Your practice data. A goldmine for your business

Selling more to your existing customers is one of the easiest ways to increase your revenues. Can you mine the data acquired in the course of tax, accounts and company administration compliance work to reveal a wealth of opportunities?
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 &quot;I never knew you did that.&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Uncovering opportunities by filtering your data</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Automate communications to save time and energy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Preparing for a client review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Understanding and exploring your own business</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 Build your practice with IRIS Accountancy Suite</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 The complete IRIS Accountancy Suite</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Selling more to your existing customers is one of the easiest ways to increase your revenues. Can you mine the data acquired in the course of tax, accounts and company administration compliance work to reveal a wealth of opportunities? In today’s uncertain economic climate, wise practices are taking nothing for granted. Many are actively seeking to attract new clients, often embarking on marketing campaigns for the first time.

Adopting a two-pronged approach creates the optimum balance: while you need to target new clients to build your practice and combat ‘churn’ as clients move on or retire, selling additional services to existing clients is generally more cost-effective. Indeed, some business gurus reckon that acquiring a new client costs between six and seven times more than retaining an existing client.

Selling more to your existing customers is, therefore, one of the best and easiest ways to increase your revenues and profitability. After all, much of the heavy lifting has been already been done. You don’t need to establish your credentials or the quality of your services. They’re already convinced!

‘Acquiring a new client costs between six and seven times more than retaining an existing client.’
1.0
“I never knew you did that.”

Don’t assume that your customers know your business as well as you do. Many will be focused on a single issue when they first approach your practice. They may be unaware of all the other ways in which you might be able to help them.

You don’t have to do the hard sell. When presented in the right way, information about other useful products or services shows clients that you understand their needs and can appropriately fulfil them. They will see this as good client care, rather than an intrusive sales pitch. Cross-sell and up-sell

It’s all about relevance. Looking at the services you already provide to a client helps you to offer other services that might be equally helpful. You can cross-sell, promoting services that complement the ones clients are already receiving, or up-sell to move them to a more comprehensive level of service, such as offering them wealth management consultancy and/or business advisory services.

The data you acquire in the course of tax, accounts and company administration compliance work can uncover a wealth of opportunities. Ideally, your accountancy software will unify this information and make it easy to mine, so there is no need to waste time searching other systems or delving into paper files.

Software is readily available that will also let you explore different scenarios with your client, highlighting areas worthy of investigation that can then be analysed more fully as a chargeable service.

“We don’t just look at clients’ books; we look at their business, with the aim of helping them to maximise their retained profit. One of the key benefits of using IRIS Accountancy Suite is that all the information related to the client is available at a glance. We can gain an overall view of a client company and identify new opportunities.

We might be doing their business tax and accounts, but not company secretarial and personal tax, for example. Based on this understanding, we can target clients appropriately, selling in the services that would add value to their business and encouraging them to outsource to us, so that they can concentrate on running their business.”

Smith Cooper LLP
Uncovering opportunities by filtering your data

Of course, the breadth of complementary services you can offer will depend on your own specialisms, but here are some of the ways that the data you collect in the day-to-day course of your business can be mined to open up new opportunities...

Helping clients with their ‘life plan’
If you’re looking at who might need pension advice, you will want to filter your data by criteria such as ‘pension contributions’ and ‘date of birth’. Can you help clients to optimise their tax by reviewing their pension contributions to ensure they make full use of the age-related allowances open to them?

Making clients’ money work harder for them
You might wish to target to explore tax-saving scenarios for higher interest rate tax payers. Are they taking advantage of all the reliefs available to them? The weeks after the self assessment deadline are a good time to identify this information. Do they have high levels of interest on their bank accounts? Do large amounts go out to HMRC in January and July? Could you suggest a better home for their money?

David Scott & Co, a Chartered Accountancy practice based in County Durham and a long-time user of IRIS Accountancy Suite software, has recouped around £250,000 in tax credits for clients in the past eighteen months alone.

Adding business value
Where you prepare the annual accounts, you could add a helpful service with little extra effort by carrying out a brief analysis of their data. Attach a profit/sales growth report for recent years, based on their data in comparison with typical figures for their industry. Could this be the start of a discussion about the business development services you offer?

Company secretarial
Do you have business clients needing a company secretarial service? Do they find performing these routine duties an onerous distraction?

Your accountancy software could enable you to easily provide all the relevant information to Companies House on their behalf. Integration with your client database would mean that forms are automatically populated. As a result, taking on the role of company secretary need not add significantly to your own workload.

Payroll
Do you produce some clients’ accounts but not their payroll? Checking your database for the size of their workforce will have a bearing on whether it’s appropriate to offer them a payroll service.

In summary, use your data to look at the services you offer, map them against your clients, and identify the gaps. Can your software support you in carrying out searches like these and in bulk so that you uncover multiple opportunities in one go?

“We go behind the numbers, which often aren’t meaningful to a non-specialist anyway, to interpret what the figures are saying about the business. We help our clients to maximise their advantage by analysing what they are doing well and could replicate. With a true picture of their business as it is today, not two years ago, they can make the right decisions, sooner rather than later.”
Woods Squared Ltd
With new opportunities identified, will you run a mini marketing campaign with a simple email/letter and follow-up call, or go for a fully fledged campaign comprising a series of communications over a period of time?

Whichever aligns best with your practice style, your accountancy software should be able to reduce the time and effort involved in getting your message across.

**Can you easily...**
- Pull up standard letter templates within your accountancy software?
- Edit them using the familiar Microsoft Word tool, adding images and graphics?
- Personalise them with contact details and relevant client information from your database?

This functionality will minimise the time spent on promoting your services. Again, your software should assist your marketing efforts here by logging and tracking all communications, both by email and by letter, and helping to monitor the success of your campaigns.

You'll want to log whether a follow-up call has been made and whether a meeting has been scheduled, where appropriate.

Having all this information in a single centralised database keeps everyone in the practice on the same page and ensures that no client is either overlooked or contacted too often.

Over time, you'll acquire knowledge of what works best for your practice and client base. But be aware that market conditions are constantly changing and a campaign that is effective today may not bring the same results next year.

**Respecting clients’ communications preferences**
Log clients’ communications preferences, too - do they prefer a letter, an email or a call? It may be that they're happy to receive a statement or news updates in email format but would prefer to receive invoices by post. Are you using their preferred salutation - an informal 'Bob' or the more formal 'Mr Brown'? Complying with their preferences shows respect and helps to build the relationship.

Can you quickly bring up all your clients on screen and identify where there are gaps in your database for routine but important data like this? In the interest of good relations, note too whether clients have opted out of being contacted about new services.
Preparing for a client review

Where you identify an opportunity to offer several additional services or the potential to move beyond compliance services, into business development for example, you’ll no doubt want to schedule a formal meeting. This is also an opportunity to review the ‘logistics’ of the relationship and discuss any issues.

Open up the conversation

A productive meeting will require you and your team to have a good understanding of the client’s relationship with your practice.

This is easier if you have in one place all the data relating to:

- **The fee balance, the last bill value and the work in progress balance.** What is their paying capacity - are they good or poor payers? Is a pattern of late payment forming and, if so, can you suggest an alternative arrangement, such as direct debit? If they grumble about your charge rates, can you highlight ways that they could help you to keep the bill down, for example by sending back requested information promptly?

- **What jobs went well for them and what not so well?** Was an issue down to your staff and, if so, is extra training needed, or did the problem lie with the client? Perhaps they were late in returning their books. If so, how can you help them to get back to you more quickly - would an email prompting them beforehand, followed by escalating reminders, do the trick? Once again, this need not be onerous for your staff. You should be able to set up and automate communications like these on your accountancy software, without diverting clerical resources.

- **The client history - who has done work for them and when?** - and jobs currently under way. Your analysis of your data will have highlighted where you could invite the client to use your practice for additional or complementary services.

By the way, don’t forget that the most powerful marketing tool for any accountancy practice is an impartial testimonial or referral from a satisfied client. If you find your clients are happy with the service you provide, encourage them to introduce new clients to you from their network as this can be an effective way to promote your business.

“The software helps us to analyse our business: for example, are we providing a service for some clients that we could offer to others? In this way, we can identify new opportunities and explore them when we next have a conversation with the client, demonstrating the kind of outcomes they could also expect to achieve. Our aim is to become clients’ virtual finance director and trusted business advisor combined.”

Woods Squared Ltd
5.0
Understanding and exploring your own business

As well as uncovering opportunities within your client base, your software should also support you in analysing your own business. In the day-to-day rush to meet deadlines and respond to clients, this is an important strategic activity yet can be easily overlooked.

It doesn’t have to be a laborious process. Your software should be able to give you rapid insight into your most - and least - profitable activities, identify service gaps and spot opportunities to make improvements in workflow.

The data you hold should help you to answer questions such as:

- What are our costs? What are the margins on our client work?
- Who are our most/least profitable clients? (There might be some surprises!)
- What are our current workload and utilisation - where do we have spare capacity?
- How smoothly does work flow through the practice: which clients are slow in turning around their books?
- In which sector(s) are we strongest? Does this leave us exposed, if a particular sector experiences a downturn? You should be able to sort by the SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) code and export the data to Microsoft Excel to identify trends.
- Which of our teams is most profitable? What are they doing well - is it their efficient use of practice software or an inspirational manager, for example - and how can we spread best practice?
- Do we have consistent data on our clients - where are the gaps?
- Once again, you should be able to do all this from a single database, without having to dip into other databases or files.
6.0
Build your practice with IRIS Accountancy Suite

The practices quoted in this paper chose IRIS Accountancy Suite to help them manage their practice and forge close, productive relationships with their clients.

All products and modules within the suite draw on the data entered into a single, central database, so practices can capitalise on improved efficiency with minimal effort, as their client base grow. With a Starter Pack of six modules or a ‘Lite’ option of just three core modules, there is an IRIS Accountancy Suite for every practice.

- **Starter Pack Lite** is perfect for the smaller practice in comprising IRIS Accounts Production, IRIS Business Tax and IRIS Personal Tax (incorporating P11D).
- **Starter Pack** supports your growing practice, with: IRIS Accounts Production, IRIS Business Tax, IRIS Personal Tax incorporating P11D, IRIS Fixed Asset Register, IRIS AutoMail and IRIS Auditor.
- **IRIS Modular** for larger practices and those looking for ultimate flexibility, deploying the individual modules of IRIS Accountancy Suite can be the most effective solution.

**IRIS Practice Management - analyse and manage your client base and track all activity**

IRIS Practice Management is an optional module that makes it easy to mine your data and carry out the proactive marketing outlined in this whitepaper. It acts as the centralised hub for storing and sharing all your client data, with workflow, tracking of all communications with clients, and powerful data mining functionality.

You’ll gain a single, unified view of your client base, offer a broader range of services to your clients and free staff time for higher value work through extensive automation.

The full IRIS Accountancy Suite comprises of a range of integrated products and modules that can be combined to build the software system to suit your needs or added onto your Starter Pack over time.

“The integration of IRIS is phenomenal. It means you only ever have to make a data entry once for every module to have the latest client information. Not only does this save time, it cuts down on errors.”

David Jenkins, David M. Jenkins & Co
Because all IRIS Accountancy Suite modules and IRIS OpenApps work together and share the same data, there is a progressive benefit the more modules you use.

However, with their best-of-breed functionality, starting with just one module, application or service can help transform your business.

Our integrated desktop software and connected IRIS OpenApps cloud solutions uniquely provide accountants with a choice of how to consume our applications.

**Desktop solutions**
- Tax
  - IRIS Business Tax
  - IRIS Non-Resident
  - IRIS Personal Tax (inc. P11D)
  - IRIS Trust Tax
  - IRIS Fixed Asset Register
  - IRIS Dividend Service
- Accounts production & audit
  - IRIS Accounts Production
  - IRIS Charity Formats
  - IRIS Auditor
- Company administration
  - IRIS Company Formations
  - IRIS Company Secretarial
- Practice management
  - IRIS Practice Management
  - IRIS Practice Dashboards
  - IRIS Practice Reporting
  - IRIS Staff Planning
  - IRIS Time & Fees
  - IRIS AutoMail
  - IRIS Docs
- Payroll
  - IRIS Payroll for Accountants
- Services
  - IRIS OpenResourcing
  - IRIS Managed RTI Payroll

**Cloud solutions**
- IRIS OpenTax - complete tax returns with ease and speed ideal for smaller practices
- IRIS OpenBooks - online bookkeeping solution providing real-time collaboration with clients
- IRIS OpenAudit - cloud-based audit solution
- IRIS OpenSpace - the easy and secure way to share and approve accountancy documents and files with your clients
- IRIS OpenWebsite - flexible, affordable website creation and maintenance services
- IRIS OpeniXBRL - iXBRL tagging for Microsoft Word and Excel accounts
- IRIS OpenPayslips - access and download payslips via an online portal or mobile application
- IRIS OpenHosting - IRIS manage your IT, so you don’t have to
IRIS Software Group is the leading provider of business critical software and services to accountants and payroll professionals in the UK.

More than 15,000 accountants and 30,000 small and medium sized companies rely on IRIS every day to run their business.

IRIS Accountancy Solutions offers customers the greatest choice of specialist accountancy software and services managed under three leading brands - IRIS, PTP and Drummohr. With 98% customer retention, 2.5 million tax returns successfully filed with HMRC and 60% of the top 50 practices as customers, IRIS is the most trusted accountancy software provider in the UK today.

IRIS SME Solutions provides payroll technology to over 30,000 SMEs and payroll bureaus. As a leading provider of payroll software, IRIS serves a number of sectors, including 70% of UK GP practices and a growing number of UK retailers. More than 10% of the UK workforce are paid via IRIS solutions.

For further information on anything you've read in this whitepaper please contact: practicesales@iris.co.uk

To find out more call 0844 815 5555 or visit www.iris.co.uk