



Collaborating While Doing Good: How Abacus Cloud Solutions Are Helping One Virtual Accounting Firm Better Serve Colorado Nonprofits

[The Accounting Department for Nonprofits \(ADNP\)](#), based out of Denver, Colorado, is a virtual not-for-profit accounting firm dedicated solely to serving nonprofit organizations and addressing their unique accounting needs. ADNP provides accounting and bookkeeping services to over 28,000 large nonprofit organizations that help six million people, mostly in the state of Colorado.

Greg Dickson, shareholder at ADNP, knows firsthand what it takes to succeed as a virtual business, as ADNP has been virtual since its inception. For ADNP, cloud-based solutions are critical. After making the switch to Abacus Private Cloud and OfficeTools, the firm has streamlined workflows and has been better able to collaborate with the nonprofits it serves.

Cloud solutions from AbacusNext have allowed these virtual accountants to continue providing great service while doing good for their community, even in the worst of times.

The Challenge

ADNP has been using [OfficeTools](#), AbacusNext's accounting practice management software, in [Abacus Private Cloud](#) for a couple years. Prior to that, ADNP had been facing challenges on both the cloud and practice management fronts.

ADNP has always been a virtual firm, eschewing physical offices long before everyone else was forced to work from home, which made finding the right cloud provider and cloud-based solutions critical to its operations. Initially, the firm relied on a Citrix-based desktop system, which served staff well for a number of years but became stagnant over time, failing to offer new improvements while the firm was looking to advance.

At that time, ADNP considered a few different cloud-based solutions and unfortunately chose one that turned out to be a mistake. The product just was not a fit for a virtual firm that didn't have offices. Among other things, ADNP lost its ability to use the Microsoft Exchange server and other products it had come to rely on for serving clients.

At a Glance

About ADNP

Accounting Department for Nonprofits

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"Office Tools could function as the central hub for everything we do."

Greg Dickson
Shareholder

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Then someone suggested the firm make the switch to Abacus Private Cloud, and the rest is history.

The Solution

Abacus Private Cloud not only gave ADNP the cloud infrastructure the firm needed; it also gave ADNP the opportunity to implement OfficeTools. ADNP signed on with Abacus and within a month was completely up and running.

For Dickson, the biggest benefit of making the switch to Abacus Private Cloud has been the tech support resources Abacus offers. While ADNP had always thought it had great customer support from Citrix, the support from Abacus was even better – “far superior” in Dickson’s eyes.

Is ADNP happier with this decision than its last one? “Everybody is happy with the system,” Dickson says. “Looking forward, we have no plans to make any changes for at least the foreseeable future. We’ll stick with Abacus Private Cloud.”

New and Improved Collaboration and Workflows

As with any new technology implementation, ADNP is still learning how to get the most out of the new solutions. The firm is taking a slow and steady approach, implementing the system a piece at a time until it achieves full OfficeTools implementation.

ADNP has always been in the cloud, so efficiency is nothing new for the firm. What Abacus Private Cloud and OfficeTools have done, however, is increase the ability to quickly add collaborative users to its systems. With over 28,000 nonprofit clients, most of which are large organizations, serving approximately six million people, that’s a lot of users to add.

ADNP encourages all new clients to sign up as collaborative users if they are on QuickBooks. The firm schedules a call with all clients to get them connected the first time, and it typically takes at most three or four days to get one client up and running. With its old system, it took two to three weeks to add a user. Since the firm has been adding three or four new collaborative users each month since it was founded, the speed of the new system has been a game-changer.

Currently, ADNP has four servers through APC, with one devoted to internal staff and two for collaborative users. The firm is currently contemplating adding another server since APC makes it so easy to add users as the firm continues to grow.

As for OfficeTools, Dickson has a couple favorite features. The first is the fact that the system attaches relevant correspondence to each client, making it easy to instantly find what you are looking for. When you have 28,000 clients, systems that make finding correspondence fast and easy are key.

His other favorite feature – and one that was a big selling point when ADNP was considering new systems and solutions – is the ability to navigate directly within the system’s client screen to the client folders you want to view.

“OfficeTools could function as the central hub for everything we do,” Dickson says. “Rather than having to navigate through the server and trying to find a client’s folder and drilling down, it’s nice to have the ability to just keep OfficeTools open, click on the client you want and go where you need to be. This really helps with efficiency. Everything is easily available.”

“We want to consolidate our workflow into one single place, and Office Tools allows us to do that”

Looking Ahead

If the past is any indication, ADNP will continue to grow and take on more clients. Its biggest goal, at least technology-wise, is to consolidate into a single workflow at the firm.

Right now, everyone has a different way of operating, using things like checklists to stay organized. Because Dickson would like to see all those different personal systems give way to everyone using OfficeTools, the firm plans to invest time in communicating with and educating its staff on how to use OfficeTools in order to get everyone on the same page and serve ADNP’s clients in the best way possible.

“We want to consolidate our workflow into one single place,” Dickson explains, “and OfficeTools allows us to do that.”

