

Case Study

BerryDunn

Discover how BerryDunn more than doubled their engagement capacity, while reducing burnout.



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Christopher Ellingwood
Senior Manager, BerryDunn

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With over four decades of expertise in full-service accounting, assurance and consulting, BerryDunn strives to deliver exceptional service to clients across a wide array of industries, including healthcare, lotteries & gaming, financial services and more. Becoming the largest accounting firm headquartered in New England requires dedication to independence, frequent investment in innovative solutions and a constant commitment to client success. BerryDunn is also a proud member of the BDO Alliance, and was named the third fastest growing firm in 2021 within the alliance.

Chris Ellingwood, Senior Manager at BerryDunn responsible for the SOC engagement team, was presented with a new challenge in March 2020: how to continue providing exceptional service in a growing remote world.

Challenges

Before Fieldguide, BerryDunn followed a traditional audit approach, corresponding with clients for four to six weeks to gather materials, traveling on-site to conduct the audit, and manually compiling final reports. This labor intensive process was highly taxing on employees, and pulled management away from more strategic initiatives.

The traditional audit process used many disconnected pieces of software, with a great deal of time spent emailing back-and-forth to gather materials.

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Disjointed sources of truth made it difficult for senior members of the audit team to quickly understand the engagement context, and forced a lot of redundant work. Each engagement also required an on-site visit to conduct the audit, heavily burdening staff members.

According to Ellingood, "We were seeing some burnout from the frequent travel, it put a lot of strain on staff. When the pandemic hit, management & I sat down and said we needed a solution to keep going and began to look for one." With their unwavering commitment to client success, BerryDunn had been devising a long-term "assurance modernization plan", aimed at enhancing the firm's staffing, efficiency, and technology to better prepare for and manage the future of assurance. The pandemic helped catalyze their modernization plan, starting with tools that would best support virtual collaboration with clients.

"How can we get more work done with a small team, without burning out the staff - is there a way to reduce travel? Staffing, efficiency, and technology were the three things we were looking at."

– Christopher Ellingwood

Solution

Soon after receiving a demo, Christopher realized that Fieldguide would support their goal for virtual collaboration during the pandemic, as well as many of the goals outlined in their assurance modernization plan.

Fieldguide's platform increases visibility throughout the audit process, helping reduce confusion over missing materials and aligning on open tasks. BerryDunn's team of Trust practitioners* are now able to eliminate the redundancies that come with managing complex engagements, and automate reporting processes.

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The new single-source-of-truth also enhances virtual client collaboration, helping reduce the amount of on-site travel by 75% and in many cases, allows BerryDunn to complete engagements entirely remotely. These audit enhancements are particularly impactful for BerryDunn's larger clients that contract 20+ individual engagements.

According to Ellingood, "Organizing client requests was the #1 priority we were looking to better manage. A lot of followup requests have gone away with Fieldguide, since our requests are mapped so closely to controls." BerryDunn's clients now have a more holistic view of all their engagements, and with the additional context and transparency, feel more comfortable sharing evidence and information in the materials request stage.

"Clients are loving Fieldguide across the board, I haven't heard any complaints. Once they understand the Fieldguide phrases (like requests, tasks, discussions), they go 'Oh this makes way more sense, this is much easier.'"

– Christopher Ellingwood

Results

Fieldguide's end-to-end workflow solution enables BerryDunn to make quantifiable improvements to their business, including margin growth, human capital optimization, and increased engagement capacity. BerryDunn now expects to realize 30-50% efficiency gains from implementing Fieldguide, more than doubling their engagement capacity. According to Ellingwood, "BerryDunn was originally sending 4 people onsite for 1 job, but we now have 2 people working remotely on 1 job... our team is now doing 3-4 audits a week with the new team structure. Historically, we were able to do 1-2 engagements per week."

Results

In addition to the time savings from more streamlined requests and report generation, travel, another significant drain on capital and human capital resources, is almost nonexistent. Less travel allows staff members to substantially increase their engagement capacity, while simultaneously reducing burnout.

“One of our larger clients is almost done with their audit as of March 31, where last year it lasted up until December. Everything was much more efficient this year - it is way faster to gather materials and much less back-and-forth is needed with our clients.”

– Christopher Ellingwood

Fieldguide has also helped BerryDunn update their staffing strategy. The de-prioritization of travel unlocks their ability to hire remotely, helping reduce the strain of a tight labor pool. Junior-level teammates are also now empowered to lead more of the audit process, helping reduce the need for management involvement.

Ellingwood stated, “We hired an Audit Coordinator to become a SME of Fieldguide. This frees up our management staff to focus more on growing the firm and strategic initiatives... I was spending up to 20hrs/week doing list of materials, reviews, creating engagement letters - all things that we’ve empowered our staff to do through Fieldguide.”

Not only does Fieldguide help alleviate strain on staff, but it encourages more creativity and excitement, especially from more junior team members.

With Fieldguide, BerryDunn was able to accomplish all of the goals set out in their assurance modernization plan and more. They are realizing 30-50% efficiency gains, helping almost 4x their engagement capacity, while simultaneously lowering their team’s stress level. Junior-level staff are excited and empowered to take on more pieces of an engagement, allowing management to spend more time on strategic and growth initiatives.

About us

Fieldguide Powers the Future of Trust

Built by and for practitioners, Fieldguide is the category-defining and comprehensive Risk Advisory Services Platform that makes it amazingly easy for clients and teams to automate the entire lifecycle of any type of engagement. Our cloud-based software helps firms take advantage of the increasing demand for risk advisory services by addressing the challenges of scarce talent, remote collaboration, and more demanding clients.

Fieldguide provides end-to-end visibility across all engagements, streamlined collaboration with distributed clients and teams, and unparalleled staff productivity for any framework, including SOC 1 & SOC 2, HITRUST, and many more. Instead of juggling siloed legacy tools, practitioners can rely on Fieldguide as a single source of truth, with all the capabilities that they need to run engagements from kickoff to completion. Streamlined requests, collaborative document management, intelligent framework mapping, and one-click reports are just some of the unique Fieldguide features that help firms drive greater visibility across all engagements, while delivering a first-class client experience. Leading firms like CLA, Wipfli, Mazars and BerryDunn trust Fieldguide to increase revenue, boost client satisfaction, and improve profits.

Fieldguide has received multiple awards from industry associations, and the company is backed by top venture capital firms, including 8VC, Y Combinator, and Floodgate.

For more information or to schedule a free product demo, visit
info.fieldguide.io/demo-case-study