

How this Canadian accountant finishes tax season in a flash





Summary

Adopting Pro Tax in QuickBooks Online Accountant let Melanie Schroeder get more of the flexibility she craves, with peace of mind that data is accurate and available when she needs it.

About Melanie

Melanie Schroeder, CPA, CGA is a sole practitioner based in Vancouver. Along with her role as a professional accountant for about 90 clients, Melanie is also a registered professional counsellor.

About Pro Tax

Pro Tax is a cloud-based professional tax solution built right into QuickBooks Online Accountant. Prepare, review, and e-file federal T1 and T2 returns with accuracy and confidence, all in an easy-to-use, intuitive program.



Striking out on her own

Starting your own business is never easy. The freedom and flexibility of running your own business sounds great - but when everything's on your shoulders, how do you actually make it all work?

Like many entrepreneurs, Melanie Schroeder, a CPA and sole practitioner in Vancouver, has grappled with this. She's committed to growing her business - but at the same time, she also values her time outside of work, from spending more time with friends and family, and hiking with her dog, to sewing and meditating.

Since establishing her own firm, she's sought after tools to make her life easier and support more flexibility. That's exactly why she turned to Pro Tax in QuickBooks Online Accountant.

Embracing integration

Before becoming a sole practitioner, Melanie worked in a medium-sized firm with a process for completing client tax returns that was cumbersome (and likely familiar to many accountants).

It required manually entering client information and GIFI data. "Every time you have to re-key in data, there's room for error," Melanie says.

As she went out on her own, it was time for a shift. "I really liked the idea of integration, which is why I wanted to try Pro Tax," she says.



Using Pro Tax has streamlined Melanie's process and put data all in one place - which was key to her goal of taking her business completely online.

"By integrating Pro Tax into my workflow with Workpapers, I don't have to re-key in any GIFL data," she says. What's more, reimporting GIFL files with changes - for times when a client makes updates while the return is in process, for example - is fast with Pro Tax.

There's also no need to switch between programs, which saves time and adds a layer of confidence that the work is accurate. Being cloud-based, client information is up-to-date, which further minimizes room for error.



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Integration with QuickBooks Online also means Melanie has been able to do away with additional, expensive third-party apps that required exporting and importing files from other programs. Not only is that better for her workflow but skipping the need for additional programs is ultimately better for her bottom line, too.

"For a small CPA firm like mine, software is expensive," she says. "In order to be efficient and produce year-ends, you need tools that make it easy and effective. Once I was able to access the suite of software Intuit offers, including Pro Tax, I had a viable business that could support me, without having to work overtime, which I couldn't do."



What's more, the learning curve with Pro Tax was simple. "It's a very intuitive program to use," she says. For any questions that did pop up, it was easy to go online and connect with a strong network of other Canadian users, and pick up the phone to reach Intuit Canada experts.

Less time on returns, more flexibility

Another bonus for Melanie? Not being tied to her desk. Pro Tax's seamlessness and user friendliness ultimately comes down to more flexibility.

Returns in half
the time.



"As a sole practitioner, new clients often ask me about what happens if I need to go out of town," she says. Since Pro Tax is cloud-based, though, Melanie and her clients have peace of mind that she'll be able to access up-to-date data securely, from wherever she's working.

Overall, depending on the client, Melanie has been able to cut her time spent on returns by about half, which can be anywhere from cutting a half hour to four hours on a file. That translates to significant time savings, given she completes about 60 T1 returns in a year, along with about 30 T2 returns.

She can also access accurate data much faster. One client, for instance, asks for tax estimates quarterly, for planning purposes, and Melanie can now pull accurate data as soon as he needs it.



That's vital to planning, for her clients and herself. With Pro Tax's integration with QuickBooks Online, Melanie can now pull tax estimates faster, with less work.

"This year, I could give all my clients with December year-ends a tax estimate by March," she adds. That's three months sooner than she could previously. "Clients need to be able to plan for cash expenditures. The earlier they know their tax burden, the better. They can also save on potential interest that may be charged."

Plus, that takes the burden off Melanie during March and April - the traditionally busy tax time.

That breathing room also spells better client service and more time to consult, rather than provide work that feels only transactional. Today, Melanie can engage in more meaningful conversations about her clients' businesses. "If they feel their basic needs are being taken care of, they'll come to you for bigger questions," she says.

And along with empowering Melanie to grow her client base, she can also get home faster to spend more time with friends and family - a big plus for an entrepreneur like her. "For me, the benefit is all about time."

Pro Tax in QuickBooks Online Accountant

Try today at quickbooks.ca/tax

