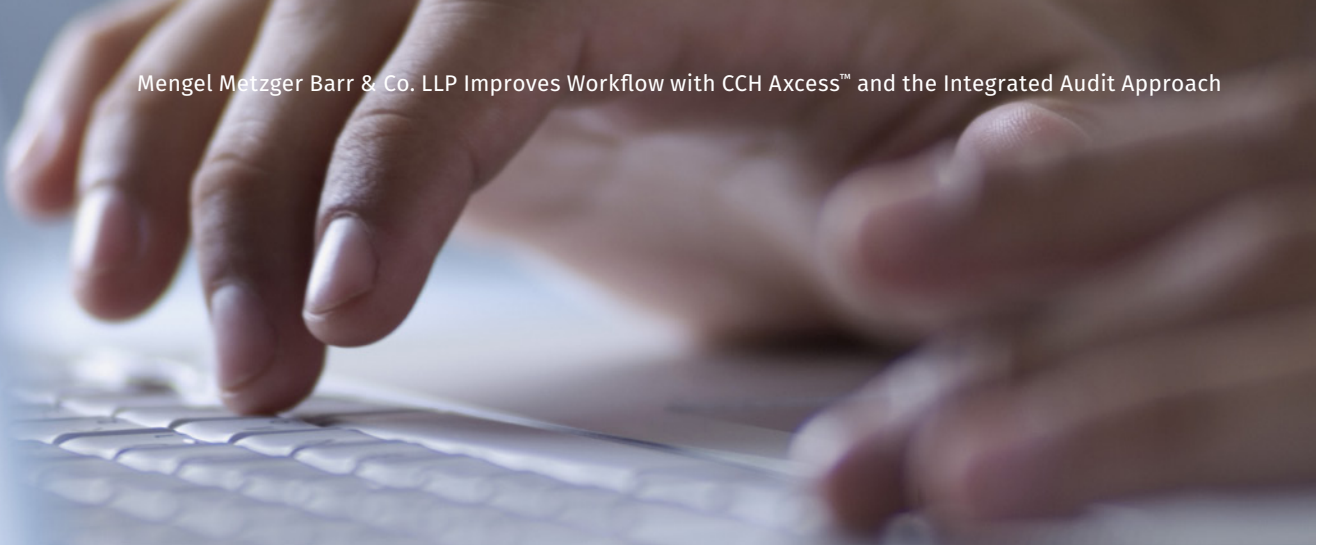


Case Study:
Tax Workflow
and Audit
Workflow

Tax & Accounting

*Mengel Metzger Barr & Co.
LLP Improves Workflow
with CCH Axcess™ and the
Integrated Audit Approach*





Challenge: Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP wanted better processes for its tax and audit workflows.

Solution: The firm moved to CCH Axxess to save time and increase productivity on the tax preparation and compliance side of the business, and Wolters Kluwer's Integrated Audit Approach to improve audit quality.

Focusing on Efficiency

Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP is a member of BDO Alliance USA and is located in upstate New York. The firm handles tax, audit, consulting, dispute resolution, business valuation, forensic and investigative accounting, and has offices in Rochester, Elmira and Canandaigua.

As the 100-employee firm grew over the years, the firm's leaders took a look at the software it used as well as its many processes and realized that it needed to employ software solutions that offer stronger integration. So, the firm implemented CCH Axxess on the tax preparation and compliance side of the business and Wolters Kluwer's Integrated Audit Approach on the audit side.

The Benefits of Automation

Before moving to CCH Axxess — Wolters Kluwer's award-winning, cloud-based tax preparation, workflow and practice management solution — the firm had to enter the same data multiple times in all the different software applications they used. The firm chose CCH Axxess because Wolters Kluwer's solutions are easy to use and are designed to work together.

“When we took a look at the main software that we were using across the firm, what kept coming back were Wolters Kluwer's software products. That's where people found the most ease of use and comfort with the user interfaces.”

— James P. Schnell, CPA/ABV, CVA,
Chair — Tax Department,
Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP

Since making the move to CCH Access, the firm has revolutionized and streamlined its tax preparation and compliance processes. First, the firm gets data from a client electronically or extracts it automatically using CCH® ProSystem fx® Scan with AutoFlow Technology, which also takes source documents and flows the data into a 1040 tax return in CCH Access™ Tax.

CCH Access™ Document, Wolters Kluwer's cloud-based document management solution, integrates with CCH Access Tax to further increase efficiency by organizing information and including a bookmarked PDF file with client source documents with each return. Additionally, CCH Access Document simplifies document management by digitally organizing and managing the full range of documents found in a firm — from tax returns to client correspondence, employee records and e-mail, both within workpapers, and also within a centralized, searchable database.

The results are significant time savings, improved accuracy and better documentation. The ease and thoroughness of documentation, especially, have impressed Schnell.

“Most tax practitioners will tell you that the workpapers on a particular tax return when you're done are just as important, if not more, than the actual tax return. So, having that thorough and organized documentation is key.”

More Satisfied Staff

With CCH Access, staff members can work from anywhere, at any time, which has improved satisfaction and work/life balance, as well as the firm's ability to recruit new talent and retain current staff.

“All three of our offices participate in one virtual server network. That has really helped increase workflow flex schedules.”

“We put a lot of energy into working with all generations, but specifically catering for recruitment purposes and understanding the Millennials. It's what they're looking for and this type of software integration — the virtual environment, the 24/7 connect anywhere flex schedules, the integrated cloud-based software — is absolutely improving our recruiting.”



James P. Schnell, CPA/ABV, CVA
Chair — Tax Department
Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP
Rochester, New York

Faster, More Accurate Research

Part of the time savings the firm has achieved is a result of CCH® IntelliConnect® and the staff's ability to access research data from within CCH Access Tax, CCH Access Document and CCH® ProSystem fx® Engagement.

“Many times we'll be working on an issue, and we'll say, I want to look that up, or I want to get some precedence, or I want to check whether I'm looking for a revenue ruling or case law or specific treasury regulation or the history on that. Utilizing a product like CCH IntelliConnect from within our tax software gives us the ability to just do that in a real-time basis, right in the moment.”

CCH IntelliConnect also provides many other valuable features, including a Quick Answers listing to over 2,000 common questions. It organizes content using CCH® SmartCharts and “relate” features so users can easily pull up additional, relevant content. Adding to the allure, firm staff can also access CCH IntelliConnect using CCH Mobile™ through a smartphone or tablet.

CCH IntelliConnect provides such quick answers that Schnell says it's difficult to even begin to try to quantify how much time it saves the firm.

“It's a huge benefit in terms of the amount of time and energy and resources required to do research. How could you do it more efficiently or effectively or accurately than being able to extract that information from CCH IntelliConnect and document it within, say, your CCH ProSystem fx Engagement tax workpapers and harness it in those workpapers?”

“If you're someone who does a lot of research, whether you work on complicated returns, or you have unique scenarios, or you like to document decisions you're making and why, being able to do that from within a return at the moment you're facing that situation is, to me, priceless. In the old days, you would have to go down to the tax library.”

Schnell points out another benefit of the integrated research solution: Because it's so simple to use, training staff as to how to conduct and properly document research is easier than ever.

Integrated Audit Approach

Several years ago, the firm adopted CCH ProSystem fx Engagement for all of its financial statement production. In addition, the firm uses CCH® ProSystem fx® Knowledge Coach for its audit software and CCH® Accounting Research Manager® as its audit research software.

This combination of solutions makes up Wolters Kluwer's Integrated Audit Approach, which starts with the Knowledge-Based Audit (KBA) Methodology as its foundation. The KBA Methodology relies on auditor judgment to drive the audit process, improving audit quality and minimizing over-auditing, as opposed to relying on past practices that used a checklist mentality and added unnecessary steps.

“Wolters Kluwer's Integrated Audit Approach provides a really nice workflow. It helps to keep the staff heavily involved and participating in all levels of the engagement [as opposed to following a checklist].”



A Smart Move

The firm is pleased with the move to Wolters Kluwer and can't imagine not having the Integrated Audit Approach and the integrated, streamlined, cloud-based tax preparation and compliance process of CCH Access.

“You don't hear about anybody that regrets making the change. That's really the proof in the pudding. You don't hear about people wanting to go back or unwind the changes of the evolution. That should mean a lot to anybody getting ready for a change.”

A Successful Implementation

Mengel Metzger Barr & Co. LLP advises firms migrating to new software to have a champions team that includes management and paraprofessionals.

“Have a champions team within your firm that includes a partner or somebody with a large sphere of influence, possibly in a management committee or a managing partner. And also include paraprofessionals. That cross-section of your firm is what's going to be the sounding board or the practical side of the solution when you implement the different stages of the migration.”

Contact information:

Wolters Kluwer
2700 Lake Cook Road
Riverwoods, IL 60015
United States
800-739-9998

Please visit CCHGroup.com/DigitalTaxWorkflow
for more information on our Digital Tax Workflow.

Please visit CCHGroup.com/QualityAudit for more
information on our Integrated Audit Approach.

