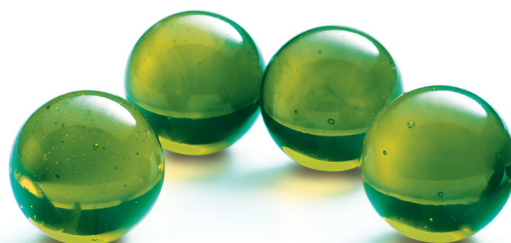


# ...clear thinking

## *TaxSure: cost effective fee protection reinforces the client relationship*

CLIENT COMPANY: **Stevens & Willey**

INTERVIEW WITH: **Dave Holmes, senior partner**



Accountants Stevens & Willey celebrated 50 years in practice in Barnstaple, north Devon, at the end of August – 50 years in which the face of local business has changed substantially, says senior partner Dave Holmes.

"Traditionally this area has been dependent on farming and tourism, but these days both are facing very challenging issues," he says. "There's probably never been a tougher time to be in business."

Keeping the practice on track, Dave believes, involves maintaining a service that meets the clients' demands and is cost effective. For the past six years, CCH Fee Protection has been part of that service.

"We decided we needed to offer fee protection to our clients, partly because it provides us with a tool to help us take on Revenue & Customs," says Dave. "You're able to deal more effectively with the negotiations if you know that your client will not end up paying your fees for the enquiry work."

"When a client is under investigation the stress of the situation can cause difficulties with the professional relationship as there is a tendency to assume that by using an accountant no enquiry is necessary. Fee protection insurance helps to reinforce the relationship and if they chose not to take up the cover that was offered then at least you don't feel so bad about charging them."

The four partners and senior staff in the Stevens & Willey practice use the CCH advice lines regularly – three or four times a week, Dave estimates.

"No matter how good you are, or how well you pool your resources, you can't know everything," he says. "Often you just need a second opinion, and the knowledge of the consultants at CCH is absolutely superb – they're like walking encyclopaedias!"

A further time-saving option has been the take up of CCH online seminars to fulfil the practice's statutory obligation to maintain continuous professional development.

"Attending external training is expensive and time consuming," says Dave. "Online seminars can be done without leaving the office. We're in control of the lectures we listen to and we can do the question and answer sessions collectively. A monitor from the ACCA has confirmed that this method of training is acceptable, provided that we keep minutes of each session."

He concludes: "We've been very happy with all the services we've had from CCH since we first took up the fee protection insurance. It works well for us and we're happy to recommend it to our clients."



**CCH**

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