

How did a leading regional accounting firm make the move to a paperless office, reduce costs, and free its staff to focus more time on client service?

Wiss & Company, LLP, now uses ProSystem fx® Document and ProSystem fx® Engagement

Wiss & Company uses many of the workflow solutions that make up The ProSystem fx® Office suite of products. In order to create a paperless work environment, Wiss & Company implemented the usage of both ProSystem fx Document and ProSystem fx Engagement. By using these paperless engagement and document management solutions, this New Jersey-based accounting and consulting firm has been able to break free from the paper trail and focus more exclusively on client issues and business development.

“The CCH suite of products has really changed our perspective on document management. With the ease of implementation and the benefits it provides, no one should hesitate to go paperless.”

– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP



SMARTER SOLUTIONS + UNPRECEDENTED

TAKING THE TEAM APPROACH TO CLIENT SOLUTIONS

Many CPA firms just compile financial statements and prepare tax returns, however Wiss & Company takes a broader perspective. As one of the region's most successful accounting and consulting firms, Wiss provides reliable independent audits and trustworthy financial reporting services — they provide a wide spectrum of business solutions to meet the comprehensive needs of their clients. For more than thirty years, Wiss has stood as a regional leader, combining the personal attention of a small accounting firm with the wide scope of resources and experience typically found in large firms.

The company's client roster ranges from individuals and small businesses to middle-market companies encompassing a wide array of industries, including construction, insurance, manufacturing and distribution, non-profit, professional service firms, real estate, and retail. To help achieve each client's business goals, Wiss creates a customized team whose members have knowledge of accounting, auditing, and taxation appropriate to their business. Led by a Wiss partner, team members also serve as trusted business advisors, providing solutions to meet not only the financial, but also the strategic, operational, and technological needs of their clients.

For team members to stay on the same page and provide the consistently superior level of client service for which they are recognized, Wiss requires an exceptional communication system. Using The ProSystem *fx* Office suite of products, including ProSystem *fx* Document and ProSystem *fx* Engagement, Wiss provides staffers with immediate, simultaneous access to critical comprehensive firm and client data — at the touch of a button.

Wiss & Company, LLP Key Data

- Offices in Livingston and Iselin, New Jersey
- Jeffrey Campo, Managing Partner
- 120 employees
- 30-Year Regional Leader in Accounting and Business Consulting

MOVING AHEAD BY GOING PAPERLESS

“Most firms start with engagement, but our goal has been to manage growth by utilizing a more robust document management system. Thus, we did it a little differently and implemented Document first. Either way, both were much more easily integrated into our firm than I thought possible.”

– **Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP**

After enjoying growth organically and through mergers, the number of paper files moving through Wiss had increased substantially and the firm was faced with increasing its physical space in order to accommodate filing and storage of paper documents. Instead, Wiss decided to take another approach. Rather than expanding the file room and continuing to pay for outside document storage, they made the decision to go paperless.

“It (the implementation) was much better than I envisioned. Our staff really caught onto it and within three days they were already thinking differently about how they could use it. Plus, the training from CCH was just tremendous. The instructor actually tailored each class based on the technology skill level of the staffers who were in attendance and helped them discover quickly where their comfort zone was.”

– **Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP**

Some firms are hesitant about going paperless because they cannot spare any downtime — how long will it really take to get the system up and running? How steep is the learning curve? Wiss did an exceptional job of upfront planning, including the formation of a “power user group, taken from its paperless committee” that would drive the implementation process. They helped others become comfortable with the changes and fostered realization of the overall benefits of a paperless environment. This type of process allowed the implementation phase of ProSystem *fx* Document to go much smoother than originally anticipated — surprising almost everyone.

The implementation of ProSystem *fx* Engagement was a little different. Because the migration to paperless had already begun, Wiss & Company understood that the product rollout for ProSystem *fx* Engagement would be a little easier. Again, they formed an “Engagement Championship Team (ECT),” with team members attending formal training sessions from CCH Tax and Accounting. Once training was complete, Wiss & Company simply made sure that a specified team member was on one of the six projects identified as appropriate for the rollout of ProSystem *fx* Engagement. This approach allowed for a more migratory usage and acceptance of the product — one that did not require each and every member of the firm to go through formal training. The process worked.

INTEGRATION = PEAK PERFORMANCE



“I have clients up and down the east coast, as far down as Atlanta, Georgia. I used to have to send down four or five boxes via FedEx prior to any trip. Now with everything being in electronic format, I simply grab my laptop and I’m ready to go.”
– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP

Both ProSystem *fx* Document and ProSystem *fx* Engagement integrate easily with other products and data points in their current system. This allows each document to retain its functionality with its original program and keep all information current, useful, and in one location.

“We were using our network drive like a document management system and, of course, we had massive amounts of paper files. Our old systems were working but had five or six extra steps that we were able to eliminate with the introduction of these products – now, most of the time, one click and we’re done.”
– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP

All of these features mean Wiss & Company can spend less time transitioning documents back-and-forth between staff members and offices, and spend more time on both enhanced client service and building better client relationships. Also, partners need only carry a laptop computer when traveling to client sites, making heavy files or boxes unnecessary. As a result, Wiss employees spend less time on menial tasks and more time focusing on higher value client offerings.

BETTER TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND BETTER EMPLOYEE RECRUITING

Like most accounting firms and other types of organizations, Wiss & Company relies heavily on the usage of Microsoft® software products – specifically Outlook, Word, and Excel. From the process of selecting The ProSystem *fx* Office suite to the implementation of ProSystem *fx* Engagement, Wiss & Company realized they would have the ability to leverage this existing technology investment because of ProSystem’s tight integration with Microsoft® Office. ProSystem *fx* Engagement’s exclusive use of these applications has allowed them to save engagement related e-mails easily in Outlook and incorporate Word and Excel workpapers and financial statements into electronic binders and automate them with links to client, engagement, and trial balance data.

“We empowered our professional staff to fully understand the Engagement product. We quickly realized that their hands-on involvement enhanced our utilization of the product and created immediate buy-in. With Document we took the time to train the whole firm, including administrative personnel.”
– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP

ENHANCED CLIENT SERVICE

Although Wiss has two separate offices, partners from one office often work with clients from another. Before implementing ProSystem *fx* Document and ProSystem *fx* Engagement, staffers spent time reading information over the phone or faxing documents back and forth. Now, all documents are automatically scanned into the system, routed in paperless binders, and stored in electronic format where Wiss staff can access them electronically – anytime, anywhere.

ProSystem *fx* Engagement also allows staffers to share every document simultaneously and synchronize work from any location with the Central File Room and Synchronization Queue, ensuring total file integrity. It even allows them to e-mail an entire binder to a co-worker with just one click. Unlike competing products, ProSystem *fx* Document does not *require* the housing of files to be off-site, which was an important feature to Wiss & Company. Wiss’ client records and firm data reside securely on their servers, readily accessible. When clients call requesting information, Wiss staffers can provide an electronic copy in minutes instead of leaving their desks to search the file room or paying a delivery service to send paper documents overnight.

Wiss & Company has also noticed how the use of known software products has allowed for better employee recruitment. Wiss conveys to new college grads that they can simply leverage technology they already know and therefore immediately put their education to use without further extensive training.

“It is a tremendous competitive advantage that we can bring to the table. They (new college graduates) are always eager to embrace technology and they already use these products on a day-to-day basis. So, we can offer them the ability to utilize their knowledge and thirst for technology immediately thereby increasing their productivity and value to the firm.”

– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP

REDUCED COSTS AND IMPROVED DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICIES

As Wiss grew their business, they simultaneously increased their document storage costs. They realized that finding a way to reduce this expense would have an immediate and substantial impact on their bottom line. Specifically, in the few months since deploying ProSystem *fx* Document, Wiss has reclaimed about 20 percent of their on-site file room space, which can now be utilized in a more efficient manner. And, with the implementation of ProSystem *fx* Engagement, with its paperless engagement binders, they know the continued reduction of this space is inevitable. Next, they plan to address off-site storage, with an ultimate goal of eliminating document storage expenses from their operations budget.

Wiss has also been able to automate its document retention policies using ProSystem *fx* Document’s automatic retention feature, which enables the firm to comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act by putting a tight control on their files — keeping track of what they have and when they are allowed to dispose of them. ProSystem *fx* Document allows all staff members to easily print a report to see which files are beyond retention.

“We don’t have to have someone from our IT department physically going through drives and files to find and delete old folders, which could take days or weeks. With Document, file retention and elimination has become an automatic process.”

- Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP

THE RESULTS: STREAMLINED PROCESSES AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

Now that Wiss & Company has made the move to a paperless environment, they are discovering new and expanded opportunities at every turn. Team members can work together even more efficiently, sharing critical information and ideas to help their clients achieve success. By alleviating the time spent handling paper documents, Wiss is enabling its staff to focus on long-term client needs, including cross-selling of services, new revenue streams, and business development. In addition, the firm’s technological advancement will allow Wiss to compete with bigger companies for talented new recruits.

In addition to ProSystem *fx* Document and ProSystem *fx* Engagement, Wiss also uses several other CCH products, including ProSystem *fx*® Fixed Assets, ProSystem *fx*® Practice, ProSystem *fx*® Tax, and ProSystem *fx*® Trial Balance. Ultimately, the firm envisions having a single system that facilitates comprehensive access of a single database for tax, time and billing, audits, engagements, and documents — an integrated solution providing seamless connectivity across the board, sharing the CCH Tax and Accounting vision.

“We know that it is only a matter of time before CCH makes sure that we will have the ability to function off one database that links everything from engagement binders to document storage systems to our time and billing system. It is something we know they are working on, and they haven’t disappointed us yet.”

– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP



INTEGRATION = PEAK PERFORMANCE

Wiss & Company, LLP uses ProSystem *fx* Document and ProSystem *fx* Engagement, part of The ProSystem *fx* Office suite of products from CCH.

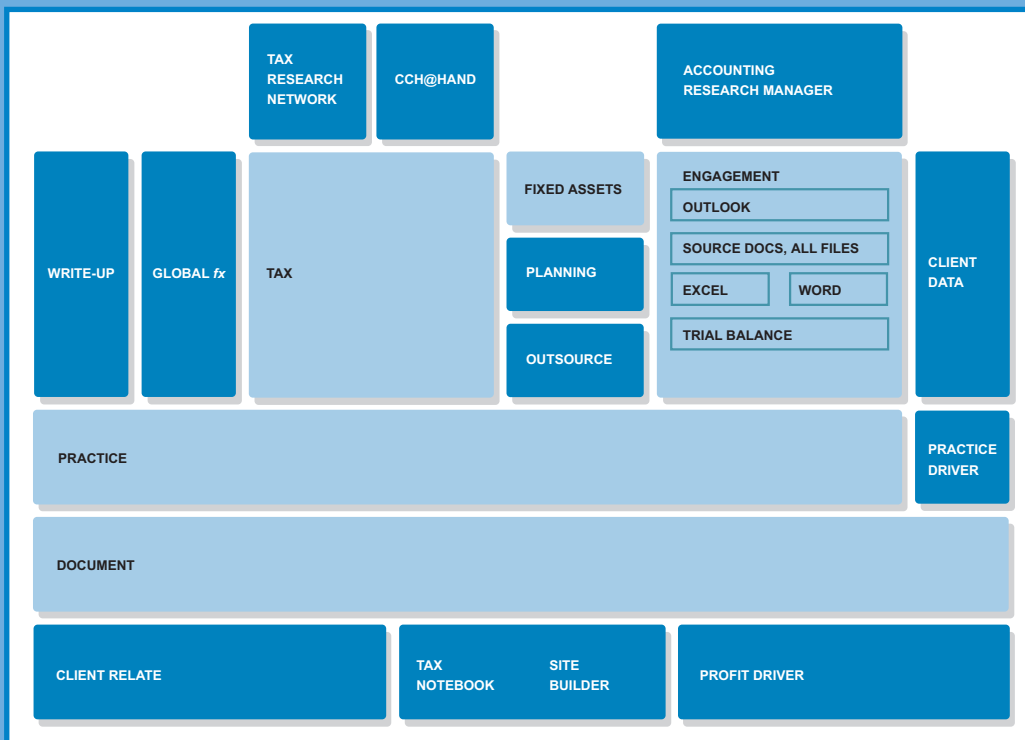
“With CCH you know you’re not just another sale. You’re actually a customer that they really want to make sure is happy with every product. From a paperless committee standpoint, they exceeded all expectations we had.”

– Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP



PROSYSTEM *fx* OFFICE SUITE OF SOFTWARE AND WORKFLOW TOOLS

Each module in The ProSystem *fx* Office suite not only functions beautifully on its own, but also facilitates unprecedented integration, streamlining your firm’s operations and enabling your staff to operate at peak performance during critical business cycles.



Wiss & Company, LLP currently use the following ProSystem *fx*® products:

- ProSystem *fx*® Tax
- ProSystem *fx*® Engagement
- ProSystem *fx*® Practice
- ProSystem *fx*® Fixed Assets
- ProSystem *fx*® Document
- ProSystem *fx*® Trial Balance

“The support and training from CCH has been outstanding. They’re always there to answer questions and guide us through the implementation process. Whether the questions are big or small the level of service is consistently excellent.”

– **Craig Erickson, Wiss & Company, LLP**

When you work with CCH Tax & Accounting, you can count on a variety of exceptional support options, including:

A Team of Experts — professionally trained in all areas of tax and technical support, just a toll-free call away.

Tax.CCHGroup.com — instant online access to product and training information, support, and program updates.

Regional Support Team — ensures your smooth transition to ProSystem^{fx} and assists with any training needs.

Effective Training Options — from in-office sessions to community seminars to Web conferencing.

For more information about The ProSystem^{fx} Office suite of software and workflow tools, call us at 1-800-PFX-9998 or visit us at Tax.CCHGroup.com.



CCH Tax and Accounting
A WoltersKluwer Company