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Our firm has achieved
75% revenue growth over the
past 5 years – **without adding clients.**

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Accounting Power® case study:
Steven Brewer, CPA

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Steven Brewer, CPA is the President of [Steven Brewer and Company, CPAs](#), located in Salem, IN. He talked to AccountantsWorld about how he's grown his accounting practice without needing to increase his number of clients – and how those improvements have eased his tax season crunch.

My background and my firm

I started in the accounting profession many years ago with a small, local CPA firm. I learned a great deal by doing extensive auditing and tax work, but of course in a small firm, you do a bit of everything.

In 1996, I decided to start my own firm in the basement of my house. I kept growing and moving into larger locations, and eventually bought out the only other CPA firm in my small town.

Our firm has made a lot of transitions since then. We started out, like a lot of firms, with a lot of tax work, and then finding that the rest of the year we were struggling to get by. Well, about 10 years ago, I saw the shifts that were taking place in tax, and decided that we needed to make some changes within the firm to survive – namely, to stop relying so heavily on tax returns to be the main source of my income, and to expand my reach geographically. With the last recession in 2008, our area took a very hard hit and has never fully bounced back.

Now, our main emphasis is CFO/Client Accounting Services and bookkeeping. We have six employees now, with three of those being bookkeepers just handling bookkeeping and payroll. And we now have clients in 20 states from Massachusetts to California.

About AccountantsWorld

AccountantsWorld is the leading provider of cloud-based solutions for accountants. We've made it easier than ever for accountants to offer highly profitable payroll processing services, write-up, Client Accounting Services, and virtual CFO services.

And unlike other solution providers, AccountantsWorld is 100% committed to making accountants more successful. We never sell our products or services directly to your clients.

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My ideal client

The first thing that we look for in a new client is a willingness to be taught. They're eager to learn how to be more financially viable and grow. We're not interested in a client that says, "I want to come in and talk to you once a year." We want a client that wants us to truly partner with them throughout the year and help them grow. They want to know that they have the right data, but beyond that, they want to be able to act on that information proactively and not reactively.

Most of our clients are in service-based industries, and within that we have gotten into a niche market of home inspection companies. About five years ago, we gained our first client in that industry, who then introduced us to many more similar firms. We're now working with about 40 home inspection companies throughout the US.

Before we worked with AccountantsWorld and Accounting Power...

Before working with AccountantsWorld, a lot of our work was desktop write-up processing. We were always waiting for clients to bring in their monthly work – and if they brought it in late, we might be days or weeks behind. Payrolls were also done using a desktop program.

It was a very manual situation that **we had very little control over**, because again **you're waiting for the client**. (And, of course, they still want it done yesterday!)

So we decided to start looking at how to become more efficient and proactive – and have more control over our processes.

Learning about AccountantsWorld

We first learned about AccountantsWorld's payroll processing solution, [Payroll Relief](#). We'd been using a national processing engine, but within a year, we started losing control. We had to send all the information to their out-of-town headquarters, and had to rely on them to update all documents and data and hopefully process them quickly so we could print checks at our office.

I became very frustrated with this lack of control, and started looking for a payroll service where WE could do each process in-house. I saw a positive review for Payroll Relief, saw the reasonable first-year price, and got started. I was very happy with our experience. I now had the ability to respond to my client's needs and wishes. So we were able to actually start offering a higher level of service than what we did with our old national processor.



Then I started listening to some thought leaders in the industry and they were saying that, for full efficiency, you need integrated products. I was still running desktop programs from Peachtree and Intuit® for GL and financial statements. When we heard about [Accounting Power](#), I liked that it was fully web-based (no more server costs), and seemed to have everything we were doing within our

desktop program. It also gave me the chance to be more responsive – I could market this to clients who want to do their own bookkeeping, but still wanted to have us available to help if there's a problem. And I would always have the data I needed to evaluate their business results and provide timely advice.

And finally, it was nice to be able to move away from Intuit! They want our business, but then they want to take our business away and go directly to my clients.

What sets Accounting Power apart

Accounting Power is now our only system for GL processing. First, the integration with Payroll Relief and Cloud Cabinet is a huge time-saver.

Also, compared to QuickBooks, I saw a simplicity and logic to the interface. It made sense, and it was easy for me to find things. But even with that simplicity, we could also offer more advanced things like job costing. And there's enough sophistication for a small business to get a lot of good information out of the system. We give all of our clients a report that lists every payment to every vendor. They're amazed – "I didn't know I was still paying that person that much!"



Offering a higher level of service

When you sit down at a restaurant, you can order a la carte, or you can bundle with combos. Generally, I think people want to have some choices, but limited choices. [vBOSS](#) is our proprietary way of offering the services our small businesses need the most - from managing their books and payroll to taxes and business consulting/coaching.

Accounting Power is critical to us offering this, because a client at this level of service expects advisory meetings and extensive consulting. I wouldn't be able to offer that without comparative financials, drill-downs on expenses, percentages of revenue or assets, and the ability to incorporate all of that information to provide peer-to-peer reports for that client, based on industry and other factors. Accounting Power delivers all of that and more.

Comprehensive functionality

We turn on all the functions of Accounting Power for any new client, whether they're using it or our staff is. So they're pulling in bank statements and credit card statements. They're actually processing using actual bookkeeping functions, not write-up functions. They're following our procedures and they're very open to it.

We really like the bookkeeping module on Accounting Power – we have dozens of clients on it. If a client wants to do their own bookkeeping work, we've made the decision that if you're going to do accounting with us, you have to use Accounting Power. We'll train you and answer any questions you have, but this is the tool we're going to use.

Because of course, most clients want not just the tool, **but the knowledge**, and when we show them **this software will provide us with the power and insights to be able to better serve their needs**, they're almost always on board with that.

To be honest, if a client is adamant about staying with their old tool, it's probably not the right client for us, because they don't value our knowledge and expertise.

Impact on tax season

Like many accountants, I was used to experiencing the full pain of tax season – 80-90 hrs a week regularly. A constant grind. I would have 30-40 returns coming across my desk every day for several weeks. Clients would bring their QuickBooks files on a thumb drive. What version were they bringing? How reliable was the data? Who knows? And I thought, I have to do something different to show them that I can deliver more value. No more surprises on your



tax return (surprises that arose because I didn't know anything on a monthly basis). I want to take over your bookkeeping, or have you continue to do bookkeeping, but on Accounting Power so I have full visibility. And in exchange you get consultations with me throughout the year, with real-time insights and proactive advice. We're going to make tax season almost a non-event. And we're going to save you, the client, 5 hours a week or more.

Now, tax season is dramatically better. I just had one of my best tax seasons ever. We had returns completed for **90% of our small-business clients by March 1**. By the time we rolled into January, my staff only had to process December transactions. The number of corporate extensions has gone way down. Fewer surprises for the client, too. It also means estimated recalculation starting in Q2. That means I'm within **\$1K of zero on almost all returns**.

The results

- ✓ 65% of our revenue now comes from CFO/Client Accounting Services – up from 25% just four years ago!
- ✓ We're processing more transactions per staff member, which means we can be more competitive with our pricing. We just added a payroll client where we were able to save them 40% compared to their previous national provider – with better service.
- ✓ Most importantly, we've achieved 75% revenue growth in the past 5 years. But, our number of clients hasn't really changed at all. The number of tax returns hasn't changed. What has changed dramatically is the makeup of our clients. We're doing fewer individual returns, and far more returns tied to monthly work. That's the main driver behind our revenue growth.
- ✓ Our client retention has also improved. If we lose a client now, it might be because of pricing, but it's never because of service.

Conclusions

I think every accounting firm needs to decide what they want to look like and how they want to work. We want to provide clients with real knowledge and expertise – and I view Accounting Power as the best tool for us to be able to deliver that.

And if I get the client to understand that commitment we have, then they don't seem to bark too much about not using something like QBO, because we've established that trust with them, and they're going to go with what we recommend.

Remember that it's still you as the CPA that your clients value the most. What can I bring to the table for that client? It has to be more than just turning numbers.

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no-obligation live demo.



Thank you for reading our ebook!

About AccountantsWorld

Many accountants don't realize that major corporations have used technology to penetrate deep into your core tax, accounting and payroll services.

At AccountantsWorld, we've used technology for a very different purpose.

For over 15 years, we've been committed to using cloud technology to create new opportunities for practicing accountants like you, and to help you reclaim lost ground so you can better serve your clients and raise your bottom line.

We created the first-ever cloud-based payroll solution, [Payroll Relief](#), to help accountants easily offer highly profitable payroll services to their clients.

Then we created [Accounting Power](#), the first cloud-based professional system to put you, the accountant, back in control of client accounting.

We now offer a fully integrated suite of highly acclaimed solutions for professional [accounting](#), [bookkeeping](#), [payroll](#), [document management](#), client portals and more.

Using our pioneering cloud solutions, you can tailor your services to best meet the individual needs of each of your clients, increase your firm's productivity, better serve your clients, and raise your bottom line.

And unlike other service providers, AccountantsWorld has made an unwavering commitment to accountants. We never compete with you, or sell our products or services directly to your clients.

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