

12 Red Flags Your Firm Needs Better Document Management

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Document Management is at the center of every accounting firm. With every client you acquire comes a new pile of forms, documents, and information you must keep track of. Chances are you're losing time and money due to a lack of a good Document Management System and process at your firm.

Here are 12 red flags that your firm needs better Document Management Software. If you identify with any of the Red Flags below, it's time to make a change.



1. You find yourself searching for documents multiple times a day.

Document Management should help you find what you need exactly when you need it. If your current system makes you hunt through folders of unorganized files or sift through piles of loose documents, you're wasting your time.

A modern Document Management solution can find the document you need in seconds, not minutes or hours. These solutions provide an indexable and

searchable archive for your documents, which makes finding the client information you need simple.



2. There is no universal naming or storage convention within your firm.

For some firms, naming conventions and document management is handled by each employee. This solution can work if you are only dealing with your documents. It's your mess, and you, theoretically, know where everything is inside of that mess.

While it might work great within your documents, it only creates confusion when collaboration or teamwork is involved. With everyone having their own processes and standards, it only creates chaos and makes it challenging to find the documents you need, if not impossible.

A Document Management solution gives everyone a standardized universal process and naming convention to store information. All client data is treated with the same respect and organization, making it easy for anyone to help any client by quickly accessing their documents and knowing exactly what to expect due to the naming conventions.



3. You've had problems due to conflicting data.

Clients move. They change their phone numbers. They marry, they divorce, they have children, they start business, sale business, close their business, oh the list can go on and on. The ever-changing lives of our clients can make our jobs more difficult if we don't have a good record system to keep everything from documents to data organized.

If these changes aren't tracked and updated, the use of bad data can lead to significant blunders in filing taxes any many other jobs you take on when you acquire your clients. If you're experiencing those errors due to conflicting data, it's time to get a better Document Management solution.

Document Management solutions should be able to update critical details automatically, ensuring that you always have the correct information for every client.



4. There is duplicate paperwork.

If you have contacts for Lee, Mike; Mike Lee; Michael Lee; and LEE, Mike, it's time to get a better Document Management solution.

If any of your clients have filled out or submitted the same information more than twice, filling their folders with duplicate files, you need a better Document Management solution.

When your documents are organized and indexed, it's easy to find the information

you need when you need it. When you bog a client's folder down with duplicate files and forms, it becomes difficult to know which file has the accurate data you need, which only lengthens the time you spend hunting and reading through documents instead of doing something more productive with your time.



5. It is difficult to identify or find the most updated version of documents.

Without opening a document, can you tell which files from your clients are from this fiscal year? If you must continually open documents and skim through them to understand if you are the right ones - you're wasting your time, and it's time to get a better Document Management solution.

If you've ever saved a project as FINALDRAFT.pdf only to revise it and rename it a few days later as REALLYFINALDRAFT.pdf and then a week later you finally hit FINALDRAFT3.pdf, you know how frustrating it can be to check and see which final draft is the actual final draft. Your documents should be arranged and named so that you can identify the document immediately and know if it is the document, you are looking for and if it is the most updated version.

Document Management solutions help streamline this process by giving you the tools to standardize your workflow, process & procedures within your entire Firm. They help ensure that you don't waste your time looking through outdated or poorly named files by ensuring you have access to the correct document immediately.



6. Your file storage system only makes sense to a few people.

If your firm relies on a handful of people to make sense of the storage and filing systems, you need a digital Document Management solution.

Firms that rely on only a few people managing all of the documents are on the edge of their firm being in chaos and don't even know it. For example, let's say Britney is the person everyone trusts to manage their documents. Document Management is her pet project, and she's a walking index for every document and client. She knows how to find the file you're looking for because she set up her custom filing system that works perfectly for her. She's reliable and always there to help other employees with their clients, ensuring they have the necessary documents, but what happens when Britney gets sick? Or what if Britney quits?

Document Management shouldn't be delegated to only a few select employees responsible for everything. This makes a firm vulnerable to people advancing their careers or getting sick. Instead, Document Management should be on the radar of every employee to ensure that everyone knows how to use it to access the files they need.



7. You have lost or misplaced essential documents more than once.

It's excusable for a child to say they misplaced their homework. They're a kid. Leaving behind their multiplication homework may be frustrating or annoying, but there are no lasting consequences in the big picture of life.

However, it is never acceptable for a firm to misplace or lose documents. Financial documents contain sensitive private information. "Accidentally" losing financial documents is "accidentally" putting your client's private and protected information in someone else's hands.

There is no excuse for a firm to misplace or lose important documents, and it is a major red flag that you need a better Document Management solution if it has happened more than once. A firm that repeatedly misplaces important client documents is at serious risk of losing its clients because they cannot be trusted.



8. You only use hard copies.

If you are still using filing cabinets to store documents, it's time to switch to digital Document Management.

Hard copies are often used by small firms that believe they can't afford a digital solution or more experienced firms that established their best internal practices and methods well before the invention of the Internet.

If you don't think you have the budget - we're happy to tell you, you're wrong. Document Management software is designed to help you get more from your day by providing the tools and resources you need to succeed. By going digital, you can streamline multiple office processes which in return will make your Firm more productive, which will help drive profitability.

If you've always worked with hard copies because that's what you're most comfortable with and what you know best, it's time to make the change to go digital. As reliable as your file cabinets may be, digital data management is more reliable and accessible. Document Management software solutions give you the tools to access, modify, and save client information from any smart device, helping you provide accurate customer support whenever your customers have questions.



9. Your Document Management isn't automated.

Manual data entry and Document Management is an easy way to set yourself up for problems. When it comes to manual data entry, there is no such thing as 100% accuracy. It is not a question of whether a mistake is made but of when it was or will be made.

The more employees must manage data manually, the higher the chance an error will be made. Document Management software automates the most repetitive and monotonous jobs saving you time, improving productivity, and significantly reducing the rate of errors.



10. It's difficult to share documents with others.

Client documents are challenging for some firms because they need to be secure from hacks or data breaches, but they also need to be easily shared with your client, client's bank or legal team and your colleagues. If you've ever had difficulty sharing client documents or reports, it's time to get better Document Management software.

Document Management software should modify and update how you share documents, adding and removing permissions as needed to ensure that

information is protected from those who shouldn't see it while accessible to those who need to see it.

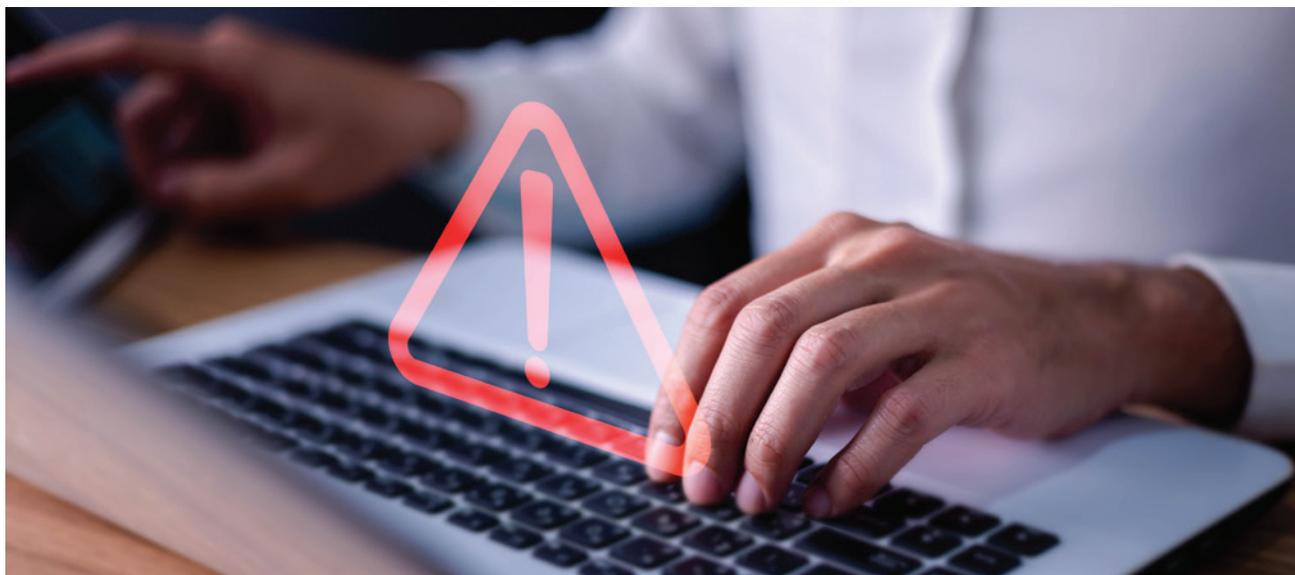


12 11. You struggle to manage data security or have had a data breach.

All accounting firms are in the sights of hackers. If they can break in and access your data, they'll have unrestricted access to banking and financial information that they can use however they want. Because of this constant threat of being hacked, your Document Management solution should be part of the solution rather than a weak point that can be exploited.

If you have been hacked or had a security breach, it's time to improve your security by improving your Document Management software. The right software will integrate with your existing security

measures as well as enhance what you currently have using Best Practices and help ensure that client information is secure.



12. Your firm can't grow.

If your firm wants to take on more clients but can't because there's not enough time, you need a better Document Management solution.

If most of your time is spent on paperwork and hunting through documents, your firm can't grow because an even more significant time requirement comes with every new client. Adopting a better Document Management solution will give you more time to dedicate to not only your current clients but new clients as well. You'll be able to spend more time working with clients and focusing on

billable hours instead of wasting your time trying to find the data or document you need.

The best Document Management solutions should grow with your firm. Whether you're just starting and only have a handful of clients or you're rapidly expanding, the software should be able to support you through it all.

When It Comes to Document Management, IRIS Has You Covered

If your firm has experienced any of the red flags stated above, you need better Document Management software like Doc. It or iChannel from IRIS. These Document Management and workflow solutions work with your existing processes, procedures and other software to help you get more done with your day while helping your firm become more productive and profitable.

See why our clients say, "Since implementing Doc.It, we've been doing three to four times more work without adding staff" and "The decision was a no-brainer for us. We continue to see more time savings, and time is money."

Contact us to see which solution would best benefit your firm today.

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