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Talking practice efficiency with Blu Sky

“We want to do more than just look
after the numbers”

Get started with Xero



Introduction: Blu Sky

Dave Gibson

Co-founder and chairman
Blu Sky



Josh Sanghera

Client Relationship Director
Blu Sky

With a client base that includes many tech start-ups and ambitious small businesses, Blu Sky accountants make it their mission to be forward-facing.

“A high-performance practice is about having that growth mindset,” says co-founder and chairman Dave Gibson. “It’s about embracing and driving change.”

Started in 2008 in North Shields, Blu Sky now has 30 staff across three UK locations. *“In 2010 we were a typical practice, with a lot of desk-based systems,”* says Dave. The firm experimented with different software providers, but none gave the desired results. *“They weren’t helping us deliver the kind of value we wanted to offer clients. We wanted forward-looking services. Sitting around waiting for someone to bring the shoebox in and then typing stuff into a computer wasn’t conducive to that. We knew cloud technology would be a help and could see the benefits.”*

The practice looked into several cloud accounting options on the market, before deciding on Xero. “We knew we wanted to become an expert in a single core product,” says Dave.

“Xero had that nice blend of usability and functionality.”

It also had the backing of many of Blu Sky’s tech clients, who liked the idea of Xero’s open API, which allows third-party app developers to create custom integrations. “They could see the potential even better than we could,” says Dave.

Another deciding factor was Xero’s support system. As well as 24/7 online support, Xero partners benefit from a dedicated account manager to help them navigate their online accounting journey. “Other companies either gave you a telephone line that just ignored you or an account manager whose sole responsibility seemed to be to raise more revenue out of you,” says Dave.

“Xero are building a community. They want to hear what our opinions are and actually drive the evolution of the product through our wants and needs.”



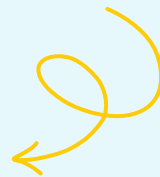
Seamless integration

Blu Sky uses Xero's online accounting software to automate routine tasks, streamline workflows and improve collaboration.

"Our clients are exclusively on Xero," says Josh Sanghera, Blu Sky's Client Relationship Director. "As soon as a client says yes to Xero, all the efficiencies we can drive just stem from there, whether that's using Xero Payroll or expenses and invoice tracking through Dext."

Because Xero integrates seamlessly with a huge range of third-party software and apps, practices can create an ecosystem to suit their needs. Blu Sky have built their tech stack up slowly and steadily, bringing in new tools where they add value. These include reporting software Fathom and cash flow management and reporting tool Cash Flow Frog. They use Telleroo for bulk payments, Mayday for automated accounting adjustments, and credit control software Chaser.

For compliance they use Xero's end-to-end tax and accounts production software, which connects to bookkeeping data in Xero, making it faster to prepare and file accurate returns.



“
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“We’re big fans of [Xero Tax](#),” says Josh. “It’s the easiest accounts production software to use in terms of time and efficiencies.

In other software, you might import something and are then making adjustments and trying to tie it back. That can be an extra 20-30% of your time wasted. The benefit of just pulling all the data with no backdating is a real timesaver for us.” It works for their clients too, many of which are young start-up companies sometimes filing accounts for the first time. *“They need a process that’s simple and intuitive to follow,”* says Josh.

By automating routine tasks and boosting efficiencies, Xero allows practices like Blu Sky to grow, offering more advisory services and taking on new clients.

“The tools we use allow us to be quicker and more efficient, which leads to happier clients,” says Josh. *“The best and most cost-effective way to grow is to do a brilliant job for your existing clients. That’s the easiest way to gain a lead or a referral and grow the firm.”*

Blu Sky empowers clients to embrace technology to help achieve their goals. *“Doing payroll and submitting VAT on time, those are not things that business owners set up a business to do,”* says Josh.

“What they want to do is look forward and grow their business. And when the businesses you work for grow, your practice is likely to grow as a result of that.”

A rewarding relationship with clients

The firm wants to be part of their clients' journeys, rather than someone they check in with once a year.

"We aim to work with ambitious businesses that are trying to scale up and to be their companion," says Josh. "If we can be seen as a partner, rather than just someone doing certain process bits, that's a win for us. And clients appreciate a second pair of eyes over everything they're doing financially and strategically."

When it comes to the firm's own strategy, they concentrate on three pillars: clients, growth and the team. *"For each of those things we set a target for the year, and the tasks and activities we do are there to help us build and grow towards that target,"* says Dave.

Xero and the ecosystem that Blu Sky have built around it helps them to achieve their goals. *"As a practice, you need a purpose, as you do in life,"* says Dave. *"Follow that up with a strategy that helps you deliver that purpose. That then needs to be understood by a high-performing team, who are themselves backed up with the processes and tools to help them deliver on that."*

For Blu Sky, a high-performing practice is also one with a mission, and they're clear on theirs.

"We're trying to be pioneers with what we do," says Josh. **"At Blu Sky we want to look forward to the future along with our clients."**





**Find out how Xero's integrated software,
innovative practice tools, thriving community,
and on hand accounting experts help increase
efficiency so you can do more**

