



## Looking For a Better Way

Selecting then converting to a new time & billing solution can cause almost as much discomfort as the pains of non-billable hours, slower cash flow, missed opportunities, and other faults of your current time & billing solution.

“We knew there was a better way,” says Alan Fox, CPA, a partner in Fox and Fiorino, P.A., an accounting firm in Reisterstown, MD, near Baltimore. “We used QuickBooks’s time sheet to track time, then our admin person rekeyed it into another program. Billing was another step. And we didn’t get the reports we wanted.”

Alan Fox and his partner, Mike Fiorino, worked in a large CPA firm before forming their local firm a few years ago. They know firsthand the efficiencies gained from the right software and hardware tools, not to mention the opportunities that arise or become more cost-effective with the right solutions.

“We’re always looking for a better way—to offer services, to increase billable hours. Productivity is critical. Having real-time access to management information is critical too. We checked out several practice management packages, but they demanded too much admin time, lacked the real-time feedback we required, or didn’t measure up with analysis and other reporting that would help us efficiently manage our firm.

“It may seem obvious, but we’re in the business of selling expertise. Our firm provides traditional services like tax preparation and write-up, as well as non-traditional services like QuickBooks consulting, valuation analysis for businesses, financial consulting, etc. Our expertise is sold in increments called hours. The more billable hours we generate, the more profitable we are.”

While a simple equation, it is fraught with challenges. The right software can make the difference — even if installed during tax season.

Alan continued. “We don’t even use all of BillQuick’s features yet. We bought the software in late 2003, and then implemented it in February 2004. It was straightforward and easy. Of course, there’s a learning curve. Anything new has one. But, BillQuick’s was lower than we expected.

“BillQuick is a robust solution, which is one of the reasons we bought it. But it’s also like an onion. You can peel back layers over time. Like I said, we’re not using all of BillQuick yet, not taking advantage of all the ways to increase billable hours and improve management information. Our current and new clients have kept us very busy, out of the office a lot. But we will have BillQuick fully implemented by the end of 2004. We’ve set aside an hour a week to peel back the layers and implement more of BillQuick’s capabilities. We plan to implement other BillQuick add-on modules, like the Palm module so we can capture time and expenses in the field. Probably the report workflow modules too.

While Alan noted several features and functions yet to be implemented, he emphasized that BillQuick lived up to and exceeded expectations.

“Any solution we bring into our firm has to do one thing: Make us money. That requirement applies to practice management software as much as tax preparation, consulting or valuation analysis software. While we were evaluating BillQuick, three things stood out over the competing packages: ease of operation, good value and excellent support.

“We were productive with BillQuick right after installation. Lost time from phone calls and interruptions don’t happen any more. Capturing time and expenses is efficient and flexible; no more duplication of entries. And billing recurring, flat fee and hourly clients is easy. What used to be a couple days a month has become an hour. Most invoices take only a few clicks to create.

“The value side was good too. Any tool has to deliver good features at a reasonable price. BillQuick does that.

“Finally, support is critical. We work with many software packages. A manual and help screens are important, but poor support can make software a hassle rather than an asset. During our evaluation we talked to BillQuick Support multiple times. They were responsive, fast, friendly and informative. They had the right attitude and the right skills. In short, they have been there when we had questions.”

Alan noted that while integration with QuickBooks was not a requirement for a practice management solution, BillQuick’s real-time integration with QuickBooks was a factor in the final decision. “We’re QuickBooks ProAdvisors. We use it in-house and support it in many client offices. BillQuick handles sharing data with QuickBooks behind the scenes. No duplicate entry.” Fox and Fiorino also gain additional benefits from real-time, on-demand information in both BillQuick and QuickBooks.

Asked to highlight BillQuick capabilities that are most important to him, Alan added, “We’re still peeling back the layers. Okay, there’s still a lot. One thing is all our time and expenses are now online. WIP is recorded quickly and accurately, and it’s *complete*. Another thing is I can track staff time; see how productive they are in real-time. I can see if they’re having a good or off day, and that their time is being efficiently utilized.

“Then there’s billing. BillQuick handles our traditional and non-traditional services with ease. Flexibility is great. Even though our write-downs are lower than national averages, BillQuick makes it easy to do and tracks them by employee and project.

“Information is important to us. It’s essential to our continuous improvement management style. BillQuick offers productivity, profitability, cash flow and other analysis reports, plus dozens of listings and other reports. We simply choose what works for our firm and management style.”

Taking a breath, Alan laid out the bottom line.

“Let me quantify this for you. Before we implemented BillQuick, our admin person, Kathy spent significant hours per year managing time sheets and rekeying it into another program. At her billable rate, there were a significant number of non-productive/non-billable hours. Kathy now has less overtime. Financial results to our firm reflect an increase in revenues and cash flow of 10%, and 15%, respectively.

“In other words, BillQuick met its requirement: Make us money. BillQuick was found and implemented because we’re always looking for better tools and better ways to manage our firm.”



Founded in 1995, BQE Software, Inc. released the first version of its flagship product, BillQuick®, in 1996, growing it into a leading time billing and project management software solution. BQE develops products that completely automate time-keeping, project management and billing processes. Extensive management information is available through hundreds of reports. BillQuick also tightly integrates with QuickBooks® in real-time, providing 2-way synchronization.

The BillQuick Family extends recording of time and expenses to the Web, cell phones, email and PDAs, and converts appointments and tasks in Microsoft Outlook into time entries. BillQuick employs advanced technology, including *workflow automation* and *fuzzy logic learning algorithms*.

BillQuick adapts to firms of any size with unequalled features and flexibility of BillQuick products. BillQuick supports Microsoft Access and SQL databases.

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