

HR advisory: Answering the client call

CPA.com and Paychex Client Success Story

How a Massachusetts CPA firm provides the full-service business advisory capabilities their clients need to grow.

Meredith Anderson, CPA, partner at Massachusetts-based Coval Anderson Coval LLC (CAC), isn't just a tax expert for her clients — she's a business adviser. *"When our clients have questions about any part of their business, we want to be the first ones to field them,"* says Anderson. *"Because we know that to deliver the kind of service they expect, we need to see it all — even aspects of the business where we don't traditionally focus."*

Because CAC serves as a business adviser to clients, the firm initiates frequent client conversations to discuss everything from changing accounting needs to big-picture business strategies and challenges. Through these routine business strategies and planning conversations with clients, the firm identified signs of an emerging issue across its client base: The growing need for advice on human resources issues and administration.

For Anderson's clients, many of which are experiencing rapid growth, these issues were near the top of the list of pressing business issues. *"One client may be pursuing a shift in business strategy that requires recategorizing a number of employees,"* says Anderson, *"and they don't know how to do that legally, how to handle compensation and benefits changes, or how to address more of those types of issues. For another client, it's handling unemployment issues. Another day, it's health insurance. Firms like ours that really work to understand their clients' businesses are familiar with all these issues and more — we know when our clients are encountering new challenges that they may not be prepared to handle. The question is: how can we help them be successful?"*

"Since we began engaging Paychex on HR-focused client issues, clients have really embraced this new resource. Suddenly they're speaking to experts on the HR issues keeping them up at night, and the technology layer makes it easy. Just as important to us, they recognize and appreciate the value we've brought in making this connection. Paychex helps us help our clients grow."

As this need emerged organically from client discussions, CAC's leadership team began to explore how it might help clients address these issues — start by taking a closer look at partners who could bring relevant expertise in HR and benefits.

Finding new ways to help clients grow and succeed

Coval Anderson Coval has built its reputation on the value it can offer as business advisers to clients. So, when clients voice a clear need that the firm can't fill on its own, Coval Anderson Coval has established relationships with best-of-breed partners who can step up — including Paychex, a widely recognized leader in HR, benefits and payroll.

Executive Summary:

This small regional CPA firm used Paychex to help its clients benefit from a wider range of business advisory services in areas including:

- Retirement planning
- Unemployment issues
- Compensation and benefits



Firm profile: This small Massachusetts-based firm focuses on providing business advisory services to clients in addition to strong tax and accounting capabilities: "You tell us your goals. We help you get there."

Niches served: Cross-industry

Locations: Two offices in Massachusetts

Staff: 6

Years working with Paychex: 4

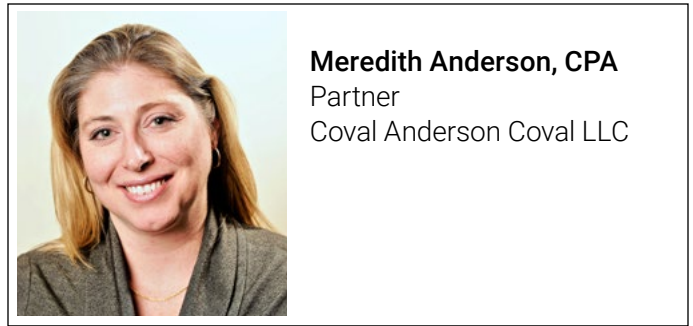
For CAC, it was important to find a resource that would provide a seamless client experience — creating no additional work for clients to engage, and making use of the insights, context, and history CAC could provide on individual clients. Paychex fulfilled all of these requirements and more. *“Since we began engaging Paychex on HR-focused client issues, clients have really embraced this new resource,”* says Anderson. *“Suddenly they’re speaking to experts on the HR issues keeping them up at night, and the technology layer makes it easy. Just as important to us, they recognize and appreciate the value we’ve brought in making this connection. Paychex helps us help our clients grow.”*

The practical value of scale

Clients’ needs change over time, in every part of their business — it’s as true on the tax side as on HR issues. In the very early stages of their business, many clients may only need payroll services to remain compliant and do right by their employees. But as they grow, that changes. Firms like CAC need to be able to respond to changing needs — and they need to work with professionals who are flexible enough to do the same.

For clients working with CAC, the Paychex relationship allows them to ramp up their offerings to clients quickly and effectively. *“Paychex brings the scale needed to grow with our clients,”* says Anderson. *“As they grow, clients can use Paychex to dive into more complex issues facing clients, on everything from which type of retirement plans may make the most sense for them, to unemployment, HR, you name it. Any clients’ ability to grow successfully relies in part on their ability to address those issues effectively.”*

CAC was able to identify an emerging client need in HR issues, begin delivering services to clients who needed help and ultimately expand their advisory capabilities to include HR services — all in a way that matched the firm’s natural path to growth, at a scale that shifted in line with client demand. For Anderson, that’s an important victory: *“We found a way to deepen our engagements with clients, and we did it our way.”*



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