415 GROUP

❝ One of the things BigTime has helped us do is manage our growth. We've tripled our revenues and more than doubled our employees over the years, yet the software has allowed us to keep our administrative staff — three to four people — virtually the same. It was a real game changer. ❞

— Rich Craig, *Managing Partner*

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415 GROUP is a full-service firm providing certified public accounting and business advisory services to privately held companies, from family-run startups to $100 million corporations, across a variety of industries. The firm also operates an IT division, which provides computer consulting, networking and security services to 1,200+ business entities. Founded in 1981 by several former Ernst & Young executives, the firm is an acknowledged accounting and IT leader serving Northeast Ohio.

BASED IN: Canton, OH. **INDUSTRY:** Accounting & IT Services. **WEBSITE:** 415group.com.

BIGTIME USERS: 50

SWITCHING T&B SYSTEMS (AND CONVERTING 20 YEARS OF DATA) IN THE MIDDLE OF TAX SEASON.

That was the challenge facing Northeast Ohio accounting leader 415 Group when it decided it could no longer deal with the inadequacies of its time and billing software. "It was frustrating to input time," says Craig. Plus, no direct integration with QuickBooks made "it difficult to get time and expenses out of the system and into our invoicing."

To make matters worse, 415 Group had a thriving tech consulting division whose hardware sales, inventory and expense data wasn't accommodated by the software. For years, the firm had tried a number of workarounds to fit a square peg into a round hole. "It just wasn't working."

In 2010, BigTime came in. "The transition was seamless, even in mid-February," he says. "They were able to pull everything from our computer division into the billing system and right back out [in our accounting system]. And it was accurate. The switch saved our administrative personnel a lot of time, at least 10 to 12 hours a month."

MORE DATA, BETTER PRACTICE MANAGEMENT.

For accountants, there can never be too much detail. Craig says BigTime helped 415 Group use it to see the big picture.

"BigTime created a daily report that, by nine o'clock every morning, tells us who put in their time, every hour that was billed, how that compares to budget, and more. It might seem like a lot of information, but that's the way we like it."

Adds Craig: "When we were a 5- or 10-person firm, I could walk through the office and see who was busy and who wasn't. Once you get to a certain size, it's more difficult. With our daily report, we've got the data right there — today, not next month. So we can run our business more proactively."

For staff, the ability to choose their data interface has been a popular feature, he says. "With one click, a user can select how his or her data gets put into the system. BigTime wrote a front end that gives people a choice. It's a little thing, sure, but little things can make all the difference."

ONLINE SOLUTION: ANYTIME, ANYWHERE ACCESS.

415 Group encourages its clients to invest in technology for growth, sage advice the firm follows for its own practice.

"We emphasize technology here, and the need to get it right, because it's helped us do a lot more with less," says Craig. "BigTime's ability to host our time and billing system was key for us. They're able to constantly update our software with new features and apps, all remotely. No desktop reinstall."

And with people always on the move, mobile functionality is critical. "During tax season, a lot of our accountants aren't in the office — and our technology consultants almost never are. Now they can access everything through their iPhone, iPad, the client's computer, wherever they are. They're able to input their time on a timely basis, and we get that data instantaneously."

USING TECH TO MAKE WORK (AND LIFE) EASIER.

Technology has changed the accounting world — and the balance between work and home life — for the better, Craig says. Being an accountant used to mean working late, at the office, three to four months a year. Not anymore.

"We now have the ability to work from home identically to how we'd work in the office," he says. "That means, even in the middle of tax season, I'm home almost every night — eating dinner with my family, helping out with homework. And after the kids go to bed, I can still get my work done. Five years ago, before BigTime, I couldn't have done that."

BigTime is the complete practice management system for growing professional services firms across a variety of industries, including:

↗ **ACCOUNTING**
   ARCHITECTURE
   DESIGN/ADVERTISING
   ENGINEERING
↗ **IT SERVICES**
   LEGAL
   MARKETING
   MGMT. CONSULTING