

Client Accounting: Many problems, one solution



Take back command of client accounting with client collaboration

By Dr. Chandra Bhansali and Sharada Bhansali

It's possible that you're completely happy with the current state of client accounting.

But if you're like most accountants, you feel some pain when performing accounting engagements. What is that most frustrating problem you'd rather not deal with?

Is it the errors clients make in their bookkeeping systems, the different programs clients use, cumbersome file transfers, or lack of control?

These are some of the major problems accountants acknowledge.

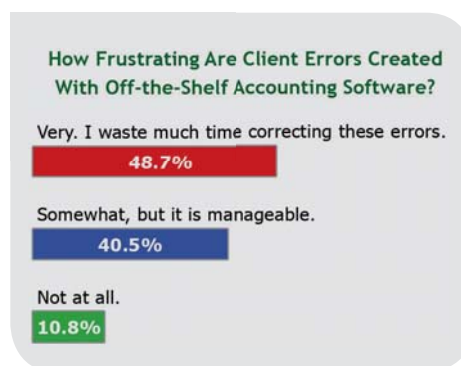
According to extensive polling conducted by AccountantsWorld, about half the accountants find client errors highly annoying and believe they cause significant loss of time. Forty percent find these errors somewhat frustrating but manageable. And a small minority believes they're no problem.

The cause: the disjoint

What are the causes of these problems?

AccountantsWorld did a thorough analysis of the problems accountants encounter in client accounting and concluded these problems have one root cause—the *disjoint between accountants and their clients*.

When you perform write-up for your clients, you enter the transactions, perform trial balance work, and produce the fi-



AccountantsWorld poll reveals client errors are a major cause of frustration.

nancial statements. There is virtually no room for error in this scenario, because you do it all.

But the situation changes when your clients get involved. Typically, the tasks of client accounting are split between you and your clients. Clients enter the transactions; then you take the data they provide and complete your professional work. But unfortunately you have no control over the work your clients produce. Often clients who have no accounting knowledge wander into uncharted territory, making mistakes. You must first correct these client errors before you can proceed with your own work.

While you and your clients are performing different parts of the same project, there's a lack of coordination and supervision. That's the primary cause of most problems accountants face in client

accounting today. It's ironic that the masters of accounting have been put into such a challenging position.

The solution: collaboration

The solution is simple. Create an environment that lets you and your clients work together using one unified system, but with you in command.

But how is that possible? The answer lies in the 3rd C—the collaborative power of the Internet. By using this concept, AccountantsWorld has created a new breed of accounting software that changes the premise of client accounting.

Whereas the current environment forces you and your clients to use separate accounting systems on separate PCs, the web-based **Accounting Relief** provides a complete accounting solution in one unified system—which, along with all your client data, resides on AccountantsWorld secure servers. Accounting Relief includes a write-up, trial balance, and financial reporting system for your firm, as well as a bookkeeping/transaction entry system for your clients. Both you and your clients log into the system using a secure Internet connection, but you access different functions. First, the client performs the bookkeeping part; then, using the same data, you perform the trial balance work and produce finished financials.

Accountant-centric accounting

To restore full control over client accounting to accountants, AccountantsWorld has also incorporated two special features into Accounting Relief:

- Accounting Relief is sold exclusively to accountants, who decide how they wish to use it.
- Accounting Relief is fully customizable for each client, so you can limit client access only to the functions clients are capable of performing.

For example, Al the plumber is comfortable writing checks and entering deposit slips. Therefore you limit his access so that when he logs in, all he sees are the screens for writing checks and entering deposit slips. On the other hand, Jim employs a good bookkeeper to whom you provide access to the entire bookkeeping module, including setting up the chart of accounts and entering receivables and payables. He is only prevented from performing the functions that are part of your engagements—making adjusting entries and preparing financial statements.



With Accounting Relief, you can limit client access to the functions they can use.

In essence, you may create as many versions of Accounting Relief as you have clients, and you still use the same core system for write-up, trial balance, and financial statement preparation!

Your ability to work collaboratively with your clients and take a supervisory role changes the entire premise of client accounting. We call this making accounting **accountant-centric**. Like most users of Accounting Relief, you'll find this accountant-centric approach greatly reduces or even eliminates many of the problems you face in client accounting today.

Accountants share their experiences

"Most bookkeeping programs are excellent—if the client knows what they're

doing," says Gary Nelson, an E.A. in Tulsa, Oklahoma. "But most of the time they don't, and that creates a mess. With Accounting Relief I can block clients from accessing the functions I believe they shouldn't perform, and now errors have been reduced tremendously for the clients who use Accounting Relief," he adds.

"My clients like using Accounting Relief because I have made the program easier to use by customizing the program to their needs. They like the fact that we both can tap into the same program and I can easily help them. It's an excellent concept."

For Hector Garcia, a CPA in San Antonio, Texas, correcting client errors and working with different versions of his clients'



Hector Garcia, CPA, and wife Maria are glad that Accounting Relief gives them more control.

programs were a nightmare. "Because of these problems, we could not spend as much time on advisement as we wanted to. Another problem was that previously we could not assist our clients with cash flow management as effectively, because the data was old by the time we got it. Accounting Relief has virtually eliminated these problems. With real-time access to client data, we can help our clients manage their cash flow more effectively, which is a key benefit of our service."

Hector's wife Maria, who manages the client accounting, adds: "We love the fact that Accounting Relief is geared for CPAs and accountants. We have more control and it helps us facilitate and supervise client accounting."

And Gottlieb Bright, an accountant in Beltsville, Maryland, is deriving another major benefit from Accounting Relief. "We moved a number of our write-up clients to Accounting Relief, and taught them how to enter cash receipts and disbursements. Now they do transaction entries themselves, saving us all the time

that we used to spend entering the transactions previously."

Another important collaboration

Client-accountant collaboration—putting you back in the driver's seat, made possible by the Internet—is forever changing the way you perform client accounting. But there is one other collaboration—the partnership between accountants and AccountantsWorld—that is playing an equal role. As your trusted partners, we have done everything possible to make upgrading to Accounting Relief easy, highly cost-effective, and risk-free. Please visit www.AccountantsWorld.com/accounting for details.

And let us know if we've helped you regain control over client accounting and solve the problems you currently face in client accounting.

Chandra and Sharada Bhansali are Co-Founders of AccountantsWorld.

10 ways to profit from Accounting Relief

- Since you limit client access to only the functions they can perform, client errors are greatly reduced.
- Clients feel comfortable with a system configured to match their needs and abilities.
- The web-based system lets you, your staff, and your clients work from any convenient location at any convenient time.
- Cumbersome file transfers and duplication of data entry are completely eliminated.
- With real-time access to client data, you can help clients manage their cash flow more effectively.
- You no longer need to work with different accounting programs or different versions of the same program your clients use.
- The risk of data loss due to virus attacks or hard disk crashes is eliminated.
- There is no software to install, no updates and patches to apply.
- You don't chase after your clients to get accounting data in a timely manner.
- Clients have real-time access to their financials.