

# The Tax Stack Assessment Checklist

The 20 questions to answer before committing to any platform for your firm or finance team – the same ones I work through in every stack assessment.

**HOW TO USE** Check a box only when you have a confirmed answer – and that answer works in your favor. Blank boxes are your open questions. Get those answered before you commit.

## 01 • WORKFLOW FIT

- Where does work actually slow down today – intake, prep, review, or delivery?
- Which steps live outside any system today (email, spreadsheets, someone's memory)?
- Does the tool match how your work actually flows, or will you redesign around it?
- Can it handle your messiest real return – multi-state, trusts, K-1s – not just the demo scenario?

## 02 • INTEGRATIONS & DATA

- Does it connect to your tax engine, document management, and practice management?
- How many times is the same client data re-keyed across systems?
- What is the migration path for prior-year data, templates, and workpapers?
- Can you get your data OUT if you leave? Test the export before you sign.

## 03 • PEOPLE & ADOPTION

- Who is the internal champion – and do they have busy-season credibility?
- What is the realistic training lift per person, in hours, before January?
- Which two or three people will resist hardest, and what do they need to see?
- What happens to the rollout if it is not finished before busy season?

## 04 • SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

- SOC 2 report available? Where is client data hosted and who can access it?
- If AI features are involved: what is the vendor's data-use and retention policy?
- Does it support MFA / SSO and fit your WISP (FTC Safeguards Rule)?
- Does vendor data retention align with your firm's records-retention policy?

## 05 • TOTAL COST & TIMING

- All-in cost: licenses + implementation + training hours + the realization dip.
- What does renewal look like – seat minimums, price escalators, auto-renew terms?
- Is the go-live date realistic relative to extension and filing deadlines?
- What is the exit cost – in dollars and disruption – if it does not work?

Scoring it honestly? If more than five boxes are blank, run the assessment before you sign anything.

Yani Marx, CPA · Founder, TaxStackIQ · info@taxstackiq.com · 20-minute discovery calls, no pitch.