

How **Dext** Helps Woodbridge Waterfields Expand its Services and Extend its Reach

Dext

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Waterfields

About Woodbridge Waterfields



Tariq Ally

Woodbridge Waterfields Ltd supports a wide range of clients with audit, accounting, tax and advisory services. Founder Tariq Ally - qualified as both a lawyer and an accountant - was an early adopter of cloud technology and was quick to see the potential of Dext from its earliest inception.

Here, Tariq explains why Dext has been an integral part of the firm's tech stack for over a decade and how it helps him to provide a more insightful, data-led advisory service to clients today. He also shares how Dext has both supported and enabled the firm's recent evolution.

While Woodbridge Waterfields Ltd has a physical presence in Leicestershire – with three offices across the county – it works with clients in a variety of locations.

The firm supports businesses in a diverse range of industries, including legal, financial and retail wholesale. Woodbridge Waterfields also works with small businesses in a number of specialised areas, including the publishing industry.

In addition to its small, UK-based team, the firm works with a number of sub-contractors around the world to streamline processes and maximise efficiency.

The Opportunity

When Woodbridge Waterfield's founder, Tariq Ally, began his career over 25 years ago, accountancy was a firmly paper-based industry. He recalls piles upon piles of receipts and offices stacked wall-to-wall with lever arch files.

So when cloud accounting software came on the scene in the mid-2010s, Tariq was quick to understand and embrace its benefits. With a background in computer science, Tariq was more than happy to move to desktop accounting software when it first became available.

"Cloud accounting was just a fantasy at the time and nobody would ever think about how it would cause the landscape of accounting to change over time," he shares.

He started using QuickBooks and was impressed with how it automated basic bookkeeping tasks and allowed him to work with clients in a wide range of locations.

However, Tariq knew he would need to free up more time to pursue his goal of providing clients with a wide range of advisory services supported by a deep analysis of data. He was therefore eager to find a way to use his accounting software even more efficiently and effectively, especially when it came to processing and storing invoices.

Fortunately, his next visit to Accountex would provide the solution.



The Solution

When Tariq got talking to Dext about its ability to integrate with Quickbooks, he was intrigued. *“It was all new to me”,* he recalls. *“But then I thought about it and I said, ‘Look, we can do something here.’”*

Tariq realised that by sending all his clients’ invoices to a single software and then synchronising it with Quickbooks, he could automate a huge amount of tedious bookkeeping work and save a great deal of time. He was impressed by how quickly Dext could process high volumes of invoices.

Another reason that persuaded Tariq to use Dext was how quickly and easily clients’ documentation is available in the software. *“When you go to Dext, if you want to find something that’s instant”,* he explains.

“You look for the information and the invoice just appears... The time it takes for us to do that in the accounting software is too long. So we look in Dext and it solves a problem because we can locate the information very easily”.

When it came to communicating the purpose and value of Dext Prepare to clients, Tariq was happy to see that most were open to trying the software. He started small, asking clients to upload invoices to Dext in PDF format. He gradually introduced more information, adopting a coaching approach so that clients understood not only what they were being asked to do, but why.

Today, the majority of clients are open-minded about using digital tools and are already aware of many of the benefits of cloud technology. *“Most of the clients I see using Dext are very tech-savvy,”* Tariq notes, recalling how one started “following along” with the progress of his business after installing the Dext app on his phone.



The Impact

For Tariq, the ability to process a high volume of expense paperwork at speed was just the first major impact he noticed on Woodbridge Waterfields Ltd.

Thanks to Dext's ability to process and store documentation securely in the cloud, the days of printed reports and piles of paper receipts are a thing of the past.

"Xero and Dext is a great initial toolkit, because they don't break the bank. You don't need to go through big transitions, but you can scale at size and you can start plugging in other things around them."

But this wasn't the only benefit of Dext. Being cloud-based and compatible with full cloud accounting platforms like Xero, Sage and Quickbooks, the tool has allowed his firm to work with clients and subcontractors all over the world - expanding their reach and creating opportunities for further efficiencies and optimisations internally.

Tariq and his team don't only use Dext to automate the bookkeeping process. They use it to automate aspects of expense management and cash flow as well. *"We can better control the suppliers, see who's being paid and who's not being paid"*, he explains.

Tariq shares how Dext is instrumental to the sophisticated financial modelling and deep data analysis work he does with many of his clients. *"It's very complicated and, without data, you can't do that level of work. You've got to have your raw data, then clean it up and try to analyse it... We know Dext Prepare helps us to achieve the efficiency that we want to be able to do that"*.

Reflecting on the evolution of Dext as his firm has expanded, Tariq points to the development of the software's machine learning model as a key driver of progress. *"Dext has improved a lot over the years"*, Tariq points out, referencing AI-driven features like user and supplier rules and bank fetch as recent milestones in the product's development.

Crucially, Dext has allowed Tariq to achieve his goal of evolving the firm's advisory offering.

"If you want to really broaden your service and offer different services, my answer is cloud accounting and AI. It starts with Dext."



Moving Forward

When it comes to the future, Tariq plans to continue growing the firm's presence and capabilities. As a trusted time-saving tool – and an integral part of Woodbridge Waterfields' tech stack – Dext will continue to support the business's plans for growth. In fact, it will be a growth partner for the firm.

"Without Dext, we can't expand."

Find out how Dext can help your firm to speed up processes and better serve your customers.

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