

Mize Houser teams with IBM and RJS Software to improve document management and ramp up service.

Overview

■ **Business Challenge**

Mize Houser wanted to grow its CPA services business but was hampered by technology that was not easily adaptable to new requirements. Mize Houser needed to streamline and automate business processes for its document management system to strengthen its key differentiator in the accounting field—namely its ASP offerings.

■ **Solution**

Mize Houser teamed with IBM Business Partner RJS Software and IBM to quickly extend services to CPA clients and ultimately position them for growth and new revenue streams.

■ **Key Benefits**

The IBM and RJS solution:

- Increased revenue by US\$200,000 in first year
- Reduced setup time per customer from three days to half a day
- Increased revenue 25 percent per existing customer
- Generated 100 percent ROI in first year



To serve document management and CPA functions quickly and efficiently

Mize, Houser & Company, a 50-year-old Kansas accounting firm with 160 employees, was not content to stand pat with its roster of clients and services. “We believe if you’re not growing, you’re dying,” explains Terry J. Kimes, CPA, CITP, Vice President, Mize, Houser & Company. The CPA firm also serves as an application service provider (ASP), hosting accounting systems and managing financials electronically for other CPA firms and for customers in other industries, with an emphasis on quick service restaurant franchises.

“With the IBM System i™ server and the RJS software, customer service has improved, our development time for new clients has been cut from three days to half a day, and we save floor space because we don’t need file cabinets anymore. And from a disaster recovery standpoint, having all of our work papers and tax documents scanned in makes us a lot more secure.”

– Terry J. Kimes, CPA, CITP, Vice President, Mize, Houser & Company

Business Benefits

The IBM and RJS solution enabled Mize Houser to:

- Increase revenue by US\$200,000 in the first year
- Reduce development time per customer from three days to half a day
- Increase revenue 25 percent per existing customer
- Generate 100 percent ROI in the first year
- Increase number of quick-serve restaurant clients by 15 percent, the single highest annual sales increase in Mize Houser's 50-year history

“With WebDocs and IBM System i, we can bring a solution to our quick-serve clients that most other CPA firms can’t.”

– Terry J. Kimes

Mize Houser had been using document management technology that was not easily adaptable to new requirements, and that was creating inefficiencies in getting new customers up and running. A new ASP client required lengthy efforts to integrate the customer's systems with the document management environment and to customize user interfaces. This inefficiency slowed Mize Houser's responsiveness to new interest in its ASP services and limited the amount of business the firm could generate with its offerings. The firm needed a new way to connect customers to its state-of-the-art accounting and document management services.

CPA firms without document management systems find themselves bogged down in paper, and operating inefficiently. Many smaller firms waste countless man-hours filing and tracking down paper files for clients that request historical documents. “Our customers can now come into a secure portal and view their documents online,” explains Kimes. He continues: “Their tax preparers can now bring up last year's work papers, and if a client calls with a question, instead of putting a client on hold or calling back, they can bring up the file and answer the question on the spot. Customer service is improved, and they save floor space because they don't need file cabinets. And from a disaster recovery standpoint, having all of their work papers and tax documents scanned in makes them a lot more secure.”

Supersizing services

Mize Houser has always been a firm believer in the power of technology, and has been a loyal IBM user since the 1960s. In fact, “One of the reasons we selected IBM Business Partner RJS Software¹ for our solution was that it ran on IBM System i,” Kimes explains. He believes System i offers a reliable environment for Mize Houser's data while providing a scalable infrastructure to accommodate the growth expected from the enhanced functionality of its new document management solution. “Further, RJS Software had the same commitment to customer service that we do, and they were willing to let us educate them on how their software might be used in our profession,” Kimes adds.

Mize Houser replaced its outdated document management solution with browser-based WebDocs CPA software from RJS Software, loading the application onto an IBM System i server. The IBM server acts as a central repository for a wide range of documents, including (but not limited to):

- *Tax documents*
- *Billing records*
- *Medical files needed to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)*

The WebDocs application offers an easily integrated, scalable management platform for these records. Taking advantage of the advanced features offered by this application, Mize Houser can extend document access to staff as well as customers via secure Web interfaces. The new solution allows Mize Houser the ability to both streamline and strengthen its key differentiator in the accounting field—namely, its ASP offerings.

Mize Houser is also offering the solution to other CPA firms, effectively creating a new revenue stream by enabling firms to derive the same benefits Mize Houser is currently enjoying. “We offer WebDocs CPA as an add-on product to our CPA/MIS practice management package that we sell to CPA firms. We also offer the product to any type of business that needs document management since we offer it as an ASP solution,” Kimes explains. “In a typical situation we do a needs assessment for the client and then determine for that unique business how WebDocs can best be applied. We can apply the product to solve a business problem and that can be different for each business. Without WebDocs we could not offer this add-on service to our clients.”

Enabling revenue growth with IT improvements

The company is now rolling out the solution to the medical billing side of its business, which is a new revenue stream that was unforeseen when the solution was first implemented. “Since the security has been vastly improved, the solution has an outstanding audit trail. So our billing system now complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA),” says Kimes.

Key Components

Software

- RJS WebDocs CPA
- IBM DB2®

Server

- IBM System i

Business Partner

- RJS Software Systems
-

Why it matters

Mize Houser, an application service provider to small CPA firms and other industry customers, has automated its CPA services and business processes, allowing it to grow its business and expand into other industry sectors. Mize Houser increased revenues by 25 percent per existing client and overall by US\$200,000 in the first year, generating 100 percent ROI. This solution—which promotes improved customer service and a disaster recovery safety net for the firm and its clients—has given them the foundation to license this service to other firms, which will lead to a new revenue stream for Mize Houser.

Mize Houser is also beginning to roll out the new document management solution to other CPA firms, representing yet another new revenue stream for the firm. Mize Houser's new speed-of-delivery, combined with the solution's flexibility, allows the firm to more aggressively pursue new ASP customers and expand its range of ASP services. The secure solution allows CPA firms to more efficiently locate and work on documents for clients.

The solution has also helped Mize Houser improve existing revenue streams. The company already had a large client base in quick-serve restaurants, and the new Web-based solution has caught the eye of many potential new clients in that industry. With the company's new and secure Web Reports Center, its quick-serve clients can quickly and easily view any pertinent documents, which is a service not generally available to local quick-serve franchises. "We went to the last McDonald's convention, and we already have about 750 franchises, but we're adding about 15 percent more as clients. It's the largest single-year sales increase we've ever had," says Kimes. "With WebDocs and IBM System i, we can bring a solution to our quick-serve clients that most other CPA firms can't."

For more information

Please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit us at:

ibm.com/innovation



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2006

IBM Corporation
Global Solution Sales
New Orchard Road
Armonk, NY 10504
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America
10-06
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, DB2, PartnerWorld and System i are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products and services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.

¹ RJS Software participates in the IBM PartnerWorld[®] Industry Network, which offers a rich set of industry-tailored resources to all PartnerWorld members. RJS Software is an optimized member of the banking, education and learning, fabrication and assembly, and government industries. This means that RJS has developed further specialization by optimizing its applications with IBM on demand technologies.