



# ADVANCEFLOW AND CHECKPOINT ENGAGE: ONE REAL-TIME, WEB-BASED AUDIT SOLUTION

The convenience of the cloud with enterprise-level processing power

## MEET THE FIRM

**MN Blum LLC** is a full-service accounting firm based in Rockville, Maryland. **Maral Nakashian** and **Abba Blum**, president and vice president respectively, formed the firm in 2013. Both founders previously worked at a Top 50 firm before forming MN Blum, and continue to serve the sophisticated, larger clientele typical of a Top 100 firm.

The firm grew to approximately 20 employees, including Senior Manager **Dan Bures**, who led the implementation of **Thomson Reuters AdvanceFlow®** and **Thomson Reuters Checkpoint Engage™** — the combined power of the software made it possible for the firm to successfully work only in the cloud.

## PEACE OF MIND IN THE CLOUD

With combined professional experience of almost 50 years between them, Nakashian and Blum had a clear idea of how they wanted their firm to run. “The number one frustration in larger firms was how and where to find a document — it was the most frustrating, grueling experience,” Nakashian says.

MN Blum established a policy to never hold the original documents of the client, due to the risk of misplacing them or not being able to respond to clients immediately. “In that regard, we have focused on using only Thomson Reuters products and using them in the cloud,” Blum says. “We really think that the future is in the cloud...

we never spend a moment worrying about backup, security, data breaches, or outgrowing our system.”

This peace of mind was rooted in Thomson Reuters AdvanceFlow, the first audit management software that combines the convenience of the cloud with enterprise-level processing power. “Our [client] sweet spot is entrepreneurs who have more complex needs than a local accounting firm, but can’t afford the price of a higher accounting firm,” Blum says. “The AdvanceFlow system and Thomson Reuters GoFileRoom® give us all the capacities of the largest firms, but give us the opportunity to work very closely with the clients.”

Moreover, the combined power of AdvanceFlow and Checkpoint Engage provide a completely integrated cloud-based solution for enterprise audit firms. “As a pilot user of Checkpoint Engage, we really see the opportunity to integrate it with AdvanceFlow and significantly increase efficiency,” Blum says. “Most importantly, next year, all that data will be there in our system — it will automatically roll over. That could save us 30-35% of the time in our planning stage, which is a significant component of our audit budget.”



## FIRM

### **MN Blum LLC**

- Maral Nakashian, President
- Abba Blum, Vice President
- Dan Bures, Senior Manager

## ABOUT

MN Blum LLC is based in Rockville, Maryland. The firm serves larger clientele and businesses in the Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. areas, with a special focus on entrepreneurs. The firm offers a full range of services, including audit review, tax returns, estate planning and business services involving transactions, mergers, and acquisitions.

## WEBSITE

You can learn more about the firm at **MNBlum.com**.

## THOMSON REUTERS SOFTWARE

MN Blum uses AdvanceFlow, Checkpoint Engage and GoFileRoom®.



THOMSON REUTERS®

Nakashian and Blum were determined to provide a comprehensive cloud-based solution to their clients from the beginning, noting that they've seen other firms make the mistake of buying the lowest cost provider or the simplest solution. MN Blum LLC was one of the first firms to purchase AdvanceFlow, and software lead Dan Bures worked closely with Thomson Reuters, during the implementation and after.

"I love the evolving nature of AdvanceFlow... and how Thomson Reuters is working with partners of firms to make this product better and what firms want," Bures says.

"They spent a lot of time making sure that everything was right and that we understood the product and knew its capabilities."

Bures notes that many Thomson Reuters software developers have accounting backgrounds and approach the implementation process with that additional wealth of expertise. "It is just a really enjoyable experience to work with knowledgeable people," he says.

## ENSURING CLIENT SATISFACTION

"When we implemented AdvanceFlow, we immediately realized how much of a benefit this is to the clients because the clients can always have access to their data," Blum says. "Technology and change can be a little scary for all of us — but it just makes it more convenient for the clients." And with reliable cloud software, MN Blum has the ability to service clients from anywhere, 24/7, seven days a week.

The firm also experiences benefits with Checkpoint Engage on a daily basis. "The Checkpoint Engage system customizes the work program — and that's important because the staff can then focus its energy on what needs to be done and I can review just those important steps, and that creates efficiencies," Blum says. "Probably 20-25% of my time would be reduced, because I'm not looking at superfluous information."



"With Checkpoint Engage, the biggest advantage is its full integration with AdvanceFlow. We are able to fill out documents online in real time—all stored in the cloud. We never have to worry about losing data. Plus it automatically rolls over, so when we go to do next year's work, the information is already there. That could save us 30-35% of the time in our planning stage."

**- Abba Blum**  
Vice President, MN Blum, LLC

Bures sees numerous advantages to working with cloud-based products like AdvanceFlow and Checkpoint Engage — including simplicity, efficiency, consistency of process, lack of manual updates and interruptions, customizability, security, and easy collaboration with clients. "The cloud is a place where clients can get their information in a more convenient and secure manner than they're used to," Bures says. "There's no duplication of work and it's just complete peace of mind knowing that that's secure and out there and I'm not going to lose anything."

In addition to client satisfaction, the MN Blum staff is also empowered with cloud technology. When Nakashian and Blum purchased AdvanceFlow, one of the biggest advantages they saw was the ability to access the software from anywhere with zero IT burden. Because the firm went completely paperless and works on the cloud, the staff can avoid dangerous weather or the tremendous amount of traffic in the Washington, D.C. area by working from home or at a client's office — and still enjoy the same access they would have at the firm's office.

This technology also provides value from a recruiting and staff training perspective. At previous firms in which she worked, Nakashian spent an entire 40-hour work week teaching new hires how to use work systems that frequently overwhelmed and confused the new employees with complicated administrative processes. In comparison, with the simplicity of the cloud, it's easy for new staff to learn the firm's workflow — often in as little time as half a day. The recruiting process has also become easier because the platform and cloud technology allow MN Blum, a small firm of 20 people, to successfully compete with the largest firms.

"I hope this firm continues to grow at the 25% pace it's been growing the last two years," Blum says. "But even if it does, I'll never outgrow the products I'm using — and that gives me a lot of comfort."



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- Dan Bures  
Senior Manager, MN Blum, LLC



To learn more about AdvanceFlow and its seamless integration with Checkpoint Engage, visit [Tax.TR.com/Audit-in-the-Cloud/](https://tax.tr.com/Audit-in-the-Cloud/) or contact us about AdvanceFlow at +1 800 968 8900 or Checkpoint Engage at +1 800 431 9025.

