

## **TIP OF THE MONTH - CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON**

There are many reasons to avoid clothes shopping. If you buy that item, or try it on, you may find that they looked great on the hangar, but that was the end of it. Accounting systems come in all sizes, shapes, and colours just like clothing; and just like clothing, some accounting systems fit your business better than others. It's not that easy to spot in a mirror when an accounting system does not fit a business, but there are other signs that will give it away. Let's consider a few of them:



### **Numerous "Workarounds"**



A workaround happens when your current system cannot do all the things you need it to do. A workaround can take the form of a spreadsheet, a report, a program, or a database that is created with extra time spent every month so you can get the information out of your system and manipulate it the way you need it to run your business.

Since no accounting system is a perfect fit for any one business, it's normal to have some workarounds in place to meet your unique business needs. If you have too many, it might signal that you've outgrown your current system

and need to find an accounting system that provides you with more functionality. If you are not using the system to help run the business, but merely as a tax and accounting reporting device, then maybe you are one of the performance issues!

### **Downtime or Wasted Time**

If you are unable to access your system when you need to do your job, then you are experiencing downtime in one form or another. You may be waiting for a file to be fixed, or the system may actually be down. If your system runs slowly, then that's another form of downtime that wastes your time. If you have to take time to make backups and perform restorations, this type of activity does not add value to running your business. When you have too many of these time-wasters, it could be time to look for a better way.



### **Old Technology**



If your accounting system is more than about three years old and you've chosen not to update it, then you may be missing out on newer time-saving features that could help you reduce the amount of time you spend doing your accounting. If your accounting system is more than six or seven years old, then you are definitely losing productivity. It's time to bite the bullet and learn a new system so you can experience better profit margins in your business. With "Making Tax Digital" on the horizon you need an up-to-date system for on-line

filing anyway. We suggest that rather than wait for HMRC to impose this on you that you acquire the up-to-minute, compliant software that we can make available.

### **Limited Users or Security**

If your current accounting system does not provide you with the ability for your accountant to gain access to help, or to do part of what is necessary, then you may be doing work you hate instead of making your business work when this can easily be fixed. You may wish to grant access to certain

parts of the system to different users. If you're on QuickBooks, for example, that's a really easy fix, so please talk to us about this.

### **Limited Physical Access**

If your accounting system is located on a private PC or server in your business, this limits access to your files. If you have more than one business location, you like to work from home, or your employees work from their homes occasionally, then you may want to look for a system that accommodates "anywhere, anytime" accounting. This is a pretty easy fix too, as this requirement is increasingly quite common with business owners, and an added benefit from getting yourself MTD-ready. Hopefully there is some "cloud accounting" on your horizon!



There is also the possibility for mobile access. New apps enable many accounting features to be completed from your mobile phone, such as checking bank balances, and taking a picture of a receipt and uploading it, although we are not convinced that piece-meal uploading is efficient, quite apart from phone capacities, but we are keeping developments under review. It is likely that if you wish to do some or all of your accounting from your mobile phone that there are mobile apps that we can link to modern systems to enable this functionality.

### **Boosting Your Accounting Productivity**



We might be a little biased, but accounting has become a lot more fun in the last few years with advancements in technology. If you see any of the signs listed above, it might be worth a conversation to see if your accounting system is "fit for purpose". We can explain how our solutions to "Making Tax Digital" will work, and are available right now (and heavily discounted) to grab some gain, as well as putting you in a position to avoid the pain later.