

## Executry/Probate Case Management Solution

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### Introduction

Headquartered in Dundee, Scotland, Blackadders is a long-established, expanding and ambitious law firm with a Scottish and international client base, providing a range of services for business and private individuals. The firm has two branch offices in Arbroath and Forfar and a further three offices in Dundee, employing around 160 staff in total.

### Problem

Blackadders' IT team is responsible and committed to supporting the firm in adhering to regulatory compliance requirements, and improving the firm's competitive position through a long-term IT strategy using the latest cost-effective information technologies. Historically, the development team has focused on small-scale projects involving the integration of legacy applications into the firm's practice management system. However, the firm wished to further utilise their internal resource to deliver complete functional systems using the latest Microsoft technologies. They selected to work with FloSuite Ltd. and our Adaptive Business Solutions to achieve these aims.

Having undertaken a review of internal business processes, the firm identified that there were opportunities to make significant improvements within Private Client. The key targets for improvement were: to enable a greater element of management control, to reduce cycle times, to achieve efficiency gains and to improve the overall client experience. The new system would also have to work seamlessly with the firm's Pilgrim LawSoft practice management system.

### Solution

Wendy Miller, a senior application developer at Blackadders, was tasked with leading the development of the Executries/Probate system, working in conjunction with the Executry Project Team, consisting of Private Client Partner Donald Gordon, the Director of Executry Services Moira Shepherd, Director of IT Graham Thoms, and a Technology Partner. This team worked in conjunction with FloSuite personnel and other Blackadders staff.

The project team worked with FloSuite's consultants to design and deliver an Executries/Probate Solution, developed using FloSuite's flexible BPM/Case Management Framework.

The project was a major success and the resulting system includes the following functionality:

1. Manages the complete Executry process (testate and intestate) after matter creation, and the key milestones of Investigation, Exhibition, Realisation and Finalisation.
2. Ensures a standardised process is followed for each Executry.
3. Manages all Executry contact(s) information such as executors, beneficiaries, legatees, charities, etc.
4. Creates and maintains a central and comprehensive database of organisations communicated with, e.g. financial institutions, insurance companies, utility companies etc.
5. Assembles documents or pre-populates letters as appropriate and stores them within the practice management system.
6. Pre-populates regulatory forms such as C1, C5, IHT200, etc.
7. Automatically sends emails to relevant internal parties, such as share and property valuation requests.
8. Automatically produces an inventory and three-columned final account (giving date of death and realisation values).

9. Alerts fee earners when responses from various parties have not been received within specified timescales.
10. Integrates, and simplifies, fee earner posting with the practice management system.
11. Is an integral part of the firm's 'buddy system', allowing colleagues to easily understand and respond to a client's/respondent's requests during periods of absence.
12. Allows fee earners to effectively manage pending and available tasks.
13. Produces management reports of ongoing Executries/Probate matters and records a full audit trail.

## **Outcome**

Blackadders is delighted with this new solution and seen clear business benefits since its implementation, including efficiency gains of, on average, around 50% in the processing of Executries. The solution's built-in business rules and 'best practice' processes have also enabled improvement to the ratio of fee earners to support staff, and reallocation of resources from other departmental areas.

In association with FloSuite, the Private Client partners, Director of Executry Services, our Executry specialists and our IT team, we have recently developed a complete and flexible case management system for Executry administration. This system has already proved its worth in the efficient running of individual cases, and the management of the Executry section as a whole – and this is in addition to a quicker throughput of fees for the work that we do.

## **Business Benefits**

The key benefits of the Executry/Probate System are as follows:

1. Provides Private Client department with a clear view of all on-going executries, their milestones and current estate values.
2. Provides the fee earner with an up-to-date balance of the gross estate and its breakdown for each Executry.
3. Provides Executors with a detailed update at specified periods with minimal effort to the fee earner.
4. Improves departmental efficiency.
5. Eliminates duplication of data for letter generation.
6. Reduces risk by maintaining a complete audit trail.
7. Built-in business rules and 'best practice' processes enable improvement to ratio of fee earners to support staff and reallocation of resources from other departmental areas.
8. Reduces cycle times and increases volumes of work being processed.

## **Summary**

FloSuite and Blackadders worked closely to deliver a complete Executry/Probate solution built on the FloSuite Framework, which integrates fully with the firm's existing practice management system. The solution has transformed the way in which the Executries function of the Private Client department operates and generated significant measurable business benefits for the firm, whilst improving the service they are able to deliver to their clients.