



Interview with Minnesota CPA Steve Zelinsky

Tech Guru: How long have you been in practice, and do you service a specific type of client?

Steve: I do not have a specialty. I've been in practice on my own since 2009. My clients are 1040 individual clients, partnerships, S Corp, and sole proprietors.

TG: Where did you come from before you started your practice? Were you with another firm?

Steve: I worked for four years with a small CPA firm in Edina, Minnesota. And prior to that, I worked for Honeywell.

TG: Can you tell me a little bit about what your IT situation was from the time you started to the time you started your practice until you hired Tech Guru?

Steve: Before I started working with Tech Guru, it was all do-it-yourself.

TG: How did you hear about Tech Guru as an outsourced IT support provider, and what made you interested in what they do?

Steve: I did a webinar on Mobile Device Security, and you were an exhibitor at the MNCPA conference.

TG: And before that were you feeling, "I'm getting to the point where I could use a little help with my IT," or was it that they were offering something new that you didn't even know you wanted?

Steve: I think with the whole identity theft and the importance of cybersecurity being elevated to the area that it was, I just felt that I wanted a second look and some professionals to look and help make sure that I had the barriers in place that I need to have.

I was ultra low tech as a result so it's like turn off your machines, turn off the internet so you can't get hacked overnight.

Also, the liability and regulations have increased significantly in the last few years. You just have to have that extra level of protection.

A single breach, notifying all your customers, probably will lose you 15 to 20 percent of your customers.

Plus the fact that it's going to cost you a good 10,000 dollars in the possibility of regulatory review, fines and things.

My insurance to cover this stuff is going through the roof, so if I spend a little bit of money to feel more secure here then I can probably up my deductible a little bit and feel good about it.

TG: So Tech Guru took care of the security aspect of your data. Did they do anything as far as apps or changes to the stuff you work with every day?

Steve: Now my assistant can do direct data entry into the data file which I didn't have set up before. I know it could be, but I didn't know how.

They also set up auto backup, where before I was doing the backup manually, once a week.

During the tax season, it's much better to have it daily.

TG: Have you had to call the service desk or had to call in to get anything taken care of?

Steve: I have. I called in yesterday. I was impressed at how quickly they responded.

TG: Do you anticipate any differences in productivity or efficiency going forward?

Steve: That was the big thing of making the two computers so my assistant could do data entry of things that are mailed to me. I probably have 30 or 40 clients that mail me a package of things. And rather than have me sit down and enter all of the basic documents, I have an assistant that will do that. It will save me a lot of time.

TG: Do you feel your providing better service to your clients now? Is it something that you'd promote to them?

Steve: I told clients that I invested heavily in new cybersecurity and software, and updating equipment, and that was the justification for my price increase this year. Even though I've increased my expenses, I'm hoping to recoup it quick quickly. And so far, I haven't gotten any pushback on that.

TG: If you were talking to another CPA, like you, who was where you were at 6 months ago, what would you tell them on why they should give their IT a boost?

Steve: I think it's gotten significant enough that you need a professional to make sure that everything is together the way it should be.