



New accountancy practice embeds 'best in breed' software to achieve digital vision

A strategy to become a completely digital practice – and harnessing the latest and best software on the market to make this happen – has led a new Essex-based accountancy practice to use Inform Direct for all its company secretarial services.

Gains Accountants, set up by Phool Ashraf, is based in Barking and currently has a team of four, with plans to grow rapidly. The practice offers a broad range of services including corporate and personal taxation, VAT and filing statutory business accounts, business forecasting and advice, as well as company secretarial, bookkeeping, payroll and cloud accounting services.

New practice, new vision

Phool says: "When I set up Gains Accountants with my partner Tariq after a number of years working in practice and industry, I wanted to differentiate ourselves from our competitors. I strongly believed the way to do this was by becoming a completely digital practice, providing the best possible service to clients and maximising our productivity through automation.

"This meant embedding best of breed software packages into our operation right at the very start, which will add even more value as our business expands. It enables us to gain insight into our clients' businesses, offer the best service to our clients from the outset, and avoid the cost, effort and disruption of migration further down the line.

Efficiency improvements

"I had used Inform Direct in a previous role so I knew about the benefits it could deliver as well as its intuitive, user-friendly approach. Since we integrated it into our workflow, we have seen significant improvements – between 7-10% greater efficiency within our team.

"An example of this is the confirmation statement. We can send a draft to the client for approval, which automatically includes changes made since the last confirmation statement. Because

the client has clarity of what is being submitted, what might have taken two or three emails before is now streamlined.

"Across Inform Direct, there are loads of efficiency savings like these. It already makes a big difference to us, meaning we can spend more time adding value to clients and winning new business. Having made the right decision up front, I can focus on growth, confident that we'll continue to reap the benefits of great software when we have hundreds or thousands of clients."

Empowering a growing team

Staff development is high on the agenda and Phool is keen to ally the career goals of her team with those of the practice. One of the ways she is achieving this is broadening the skillset of her team, including training them to use Inform Direct.

"It's extremely easy to train others as the software is so usable and logical," she says. "New members of staff have picked Inform Direct up very quickly, and actually enjoy using it. I really appreciate all the software guides and knowledgeable technical articles and also the responsiveness of the team if you need advice."

In addition to Inform Direct, other packages in the suite used by Gains Accountants include Xero, Receipt Bank, AccountancyManager and Taxfiler – which together deliver the functionality required by the practice which would not be possible with one integrated solution.

Phool is committed to her vision of becoming a completely digital practice and supporting SMEs. "It's very exciting to see how our strategy of using 'best in breed' is working and the efficiency improvements in our workflow. Inform Direct is playing a central role in this and helping us to achieve our goal," she concludes.