
Toni Levy & Associates

IT Strategic Assessment Report

21 April 2021

Toni Levy & Associates	Version: 1.1
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Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
4 April 2021	1.0	Initial Draft and Collection of Data from Interview	Regis Wilson
21 April 2021	1.1	Final Draft	Regis Wilson

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1. Executive Summary

Successful business owners, individuals, non-profits and large corporations in Louisville's financially motivated society continue to look for ways to conserve their hard-earned dollars wherever they can. Often, the accounting firm they employ is their largest asset, Toni Levy & Associates (TLA) provides outstanding service to their clients because of their dedication of the four core values, which are client service, culture, community, and commitment.

TLA has built its reputation on integrity by providing excellent service to our clients. They understand a professional accounting firm must be many things to its clientele - a management and financial advisor, a business consultant, an investment counselor, a tax and pension planner - in addition to providing the traditional accounting, auditing, payroll services, preparing business certification, non profits start ups and many more services to provide to its customers.

More than 99 percent of the clients of TLA stated that they were more than pleased with the overall service (timeliness, capabilities, responsiveness, accuracy, and cost benefit) they received at Toni Levy & Associates, Inc. Toni Levy & Associates is able to provide just the right combination of consulting services and accounting skills to small business owners, individuals, non-profits and large corporations. Standing behind their clients with on-going support, training and development functions is something that Toni Levy & Associates stand on day in and day out.

The organization culture of TLA is relaxed, but professional. Each team member is valued has an

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individual, mobilized around the common goal of creating an outstanding value for customers and other stakeholders. TLA strives to create an atmosphere of empowerment where employees want to stay. This means that for their clients there is consistency of staff on their engagement and in turn an increased efficiency.

Toni Levy & Associates has proven their ability to do a thorough job and are highly respected throughout the community. The firm is committed to and recognizes its corporate responsibility to the community in which it is based. TLA has served its community by allowing high school & college interns to shadow the firm's work, and also by donating accounting services.

Through TLA's tax and software seminars, for both individuals and business owners, they strive to continue educating the community in these rapidly changing fields. TLA understands the needs of our community and continue to create new ways to enhance its growth and sustainability.

TLA is committed to helping its clients organization achieve its financial goals and objectives with their staff's combined over 30 years of experience. Their in-house technological resources target your company's specific needs to create efficiencies that will provide positive results in your business' growth. Toni Levy & Associates' commitment in keeping its clients business in compliance with regulatory requirements and providing excellent customer service for the progression of the clients business is of the utmost importance

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2. History and Purpose

2.1 History of Toni Levy & Associates

Toni Levy founded and is now the president of Toni Levy and Associates, Inc. (TLA), the parent company for Toni Levy, CPA; Levy Construction and Building Supplies; Levy's Electrical and Plumbing Supplies; TLA Workforce; and Levy's Construction Company. TLA is woman-owned/minority owned.

Ms. Levy always wanted to be an accountant, and she set her goals accordingly. After graduating from college with a degree in Computer Technology and later an accountancy-based degree, Toni Levy was employed by a local accounting firm, where she honed her skills. She also is a graduate of Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, Executive Business Program. Upon earning her Certified Public Accountant credentials, her innate instincts for entrepreneurship took hold. In 1998, with the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) financial guaranty on a 7(a) loan, she started her own accounting firm. She later used the 7(a) loan program to expand her business.

As the leader of businesses in industries dominated by large corporations and strong networks, Toni has demonstrated the ability to compete successfully. After realizing little success in bidding on federal and state contracts, TLA applied for and was accepted into the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program for disadvantaged entrepreneurs in order to be more competitive on government contracts. As a certified 8(a) firm, TLA has obtained large federal contracts and realized steady growth. The affiliated businesses are also an SBA-Certificated HUBZone Participant and classified as a Small Disadvantaged Businesses.

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Innovative arrays of service and perseverance have enabled TLA to meet the ever-growing needs of the community it serves. When the business location became too small, Toni started a construction company and built a 12,000 square-foot facility which now houses her companies.

TLA clearly reflects Toni's strong commitment to excellence. In addition to being a woman-owned/minority business, Toni has overcome major challenges to ensure business success, and the businesses have flourished. She has been the recipient of numerous honors and recognition. She received the 2000 business of the year award from the Kentuckiana Minority Supplier Development Council, the 2001 small business of the year award from the U.S. Small Business Administration, Woman of the Year award from the National Association for Professional Women in 2006, and in 2007 was a Finalist for The Women Business Owner of the Year by the National Association of Women Business Owners. She also was the recipient of the 2006 Louisville Defender Minority Business Achievement Award and listed among the most influential in the Who's Who in Black Louisville. Toni is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants and serves on the board of Dress for Success – Louisville Chapter, and the Minority Business Input Committee for the Tri-State Minority Supply Development Council.

2.2 Purpose of Toni Levy & Associates

The purpose of Toni Levy & Associates is to help serve and supply their clients with the necessary tools to help their business(es) thrive in this economy with things like tax services, businesses services, and personal services all with respective subcategories as well.

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3. Management and Business Processes.

[In this section, document the major processes necessary for the organization to fulfill its mission.]

3.1 Storing client's information in a database for retrieval

Toni Levy & Associates, has a process that allows for them to keep their clients information together in a database so that it can be retrieved from virtually anywhere within the system by people with the administrative rights to either the whole system or to the person individually. This process is extremely important because without it, TLA would not be able to adequately assist its clients from year to year, especially when tax season rolls around and things are misplaced or not saved. The database used allows for easy retrieval of information needed to assess, advise, and complete tasks to benefit the client's needs. This is crucial to the overall success of TLA.

3.2 Creating a great relationship with its clients.

This is also critical to the overall success of TLA. Having a good relationship between the staff and advisors with the clients helps nurture and promote more positive feedback which could be a point of return for existing clients but would allow for word of mouth to get out about TLA and other new clients could experience this as well. The work that is done at TLA is very crucial to be accurate and correct in all forms without any type of discrepancy. With a positive relationship, the likelihood of false information or not the full truth is lessened as clients feel like they can trust TLA which is something TLA strives to incorporate into their business endeavors.

3.3 Online service preparation

Toni Levy & Associates website allows for clients to prepare their documents whether they are filing for taxes, payroll information, personal financial planning, and even non-profit

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organization filing online. Toni Levy & Associates have developed this system to allow for its clients to meet virtually and complete documents virtually instead of going down to the office. The option to go down to the office is still very much available to the clients, but the access to an online platform truly shows that Toni Levy & Associates is making strives to a more inclusive, and comfortable relationship.

3.4 Transparency and Communication

Toni Levy & Associates strives to implement its core values into every single aspect of its daily operations- client service, culture, community, and commitment. By taking this and applying it to each and every client that walks through the door or sets up a virtual meeting, Toni Levy & Associates strives to showcase each one of these values every time. TLA wants to create an atmosphere amongst its employees and its clients that shows everyone that you are valued and they will help you and your business in any way they possibly can, but there will be no beating around the bush or false narratives.

3.5 Ensuring that personnel have required knowledge, experience and training to perform their duties

Toni Levy & Associates has a requirement that all employees there have a basic understanding of their role there and What is needed to complete the task adequately. Employees are expected to perform at a certain quota so that they can give the clients the best possible service, with having this type of training, knowledge, and experience dealing with clients on a day to day basis based on their situation the employees of Toni Levy & Associates can perform their duties swiftly and with excellence.

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4. Current IT Environment

4.1 Hardware

Currently, Toni Levy & Associates are using desktops that are all on a centralized network. Their last update to their desktop's hardware was in 2015. Which means they could be using dated hardware and not getting the best efficiency out of their work as they could. Each desktop that the employees use, have an Intel i5-4670S @ 3.1 GHz. And these desktops have been running all of the software that each employee needs to use on a daily basis. There are also a few HP LaserJet Enterprise Printers around the mortar and brick location as well. These have been updated pretty recently in 2019 but sometimes there are problems with the desktop computers connecting to them.

4.2 Software

Currently Toni Levy & Associates use many different software to complete their daily operations. Upon meeting with Toni Levy, she told me that there are 2 virtual servers that are managed in house by her husband Greg Levy, once a week, that holds all of their applications. When you sign on to a desktop, that specific login has all of the resources and applications that person would need to do their job. There is a very detailed and elaborate accounting software, or an enterprise accounting software system known as Traverse Software, it is able to collect information and pre-enter information for certain things that a client might need. There is also a very elaborate tax software as well. This software was available to each employee and allowed for them to directly file taxes and other important tax documents virtually over video calls or in person. It is also important to note that each desktop, and each application was networked with one another, so it is all connected no matter where you go.

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4.3 Staff IT Skills/Training

Each employee at Toni Levy & Associates is expected to have some knowledge of their respected software whether it is a different version they are expected to have some understanding of this. There is not much training for the employees as each person's task is different because of their specialization to the company. The only "training" that could be considered learning on the job is when an intern is at Toni Levy & Associates, and this is seldom as they do not normally have interns year round.

4.4 IT Budgeting and Spending

Most of the original software that it stored on the servers is still there and used today with the exception of Windows 7 to Windows 10. But there is not much spending on anything that is IT related within Toni Levy & Associates. Greg Levy, her husband, who generally manages most of the IT infrastructure has not seen a need to update any of the processes as he told me over the phone that none of the employees come to him with any type of complaint about their system being so slow that they cannot operate. The last major overhaul and spending spree was back in 2015 when the whole business got new desktops and all of the new processors were implemented and the printers were installed around the company as well. This could prove to be a point for improvement later down the road as virtual stability becomes more and more important.

5. Envisioned IT Capabilities

5.1 Leadership's Vision

The leadership of Toni Levy & Associates wants to be able to grow in a way that allows for the company to grow holistically. There has been the talk and heavy consideration about having a more defined an centralized infrastructure within the business, this means that there would be a dedicated area for everyone to work rather than everyone being crammed in one location. this

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would also allow for the business to expand and hire more IT professionals and other interns that could help with the original goal of the business with accounting and tax information with finances or could go over more towards the role in either making sure the information is secure updating the website and other things that can help benefit the business for years and years to come.

Toni Levy & Associates would also like to update their website periodically with no an improved operations an opportunities for individuals or businesses to complete their financial needs with Toni Levy & Associates. having a updated website and an improved landing page can make it more pleasing to the eye and potentially allow for a automated virtual presence that can help with navigating users through the website. this would allow for users to talk to a virtual person and if they need a certain file or want to file a certain way this would be able to direct them in the right direction or set up a meeting so that they could go down to the office or virtually connect to a platform and conversate and get their needs met.

In addition to this, Toni Levy & Associates would like to see a clear picture of who has authority and seniority in the company as well as depicting this on the website. Currently, Greg Levy, is the only person working on the IT infrastructure of this business, which is not particularly the smartest avenue to go down. while he has been helpful having a dedicated team to manage all of the operations from a technical perspective can be better not only in the short run but in the long run as well. this would allow for better utilization of the company's resources and assets.

Ultimately, Toni Levy & Associates wants to create a positive and lasting experience on its

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clients and it believes that through improving their IT infrastructure, they can not only achieve that but so much more. having a website for clients to land on and potentially talk to a virtual assistant that can help with any types of needs is something that most clients might enjoy. though the clients would not see this part but having a team dedicated to the IT needs of the company can also prove to be better. letting them manage the servers where all of the applications are held updated and periodically as needed and ensuring that they are up to date and up to code on any type of legal standards or any type of security standards so that Toni Levy & Associates can perform their operations without worrying about anything else except for the customer.

5.2 Top 10 Technology Issues

1. Lack of website

Toni Levy & Associates Currently have a website but this website has not been updated and therefore may look outdated and deter potential clients from viewing other parts of the website. With this being the case, if there was an improvement on what was already created with this website or a new website altogether for the company and clients and potential clients to use, the traffic and potential business possibly would increase.

2. Using outdated hardware and software

Toni Levy & Associates Have not had a hardware update since 2015, which has been a substantial amount of time. there have been new products that come up that are faster stronger in better than the current ones that they have and if they were able to use those better products in their everyday operations this would allow for the company to work swiftly to work more smoothly and potentially work faster and more accurately. by doing this they could probably see more customers come into their office and complete more and more tasks on a daily basis.

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3. Exposure

Though Toni Levy Has been in this business for quite some time, the exposure to the surrounding community has been something that could be improved upon by utilizing such things like social media and other avenues to reach other clientele. as technology advances and improves each and every day businesses should advance and improve with technology, just like you would see an ad for a restaurant and potentially try that restaurant based on the ad you see, using that type of advertisement an engagement through these platforms can help with bringing in more clients that will benefit the business as a whole.

4. Anti-virus software

Given that all of these software used by any employee here is stored on 2 servers. with that being said there is very very little antivirus software installed with that. dealing with the information that they handle here at Toni Levy & Associates, it is crucial that that information is kept secure not only for the client sake but for the businesses sake as well. As there could be an antivirus software installed to each server that could be implemented and put on each device as an employee were to sign on this could prove to be beneficial to help keeping the information and data secure for the clients.

5. Risk of data loss

By Toni Levy & Associates Keeping all of their data stored in house on 2 servers that can be used by any of the employees with their current structure they are at a risk of major data loss because of how it is only stored there. if this business were to lose power or suffer a breach of some sort, or even a shortage the information and data that is there is at a high risk that it will be

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lost a could never be retrieved. but if this information was stored on a remotely accessed server or database probably through a third party or another company, then there would probably be less risk of this information being lost.

6. Productivity

Though employees have never shared about there task being too much for their system to handle, there has been talk about how productivity in tasks can be improved. To complete a certain task, employees would have to go through numerous steps to only complete half when the steps could be completed faster and more efficiently to help serve the clients. improving on the productivity at hand would allow for more employees' focus to be on serving the client.

7. Security of emails

This concern is valid because there is the potential of phishing attacks within emails that are sent between employees in this company. by having policies that lack cyber security protocols and standards this can grow into a more prominent issue. there is no multi factor authenticator for sign on purposes and there is no policy in place for regularly changing passwords. in addition to this there is no formal training program that would teach the staff how to identify against these attacks so that they could adequately respond, report, and dismiss this attack and continue with their task.

8. IT support is limited

Greg Levy is the only person who is normally working on the system here. If Mr. Levy, is unavailable then no one would have any knowledge about the system except for him. if there was

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a team of people a collective group if you will, who were able to set up the system either in-house or remotely then operations could run swiftly and potentially more efficiently as there would not only be one person who could manage the entire system for the whole business. improving on this would create a atmosphere where employees could take their problems directly to the IT support technicians or professionals and that could be resolved quickly rather than waiting on one person to solve all of the problems.

9. Client interaction

Currently, there is very limited client interaction involved with Toni Levy & Associates. is clients have questions comments or concerns it could be very difficult for them to express those things to the company. but if you allow for 24/7 services through social media or the website, have an interactive support menu, and other things that could help improve and make a more suitable an enjoyable interaction for the client.

10.Lack of defined software, confusion on platforms used

Though there are many softwares used within this company, and there are employees who specialize in certain tasks, there are softwares to compliment these employees to complete their tasks. but for one specific task there may be more than one software to use some employees feel comfortable with one while other employees feel comfortable with a latter choice.

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6. Recommendations for Toni Levy & Associates

6.1 Update all hardware and software appliances

Though the hardware and software used at this company has not proven to be any issues as far as slow times or latency problems, since the last major overhaul of a hardware update was 2015 it is time to update the hardware and since the hardware is being updated the software should follow suit. I also want to suggest that to do this there would have to be a larger group of people doing so rather than just one person. allowing for these updates to take place can improve on many aspects of the company that they hold near and dear to them. for the hardware there could be things implemented such as either pre built desktops that would come ready to go all you had to do was plug it in and connect it or the newer parts could come and be installed manually by a team. I would recommend the first one though it may cost more money it would allow for business and operations to resume as usual without any unwanted interruption and potential mishap that would delay getting back into the swing of things further. for updating the software I recommend that there is a central repository where all the software is held and that there is an automatic update of the software whenever there is 1 coming out and I believe that this could be set up by the individual user of their own system to say after 5:00 PM all updates available will be executed.

6.2 Using project management software

One way to stay organized and even to boost productivity in the workplace is to use project management software. not only will this help with keeping things organized but this would allow for employees to see what is on their plate and allow for higher managers to see an employee's workload an move things around or suggest that an employee may do something different to

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better allocate their time and resources to the task at hand. using project management software is not something to be frowned upon, many businesses can benefit from using this as they may not notice a need for it until they actually have it implemented into their everyday operations. this would help the business move towards a more technological dependent Ave but it would also allow for that aspect of organization and productivity to be accessible from virtually anywhere connected to the servers within the business.

6.3 Devote IT operations to a newly hired team or remotely located team

IT operations are something that can make or break a business depending on how they are used. they should be used with care but they should also be used with the utmost understanding and flexibility. Sadly, this cannot be done with only one person and be successful for years to come. though it may seem like a good option in the beginning things have to advance. if this business were to allow their IT operations to be held in another sector of the business or remotely located then other things would follow suit and being more productive. employees would not have to worry about updating softwares as these IT technicians and professionals could do that remotely or set up a platform for where it will automatically update based on the employees preference. some employees may work later than others, some employees may arrive earlier than others, having a strong IT presence an understanding of the system what give the company peace of mind knowing that their operations are safe.

6.4 Improving the website

When a client searches up Toni Levy & Associates, and comes to the web page, first impressions are everything. this could determine if the client stays on the website, how he or she may look

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around on the website, and how the client could review the website. having a strong landing page would allow for the client to be more willing to stay on and navigate through the website. the website was created and it served its purpose years ago, but the structure that the website is in now, the color scheme that is used in the website, in the basic use of tabs in web pages can be improved upon tenfold. by improving on this clients may feel more welcome to the website and adding on the virtual assistant and 24/7 customer service could also help decline have a better experience navigating the website an communicating with other employees at Toni Levy & Associates.

6.5 Automate operations

Part of the day-to-day operations in this company deals with tax preparation and other things dealing with accountancy. most of the time these documents have been continued or compiled from previous years and there are trends that show what may come for the current year. though this may seem like an invasion of privacy or taking away from the physical experience of filing, having clients too provide there spending history or other sufficient legal documents detailing this information could help with automating the operations for the business. this would allow for the business too complete more task an quickly serve their clients and potentially predict certain categories of documents which would cut down on time allotted to complete those sections.

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7. Conclusions

In conclusion, Toni Levy & Associates, has some work to do regarding their IT presence in their business and in this industry. they are committed to exemplifying their dedication to quality client services, promoting a healthy and positive culture, uplifting the community around them, and commitment to its clients' needs. With Updating hardware and software within the business, implementing a project management software to help increase in promote organization and productivity, delegating IT work to either a remote company or new hires to manage the system, improving and updating on the website and landing page for the client, and using this information to help automate operations can all be something that Toni Levy & Associates can benefit from and help them grow in the future for years to come.

8. Appendices

8.1 Basis of Analysis

[In this section, explain findings in light of the theories and models used in the course, as outlined in Dr. Barker's class meetings.]

Porters 5 forces

Threat of new entrants: Low

Because this is a financial service business there are state and government regulations on these businesses, there is a process that a business has to go through, and the risk of doing something wrong is also very likely to negatively effect the business as a whole.

Threat of substitutes: Moderate

There are other online, no contact options to fill out certain documents like on TurboTax, but with a brick and mortar place like Toni Levy & Associates, it allows for a human interaction as

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well as the opportunity for negotiation about said services for the client's benefit.

Threat of consumers: High

The clients for the business have the ability to make or break the business. They can easily take their business elsewhere and complete it on a fully online service like TurboTax.

Competitive rivalry: Moderate

Though there are not many other services like this in Louisville, there are some more prominent services in Louisville that more people use and this could prove to be a substantial problem to the overall success of Toni Levy & Associates.

Threat of suppliers: Moderate

TurboTax and other local financial institutions that execute the same operations can be used against each other to appeal to a consumer.

8.2 Technology Inventory

- 2 centrally used servers in house
- Elaborate detailed Accounting Software
- Elaborate detailed Tax Preparation Software
- Network based/connectedness

8.3 Top 10 Technology Issues

- Lack of website
- Using outdated hardware and software
- Exposure
- Antivirus software
- Risk of data loss
- Productivity
- Security of emails
- IT support is limited

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- Client interaction
- Lack of defined software, confusion on platforms used

8.4 Strategic Planning/Visioning Documents

Not Available

8.5 IT Budget/Spending Documents

Not Available