

Lime and Company

“I made the transition [to the cloud] quickly because SmartVault is so incredibly intuitive—for both myself and my clients.”



ANDREA ABEL
Owner

Core Business

Full-service accounting practice for small business

Services

Accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, QuickBooks consulting

Homebase

Sarasota, FL

Business Launch

2005

Employees

2 part-time contractors

Technology of Choice

SmartVault, QuickBooks, ScanSnap

To the Cloud—A Move that Positioned Lime & Company for Rapid Growth

Andrea Abel knew that if her firm was going to grow, she had to ditch desktop software, paper, and several cumbersome filing cabinets.

The Background: *Concerned with the high cost of technology and IT support, Abel wasn't sure how she would ever be able to operate her own firm...and then came the Cloud.*

Like many firm owners, Andrea Abel, principal of Lime & Company, started her career working for other firms—both private and public. During this time, she enhanced her practitioner skills, while also getting insight into what it takes to run an accounting firm.

“When I worked in public practice, there was a full-time dedicated IT person to maintain the firm’s technology, including software and servers,” Abel recalled. “So, when I thought about starting my own practice, I immediately thought how could I ever do it?”

Abel admitted to feeling intimidated by the level of technology she thought was required to operate her own firm—not to mention the cost of having an IT person onsite.

“At the time, I was not up-to-date on Cloud solutions, so in my mind the technology infrastructure I experienced working at other firms was the reality,” said Abel.

In 2004, Abel took a break from accounting to start a family. In 2005, as a stay-at-home mom, she started helping a few friends with business consulting support. A few friends quickly turned into a few clients...and then a few more.

“It happened so fast. First I’m helping friends get their businesses going, and then suddenly I have a list of clients.”

Before she knew it, Abel was well on her way to running a full-service accounting firm. The key issue was efficiency.

“I worked with desktop software and paper files. The filing cabinets took up so much space in my small home office. I knew there had to be a more efficient way to work; I just didn’t know what that was,” Abel stated.

A few years later, Abel attended The Sleeter Group’s Accounting Software Consulting Conference and was blown away by presentations on Cloud computing and the ease of use web-based applications offered. From that point, she adopted a “to the Cloud” attitude.

The Art of the Quick Change

Once Abel made up her mind to transition to Cloud-based technologies, change was immediate and permanent. Abel went from paper files and onsite client visits to a paperless office in only a few short weeks.

"After seeing a SmartVault demo at the Sleeter show, I jumped in and invested in an all-Cloud system. Within a few weeks, I set up my clients on Hosted QuickBooks [using InsynQ] and SmartVault for storing and exchanging files. I also use ScanSnap because it integrates with SmartVault. I can quickly scan in documents and save them to the appropriate SmartVault client folder in a few mouse clicks," Abel stated. "I made the transition quickly because SmartVault is so incredibly intuitive—for both myself and my clients."

Abel admitted to having a few "paper hold-outs" among her clients. She honored these clients' requests to not be placed in the Cloud, but was also direct on what they were missing.

"I explained that being online gave them unlimited access to me. At any time they could request a file and have it sent immediately. The technology puts all data at my fingertips, enabling me to serve my clients with speed and convenience," Abel said.

Abel's paper-based clients are also restricted to a set number of hours per month. Under her fee scale, clients receive four hours of onsite time for review and consulting. If more time is required, they pay extra. For her web-based clients, the lines of communication are open 24/7.

"I was direct with clients when it came to my time," Abel explained. "If they were online, they had all of me. If not, they didn't."

Still Growing...Rapidly

There's no stopping Lime & Company.

"I'm up to 45 clients and predict continued growth," Abel said. "It's just so easy to service clients in the virtual environment. I can now accomplish tasks in minutes."

Because her firm is established in the Cloud, she was also able to hire two part-time contract employees without leasing office space.

"I have one employee in Michigan and one here in Sarasota. Both work from their homes like I do because we all have access to the technology and real-time data and files," Abel explained.

Overall, Andrea's outlook on the future of Lime & Company is bright. Cloud computing completely changed the way she operates her firm and serves her clients. By eliminating the boundaries of time and distance, growth potential is unlimited!