

# Tax Office Systems & Workflow

## Master Study Guide

## 1. Understanding the Workflow

### What a Workflow Is

- A workflow is the path a client follows from first contact to completed return.
- Without a workflow, a tax office becomes reactive instead of organized.
- A workflow creates consistency.

### Example Workflow

- Client Inquiry
- Client Intake
- Document Collection
- Return Preparation
- Return Review
- Client Approval
- Signature Collection
- Transmission
- IRS Acknowledgement
- Follow-Up

### Why Workflows Matter

- Reduce confusion
- Improve efficiency
- Improve client experience
- Increase productivity
- Improve compliance

## 2. Client Intake

### Information to Collect

- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number
- Address
- Phone number

- Email address
- Filing status
- Dependent information
- Banking information
- Prior-year tax return when available

### **Required Documents**

- Government-issued photo ID
- Social Security cards
- W-2s
- 1099s
- Business records when applicable
- Tax documents related to credits claimed

### **Key Takeaway**

- The quality of the return often depends on the quality of the intake.
- A strong intake process prevents problems before they start.

## **3. Document Collection and Organization**

### **Common Collection Methods**

- Secure portal
- Mobile app
- Encrypted email
- In-person collection
- Secure cloud storage

### **Best Practices**

- Label files consistently
- Verify all required documents
- Use checklists
- Track missing documents
- Maintain organized client folders

### **Common Mistakes**

- Accepting incomplete files
- Missing signatures
- Missing Social Security cards
- Missing income documents

## **Key Takeaway**

- Organized documents create organized returns.

## **4. Return Preparation Process**

### **Preparation Steps**

- 1. Review documents for completeness.
- 2. Verify taxpayer information.
- 3. Input tax documents.
- 4. Review calculations.
- 5. Review credits and deductions.
- 6. Verify bank information.
- 7. Complete quality review.

### **Important Reminder**

- Never guess.
- If information is missing, request clarification from the client.
- Accurate preparation starts with accurate information.

## **5. Return Review**

### **Review Checklist**

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number
- Filing Status
- Dependents
- Income Documents
- Credits
- Bank Information
- Preparation Fees
- Required Forms
- Signatures

### **ERO Responsibility**

- Do not allow returns to be transmitted without review.
- The larger the office becomes, the more important the review process becomes.
- Reviewing returns protects clients and the EFIN.

## **6. Client Communication**

## **Communication Stages**

- New Lead
- Document Request
- Return In Progress
- Ready For Review
- Accepted Return
- Funded Return
- Off-Season Follow-Up

## **Best Practices**

- Respond promptly
- Set expectations
- Provide updates
- Follow up consistently
- Document important conversations

## **Key Takeaway**

- Clients appreciate communication almost as much as results.

# **7. Automation**

## **Examples of Automation**

- Appointment reminders
- Document request reminders
- Missed call text backs
- Follow-up emails
- Review requests
- Funding notifications

## **Benefits**

- Saves time
- Improves consistency
- Reduces missed opportunities
- Improves client experience

## **Key Takeaway**

- Automation does not replace relationships.
- Automate repetitive tasks so you can focus on serving clients.

# **8. Standard Operating Procedures**

## **What SOP Means**

- SOP stands for Standard Operating Procedure.
- An SOP is a written document explaining how a task should be completed.

## **Examples of SOPs**

- New Client Intake SOP
- Return Review SOP
- Document Collection SOP
- Funding Process SOP
- Client Communication SOP

## **Key Takeaway**

- SOPs create consistency.
- If a task is repeated often, it should have an SOP.

# **9. Client Experience**

## **What Clients Expect**

- Professionalism
- Communication
- Accuracy
- Transparency
- Convenience

## **Ways to Improve the Experience**

- Easy document submission
- Clear instructions
- Fast responses
- Professional communication
- Follow-up after filing

## **Key Takeaway**

- A great experience creates repeat clients and referrals.

# **10. Systems and Scaling**

## **Signs You Need Better Systems**

- Lost documents
- Missed follow-ups
- Inconsistent communication
- Delayed returns

- Team confusion
- Compliance issues

## **Signs Your Systems Are Working**

- Consistent workflow
- Clear communication
- Organized records
- Faster turnaround times
- Better client retention
- Easier team management

## **Key Takeaway**

- Without systems, growth creates stress.
- With systems, growth creates opportunity.
- Systems are what allow businesses to scale successfully.

# **11. Full Office Workflow Example**

## **End-to-End Flow**

- Lead Comes In
- Client Completes Intake Form
- Documents Submitted
- Documents Reviewed
- Return Prepared
- Return Reviewed
- Client Approval
- Form 8879 Signed
- Return Transmitted
- IRS Accepted
- Funding Processed
- Client Follow-Up
- Retention Campaign

## **Final Reminder**

- This workflow can be customized based on the office structure.