



HOW SORGE CPA
IMPLEMENTED 1040 TAX
WORKFLOW AUTOMATION TO
REDUCE REVIEW TIME AND
STANDARDIZE PROCESSES

Sorge CPA

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Share Their Firm's Story

Interviewed: Ken Sorge, CPA, MST, Practice Development Director & Janet Durow, EA, Tax and Accounting Partner, Sorge CPA



Stats at a Glance

Goals: Improve efficiency and have a cohesive, standardized process across their six offices.

Office locations: Monona, Oshkosh, Delavan, Madison, Milwaukee, Stoughton, Waterton, & Waukesha, WI

Employees: 30 full-time, 30 part-time

Website: www.sorgecpa.com

Technology of choice: Lacerte, 1040SCAN ORGANZE, 1040SCAN PRO, SPbinder

Introduction

In 2019, Sorge CPA prepared tax returns across six different offices without standardized tax workflow automation. The inconsistent processes between offices were creating bottlenecks and impacting review efficiency. To solve this, they adopted 1040SCAN ORGANZE, 1040SCAN PRO, and SPbinder so that they could implement tax workflow best practices. Now, they're improving efficiency and have a cohesive, standardized process across all six offices.

Before Adopting 1040 Tax Workflow Automation...

Originally, Sorge CPA received documents from clients through disconnected channels. Although they encouraged clients to upload documents to their online portal, a large percentage would still mail paper documents to one of the offices or email a badly lit cellphone picture directly to a tax professional.

Once Sorge CPA received the documents, processes for scanning and preparation varied from office to office. Firm

leadership wanted all documents scanned and uploaded to their digital portal for storage. Afterward, admins prepared the workpaper packets separately. Executing this process consistently across six offices proved impractical. Different preparers had their own preferences, which meant reviewers had to spend more time per return to account for variations.

"We were taught differently from different people, so we expected different things," said Janet Durow, Tax and Accounting Partner. "We needed to be consistent with our process so the reviewer doesn't have to do 10 different things from 10 different preparers."

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Tax Workflow Best Practices: Standardization

The firm evaluated SurePrep's 1040SCAN, Intuit's Lacerte Tax Scan and Import, and Drake's GruntWorx before making a decision. They concluded that 1040SCAN's interface was the most user-friendly and effective for managing the organization of tax workpapers.

"I like 1040SCAN's review windows. It gets those things that Intuit Link missed when they import it," Janet said. "We have control over why something might not have been imported correctly."

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Once the documents are scanned, 1040SCAN automatically organizes them into a standardized workpaper index that follows the flow of the tax return. This aligns Sorge with the principles of tax workflow best practices. SPbinder's built-in multi-level sign-offs helped the firm track changes and ensure workpapers went through the correct levels of preparation and review in accordance with their process.

"We have one solid [binder] with everything that happened during the tax season with that one particular client. It's all in one place," Janet noted.

SPbinder also comes equipped with annotations, collaborative notes, calculator tape, and hyperlinked cross referencing across all file types. These bespoke tax workpaper tools give preparers the ability to assemble well-documented binders that are easy to review. By making the reviewer's job easier, SPbinder helps firms save money by reducing time on the most expensive phase of the tax process.

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preparer might have a little more to do now, but the reviewer can review in 10 minutes instead of an hour."

Now, Sorge CPA mandates that all returns are run through 1040SCAN and prepared in SPbinder to enforce standardization. According to Janet, "All returns go through SurePrep; even if it's one W-2, we send it through."

Managing Internal Adoption of Tax Workflow Automation

Resistance to change is normal. It's common that employees prefer comfortable routine to learning something new, even if it will make life easier in the long run. Ken Sorge, CPA MST, Practice Development Director, knew this going in. He preempted some of these challenges by taking a proactive stance. Ken mandated that all offices adopt this new technology. He also emphasized the importance of a standardized tax workflow to the firm's long-term success. Although he knew there would be growing pains in year one, he understood that realization in

future years would generate high returns on the effort invested.

“When you do things non-standard it creates waste and errors,” Ken said.

“Now we only have one way of doing things and that’s that.”

Final Words: Sorge CPA Reduced Review Time

Sustaining standardization across six offices is a challenge, but with the help of 1040SCAN and SPbinder, Sorge CPA implemented a consistent, streamlined process for scanning and preparing documents. This helped them reduce review time and achieve greater overall realization. In the upcoming year, they also plan to adopt TaxCaddy to simplify the gathering of client documents and eliminate paper. “We’ve been able to

reduce our partners’ time while still maintaining our revenue,” Ken explained. “Going forward, we have a really nice and inexpensive workflow.”

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About SurePrep

SurePrep was founded in 2002 and is the leader in 1040 productivity for CPA firms. We deliver seamless integration with your existing tax software to automate and streamline the entire 1040 process for both the taxpayer and CPA. Our solutions are used by over 32,000 tax professionals ranging from Big 4 firms to sole practitioners to reduce administrative costs, automate workpaper preparation, maximize review efficiency, and improve client service.

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