



# Planning for a successful and stress- free tax season

[karbonhq.com](https://karbonhq.com)



# Meet your host



**Ian Vacin**

Karbon

Chief Customer Officer

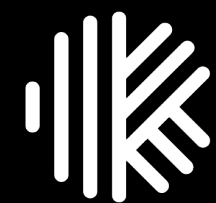


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- 1. Close any open apps**
- 2. Ask and we'll answer**



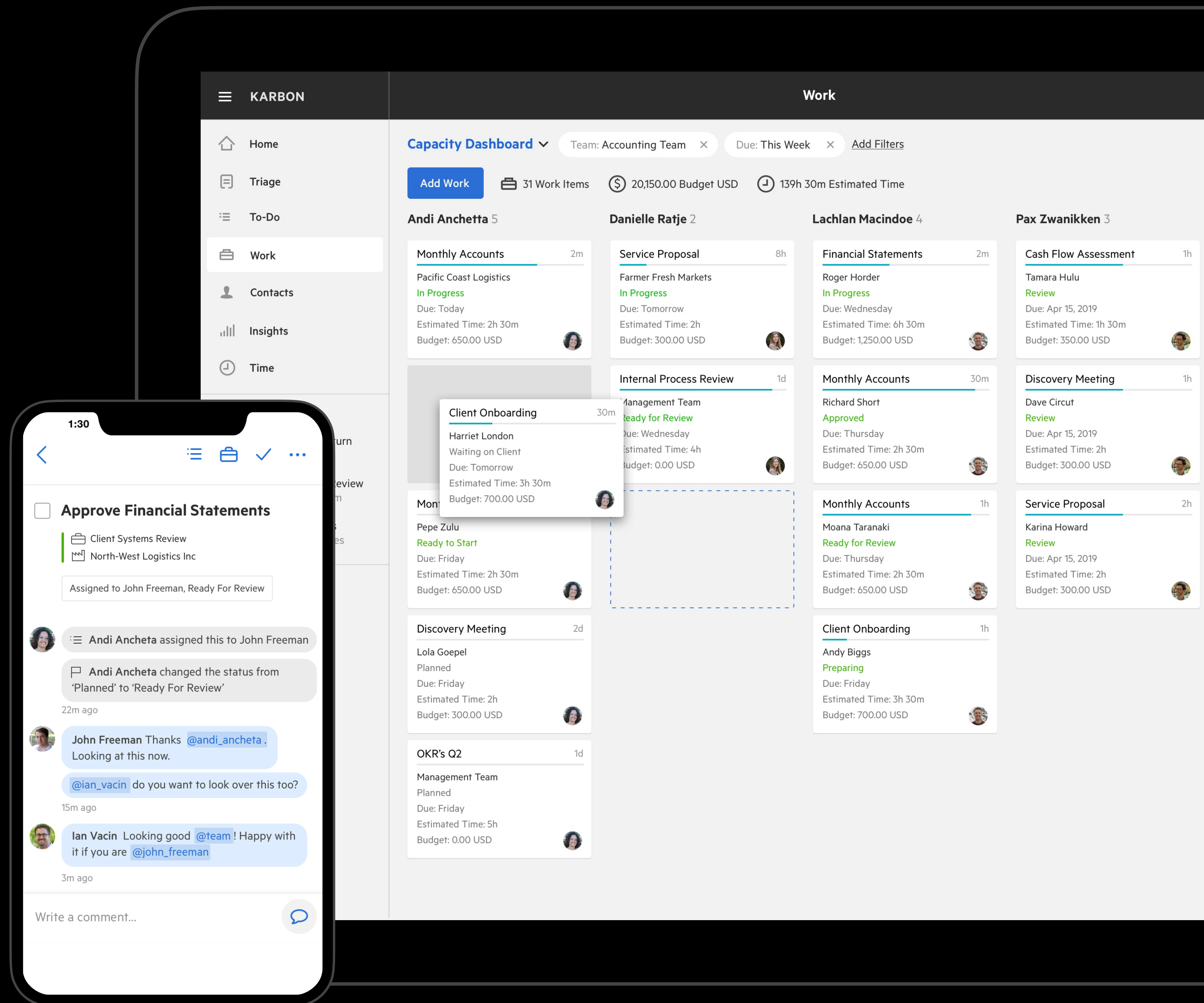




# Work Management Software *for* Accounting Firms

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GET STARTED





- 1. Theory: Operations Management**
- 2. Planning horizons**
- 3. Tax workflow & management**
- 4. Operations management: Tips & tricks**
- 5. Customized dashboards**

# Theory: Operations Management






A person is shown from the waist down, wearing dark blue jeans and colorful striped socks. They are leaning over a large, dark-colored rolling suitcase that is open. The suitcase is filled with various folded clothes, including a bright green sweater, a pink and white checkered shirt, and several dark-colored sweaters. The person's hands are visible, one resting on the top of the suitcase and the other near the clothes. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with a white baseboard. The floor is dark and reflective.

# Tax season



A photograph of an airplane cabin interior, viewed from the back of the plane looking forward. The cabin is mostly empty, with only a few rows of seats occupied. The seats are white with blue headrest covers. Each seat has a small screen on the backrest. The overhead luggage bins are closed. The lighting is bright and even. The text "85%" is overlaid in the center of the image.

85%



# BENEFITS OF CAPACITY PLANNING

1

## Maximize Utilization

Get more done with the same amount of people

2

## Real-time Data

Accurate information on team availability

3

## Better Planning

Know the demand for resources

4

## Protect Your Team

Help your team avoid burnout

5

## Organize Your Time

Know what's coming & prioritize

1. Maximize utilization
2. Real-time data
3. Better planning
4. Protect your team
5. Organize your time



# Push



Just in case

# Pull



Just in time



*Push strategy is best for small demand uncertainty as the forecast will provide a good direction on what to produce and keep in inventory.*

*Pull strategy is best for high demand uncertainty and low importance for economies of scale because aggregation does not reduce cost.*



*Push strategy is best for small demand uncertainty  
as the forecast will provide a good direction on  
what to produce and keep in inventory.*

## Planning

*Pull strategy is best for high demand uncertainty  
and low importance for economies of scale  
because aggregation does not reduce cost.*

## Production



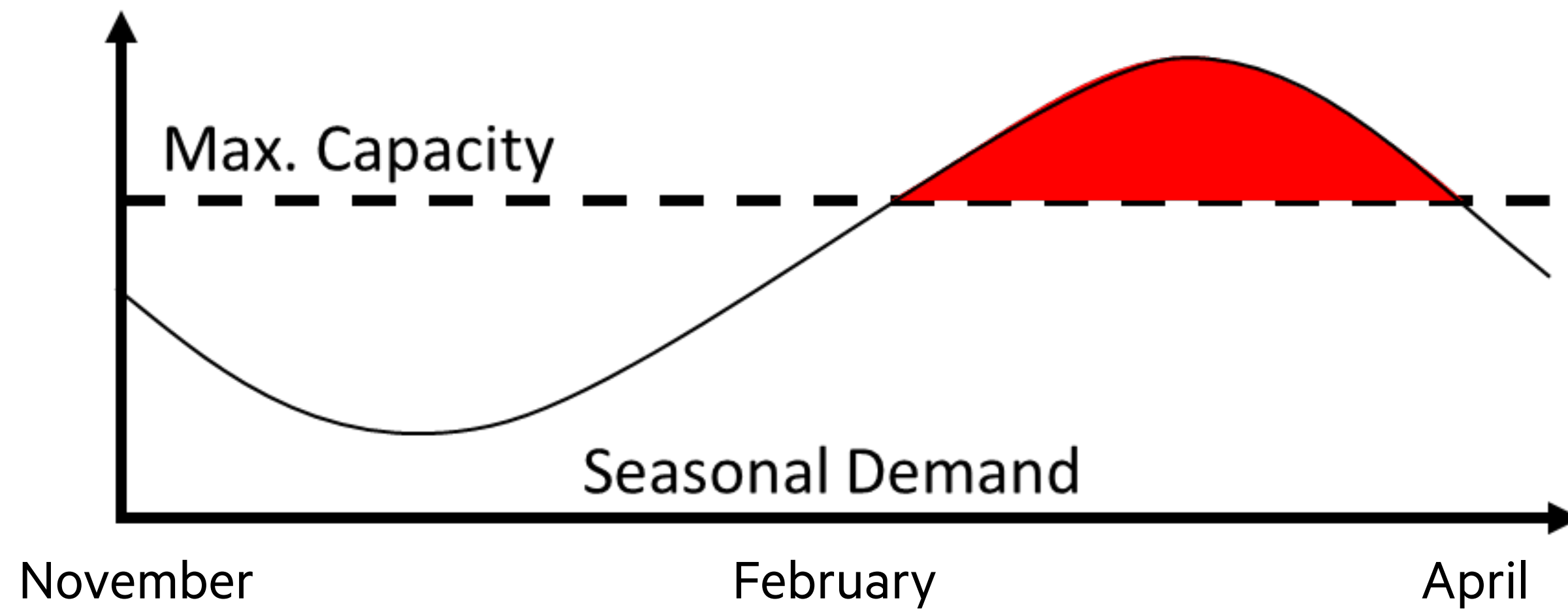
# Push strategy for resource planning

- Understand your workforce
- Analyze your team output
- Conduct demand analysis
- Conduct a supply analysis
- Build a gap analysis & strategy
- **Implement workforce plan:** Action plan, feedback loop, processes





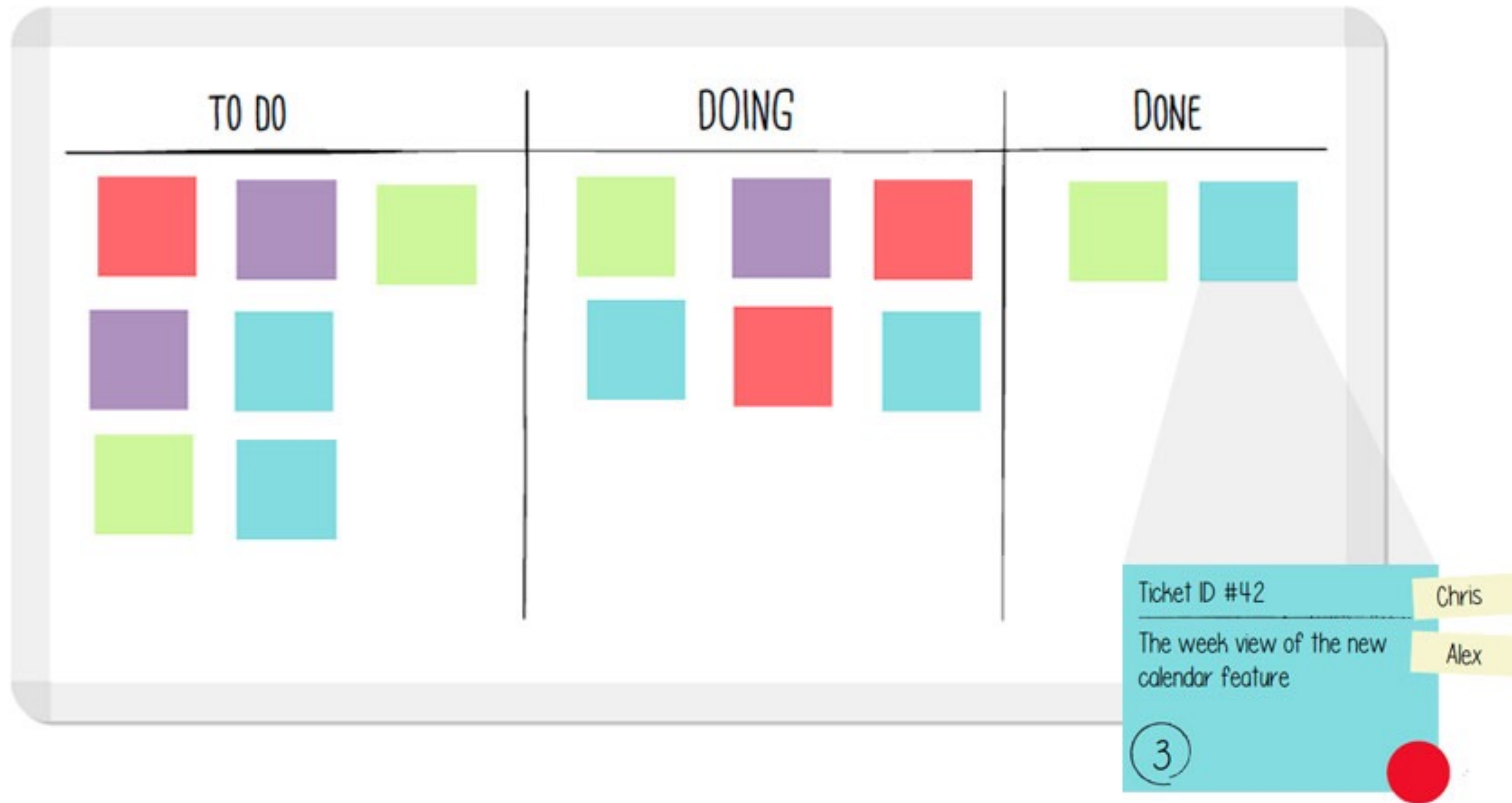
# Seasonality with tax



- What are the major causes of bunched work & lag time?
- Do you know when all new work must be done as an extension?
- Can you quote when work will exit the system when it starts?



# Kanban: Just-in-time delivery



# Planning Horizons

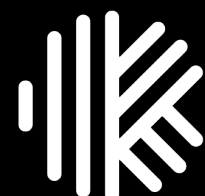




# Roles & responsibilities

Key questions each role should be asking

	Individuals	Managers	Leadership
First thing	What has changed since I last checked my projects / clients?	What has changed across the team since I last checked?	What is happening across the practice?
Urgency	Any urgent issues with my clients?	Are we on-track to hit our deadlines and meet our goals?	Are our clients happy?
Prioritization	What are my priorities? Have they shifted?	Are we servicing our clients? Are our processes sufficient?	Do we have the resources and tools we need to be successful?
Projects	Are my projects coming along as expected?	How do we do things more efficiently as a team?	How do we drive more business from new or existing clients?
Looking ahead	Will I meet my deadlines? On-time? At quality?	What cross-sell or up-sell opportunities exist?	Are we profitable? What should we change or double down on?
Vantage point	My	Our	Us



# Operations Management Planning Horizons

- **Now:** Work prioritization
- **Short-term:** Load balancing
- **Medium-term:** Capacity planning
- **Long-term:** Demand forecasting



# Operations Management Planning Horizons

Now

Near-term

Mid-term

Future

1

## Work prioritization

- **Role:** Individual.
- **When:** Today (now).
- **Pre-activity:** Understand your day, what needs to be tackled, and in what order.
- **Post-activity:** Re-prioritize to-dos, update to-do dates, delete or assign to others, plan day / week, and get tasks done.
- **Area of Karbon:** To Dos (using filters) and Triage.



# Operations Management Planning Horizons

Now

Near-term

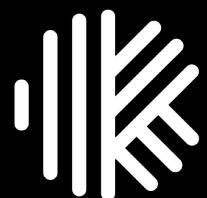
Mid-term

Future

2

## Load balancing

- **Role:** Manager.
- **When:** This week (and next week).
- **Pre-activity:** Review Work-In-Progress (WIP), upcoming work, what work is ahead or behind schedule, and what staff has what work (and how much relatively).
- **Post-activity:** Comment on key work items, re-prioritize work, update work due dates, move work between colleagues, and assign new work where spare capacity exists.
- **Area of Karbon:** Saved Views of Work (kanban), Work (items) and custom reports (using Work export).



# Operations Management Planning Horizons

Now

Near-term

Mid-term

Future

3

## Capacity planning

- **Role:** Manager and Leadership.
- **When:** This month (and next period).
- **Pre-activity:** Review current work / utilization / capacity, and next period's steady state work / utilization / capacity.
- **Post-activity:** Re-balance existing work between staff members, train / cross-train / promote / hire staff, and re-prioritize work or activities between staff.
- **Area of Karbon:** Time (timesheets, utilization), Saved Views of Work (kanban), and custom reports (using Work/Time exports).





# Operations Management Planning Horizons

Now

Near-term

Mid-term

Future



## Demand forecasting

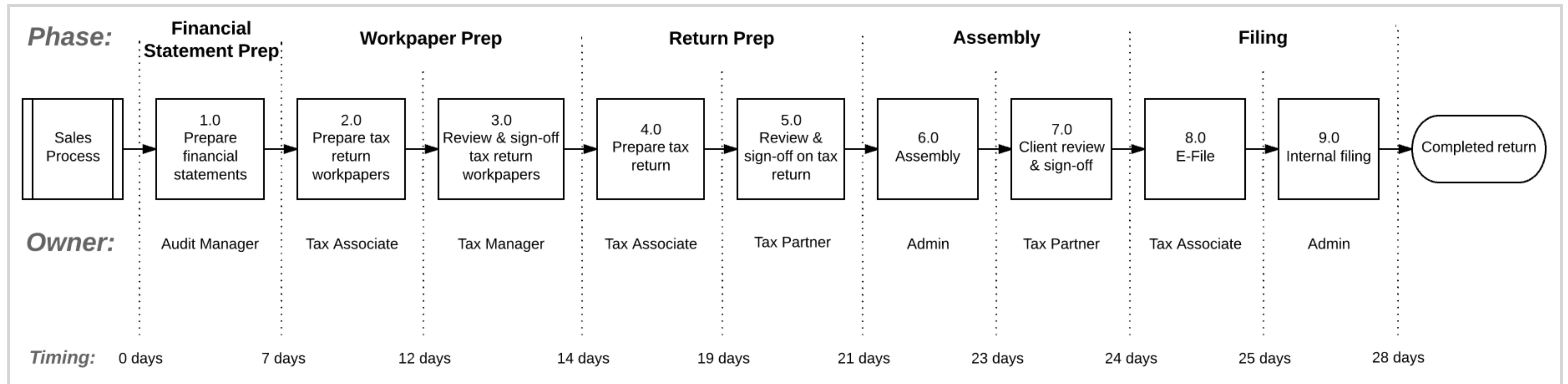
- **Role:** Leadership.
- **When:** Next quarter (next 6 months, next year).
- **Pre-activity:** Review all work completed, sales funnel/pipeline, system capacity and throughput rates, and resource allocation and capabilities.
- **Post-activity:** Forecasting model showing demand vs. supply, gap analysis, and quarterly action plan.
- **Area of Karbon:** Time (utilization), Insights, and custom exports (Completed Work/Time).



# Tax workflow and management



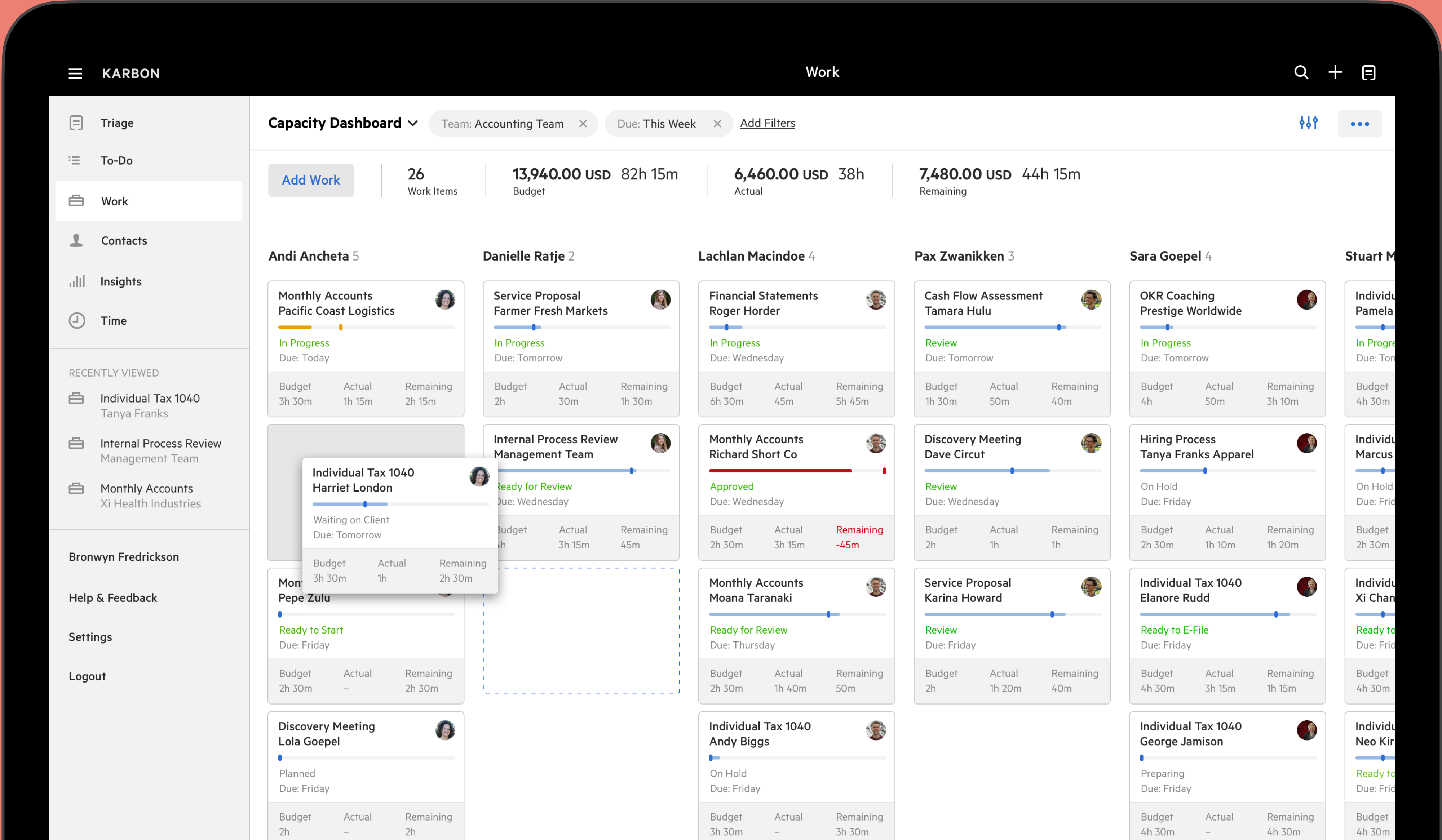
# Overview of business tax process



Work moves through statuses, roles, time and tasks.



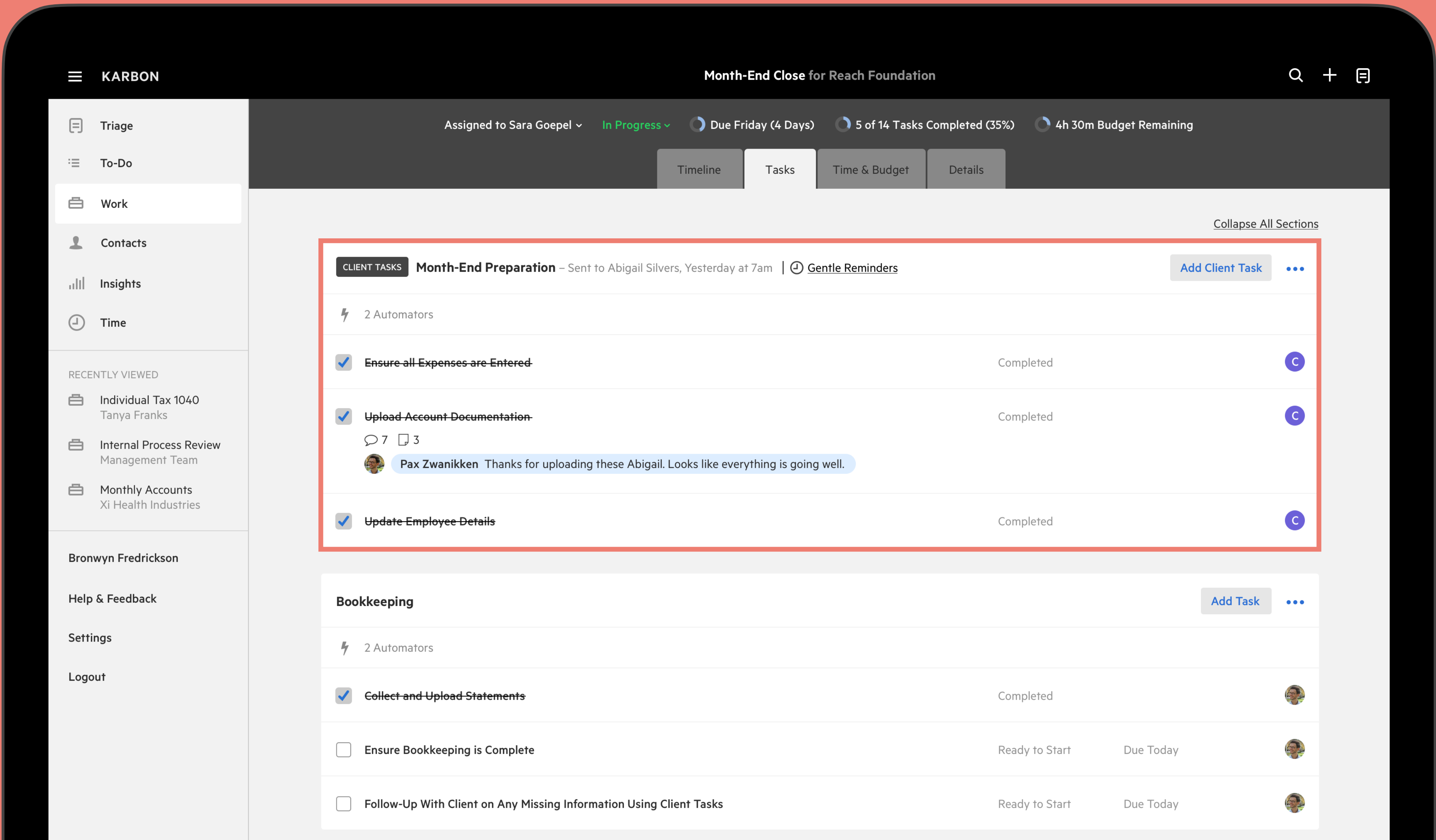
# Gain unparalleled visibility over your team's work and progress.



# Key principles to better manage tax season

## Account & Workflow Setup

Bake in your expected client interactions to chase the client for needed info.





Use client tasks to save 4.2 hours / week / employee from chasing clients.

Sending Settings

SEND TO

Abigail Silvers

▼

FROM

Work assignee

▼

☐ Send tasks now

☒ Schedule tasks to auto send later

[Edit Email](#)

Cancel

Next

Client Task Auto-Reminders

☒ Automatically send [Gentle Reminders](#)

☒ Reminder 7 days before task due-date

☒ Reminder on task due-date

☒ Daily reminder when overdue

Save

Month-End Close for Reach Foundation

Progress ▾

Due Friday (4 Days)

5 of 14 Tasks Completed (35%)

4h 30m Budget Remaining

Timeline

Tasks

Time & Budget

Details

Abigail Silvers, Yesterday at 7am | [Gentle Reminder](#)

Abigail. Looks like everything is going well.

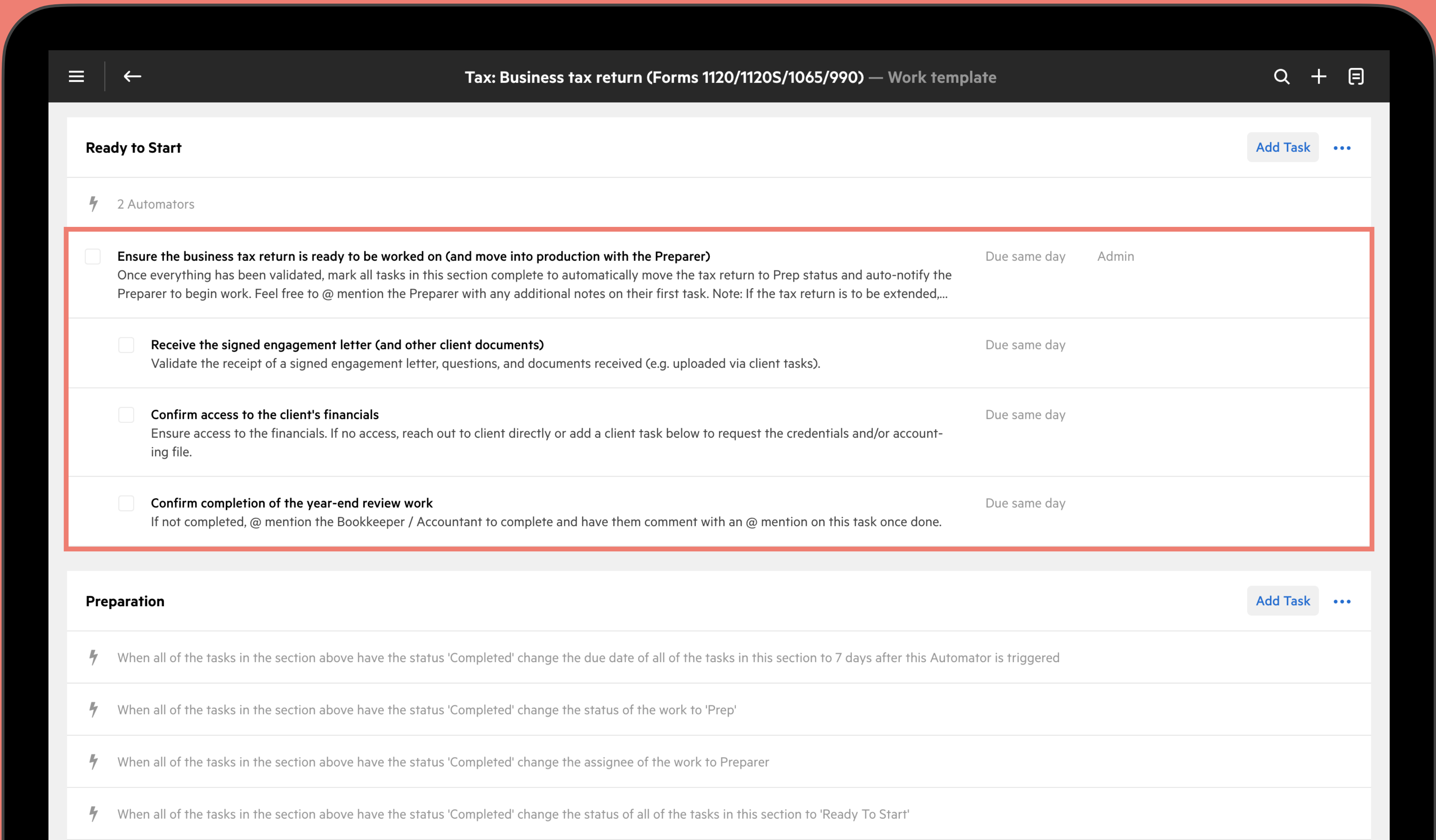
Completed

Ready to Start

Ready to Start

Follow-Up With Client on Any Missing Information Using Client Tasks

# Protect your valuable resources by using managed queues.



## Tax: Business tax return (Forms 1120/1120S/1065/990) — Work template



### Ready to Start

Add Task



2 Automators



#### Ensure the business tax return is ready to be worked on (and move into production with the Preparer)

Once everything has been validated, mark all tasks in this section complete to automatically move the tax return to Prep status and auto-notify the Preparer to begin work. Feel free to @ mention the Preparer with any additional notes on their first task. Note: If the tax return is to be extended,...

Due same day

Admin



#### Receive the signed engagement letter (and other client documents)

Validate the receipt of a signed engagement letter, questions, and documents received (e.g. uploaded via client tasks).

Due same day



#### Confirm access to the client's financials

Ensure access to the financials. If no access, reach out to client directly or add a client task below to request the credentials and/or accounting file.

Due same day



#### Confirm completion of the year-end review work

If not completed, @ mention the Bookkeeper / Accountant to complete and have them comment with an @ mention on this task once done.

Due same day

### Preparation

Add Task



When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the due date of all of the tasks in this section to 7 days after this Automator is triggered



When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the status of the work to 'Prep'



When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the assignee of the work to Preparer



When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the status of all of the tasks in this section to 'Ready To Start'

Leverage generic roles to assign work based on free capacity.

←

Colleagues

🔍

+

📄

Colleagues

Teams

Roles

Add Role

ROLE	#COLLEAGUES
<div>A</div> Accountant	0
<div>A</div> Admin	0
<div>A</div> Analyst	0
<div>B</div> Bookkeeper	0
<div>C</div> Client Manager	0
<div>N</div> New Hire	0
<div>O</div> Onboarding Specialist	0
<div>O</div> Operations Manager	0
<div>P</div> Partner	0
<div>P</div> Payroll Specialist	0

# Manage extensions within the same workflow to keep everything together.

←

Tax: Business tax return (Forms 1120/1120S/1065/990) — Work template

🔍

+

📄

Edited Sep 27

Has not been used to create work yet

Tasks

Budget

Details

⋮

Collapse All Sections

Extension (available if needed; skip otherwise)

Add Task⋮

⚡

When all of the tasks in this section have the status 'Completed' change the status of the work to 'Extended'

☐

File an extension (available here if needed at any time during the process)

If NOT doing an extension, skip this section and leave UNCHECKED. This section is available in case an extension needs to be completed. If FILING an extension, follow these steps (whenever needed): 1) Mark this task as complete (Karbon will automatically move this work item to Waiting - Extended). 2) Create a new work item (+ bu...

Ready to Start

Add Task⋮

⚡

2 Automators

☐

Ensure the business tax return is ready to be worked on (and move into production with the Preparer)

Once everything has been validated, mark all tasks in this section complete to automatically move the tax return to Prep status and auto-notify the Preparer to begin work. Feel free to @ mention the Preparer with any additional notes on their first task. Note: If the tax return is to be extended,...

Due same dayAdmin

☐

Receive the signed engagement letter (and other client documents)

Validate the receipt of a signed engagement letter, questions, and documents received (e.g. uploaded via client tasks).

Due same day

☐

Confirm access to the client's financials

Ensure access to the financials. If no access, reach out to client directly or add a client task below to request the credentials and/or account-

Due same day



# Over-engineer your workflow.

Tax: Business tax return (Forms 1120/1120S/1065/990) — Work template

Assembly (Part 1: Client review)

Add Task

4 Automators

☐

Assemble draft business tax package and send to client for review / approval

Print PDF copies of the tax return from the tax software—FC (File Copy) & PC (Preparer's Copy)—and attach the appropriate copy to the client task below. Update and send the client task. In addition, consider attaching the appropriate PDF copy as a comment on the tax review task to en-...

Due 12 days after

Admin

CLIENT TASKS

Your tax return is ready for review – [Sending Settings](#) | 

Custom reminders

Add Client Task

2 Automators

☐

Please review and confirm the draft copy of your tax return (attached)

If you have any questions, issues, or concerns, please make a comment on this task. If everything is correct, please mark this task as complete so that we can send you the forms to sign in order to file your tax return.

Due 15 days after

☐

Schedule a time to conduct your tax review meeting

Please schedule a time that works best for you. Feel free to provide us a set of dates/times that we can meet and we'll send you a calendar invite and details for the tax review meeting. If you have any items that you would like to specifically cover, please leave a comment on this task.

Due 15 days after

Assembly (Part 2: Client review meeting; if applicable)

Add Task

4 Automators

☐

Complete the business tax review meeting (if applicable)

Prior to the meeting, complete the following (if not already provided): 1) Print or preview PDF copies of tax return including all worksheets and schedules. 2) Provide a draft copy to the client via a comment on the client task above. In the tax review meeting, walk the client through the re-

Due 18 days after

Client Manager

# Key principles to better manage tax season

## Account & Workflow Setup

- Bake in your workflow expected client interactions and queries to chase the client for needed info.
- Protect your valuable resources by using managed queues.
- Leverage generic roles to assign work based on free capacity.
- Manage extensions within the same workflow to keep everything together.
- Over-engineer your workflow.

## Real-time Work Management



# Use work statuses to monitor & manage work at a high-level.

Workflow				
Workflow Statuses	This is your master set of workflow statuses. Use <u>work types</u> to create workflows that use a subset of these statuses.			
Planned	Ready To Start	In Progress	Waiting	Completed
<a href="#">Add Status</a>	Resend Client Tasks	Kick-off / Setup	Wait engagement letter	Cancelled
	Ready for Accounting	Prep	Waiting for info	Not a fit
	Ready for Tax	Process	Waiting for CPA	Closed lost
	<a href="#">Add Status</a>	Review	Waiting for client	Closed won
		Advise	Waiting for client 2	Not applicable
		Assemble	Wait for signature	<a href="#">Add Status</a>
		File	Waiting for IRS	
		Follow-up	Wait for confirmation	
		<a href="#">Add Status</a>	Extended	
			<a href="#">Add Status</a>	

Karbon saves employees in firms 3.1 hours per week managing work and tasks.

Work

Tax Work

Work Type: 8 Work Types

Add Filter

Add Work

24 Work Items

0.00 USD Budget

258h 30m

0.00 USD Actual

0m

0.00 USD Remaining

258h 30m

43,500.00 USD Fees

Planned 14

Ready To Start 5

Prep 2

Review 1

2nd Review 1

D

1065 Tax Return Sep - Nov 2020  
Acme Corporation

Planned

Starting Dec 1

Due Dec 15

Timeline Activity: 11w

Type: 1065

Fees: 2,500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

13h 0m

-

13h 0m

-

-

-

-

Monthly Accounting Nov 2020  
Bobs Donuts

Related Client Group: Atwater Enterprises

Planned

Starting Nov 29

Due Dec 20

Timeline Activity: 12w

Type: 1065

Fees: 2,500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

13h 0m

-

13h 0m

-

-

-

-

990 Tax Return Dec 2020

1065 Tax Return Oct - Nov  
Bobs Donuts

Related Client Group: Atwater Enterprises

Ready To Start

Started Oct 6

19 days overdue

Timeline Activity: 6w

Type: 1065

Fees: 2,500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

13h 0m

-

13h 0m

-

-

-

-

Individual tax return  
Aaron Blatter

Ready To Start

Started Oct 25

17 days overdue

Timeline Activity: 1y

Type: Tax (individual)

Fees: 500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

-

-

-

-

-

-

990 Tax Return Oct 2020

1065 Tax Return 2020  
Gekko & Co

Prep

Starting Jan 29

Due Feb 26, 2021

Timeline Activity: 42w

Type: 1065

Fees: 2,500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

13h 0m

-

13h 0m

-

-

-

-

Individual tax return  
Aaron Blatter

Prep

Starting Oct 25

Due Nov 1, 2021

Timeline Activity: 4w

Type: Tax (individual)

Fees: 500.00

Fee Type: Fixed Fee

Budget

Actual

Remaining

-

-

-

-

-

-

Individual tax return (complex  
1040) 2020  
James Fuller

Review

Starting Apr 1

Due Apr 15, 2021

Timeline Activity: 33w

Type: Tax (individual)

Fees: None

Fee Type: Time & Materials

Budget

Actual

Remaining

-

-

-

-

-

-

Individual tax return (complex  
1040) 2020 - 2021  
Allium Inc.

2nd Review

Starting Oct 7

Due Oct 21, 2021

Timeline Activity: 6w

Type: 1040

Fees: None

Fee Type: Time & Materials

Budget

Actual

Remaining

-

-

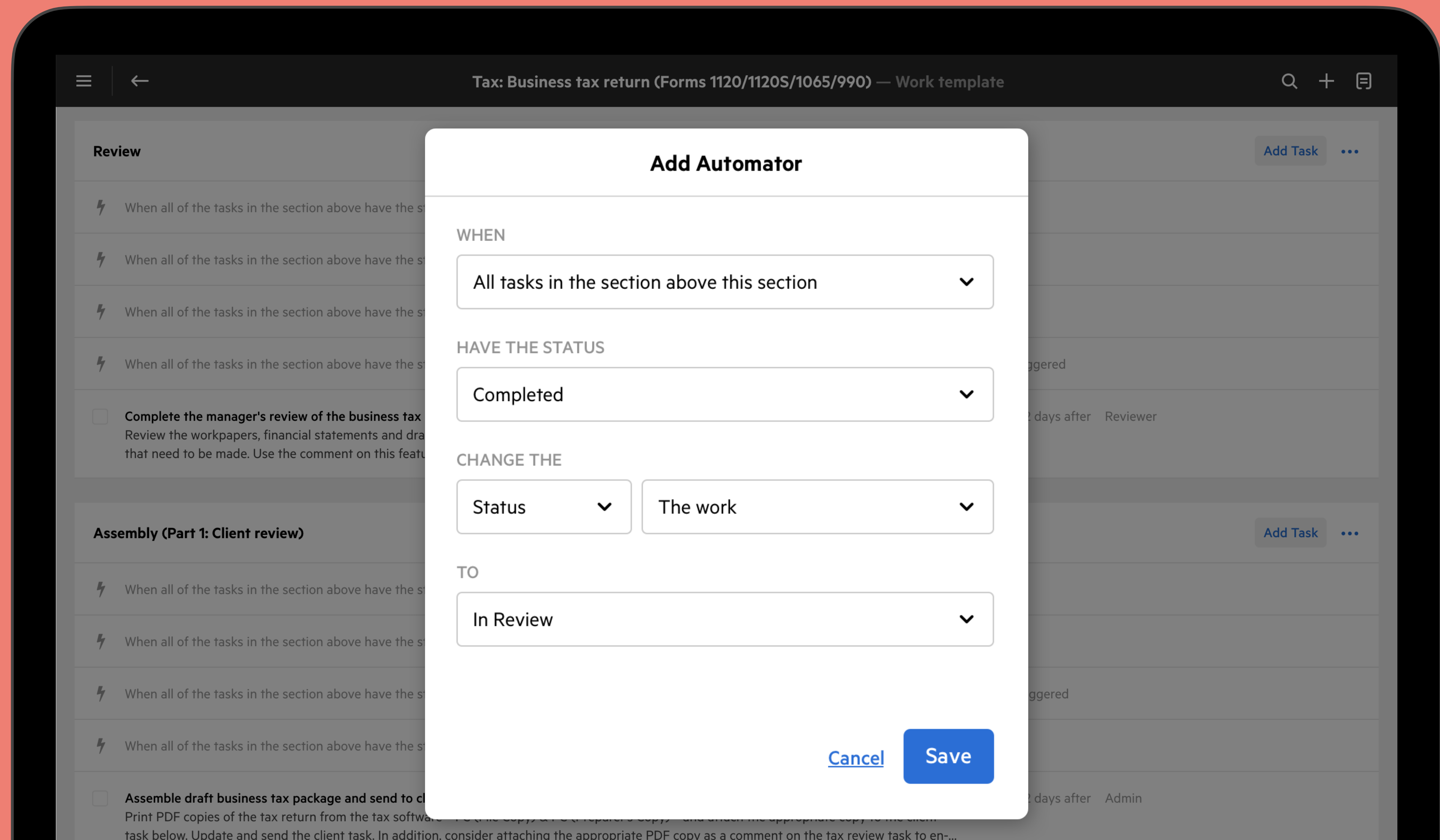
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-

-

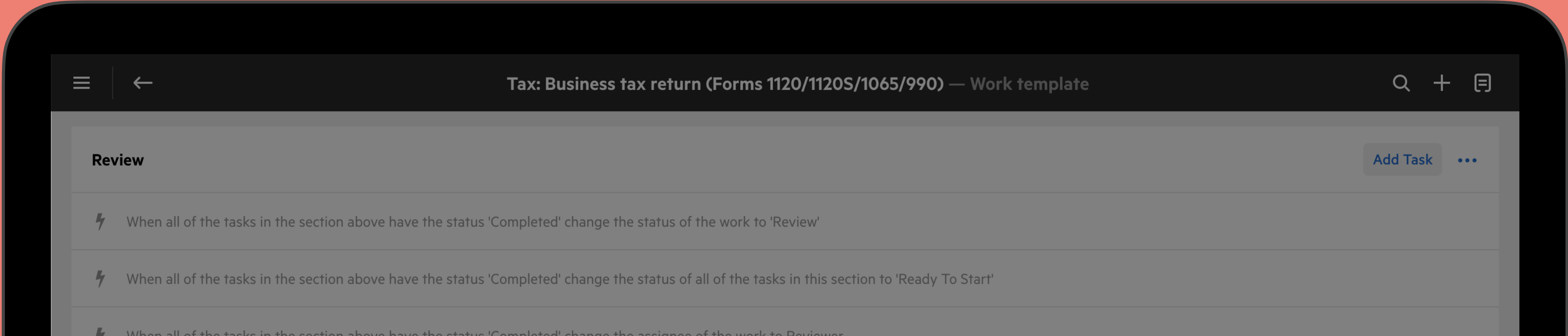
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# Automate the hand-off of work between staff as you complete tasks.

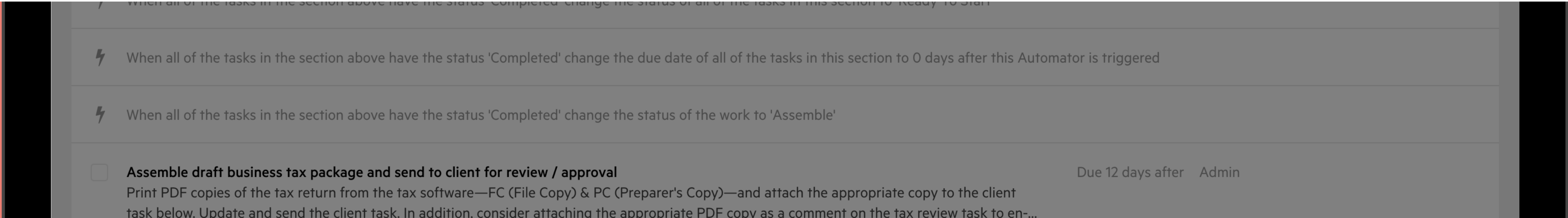




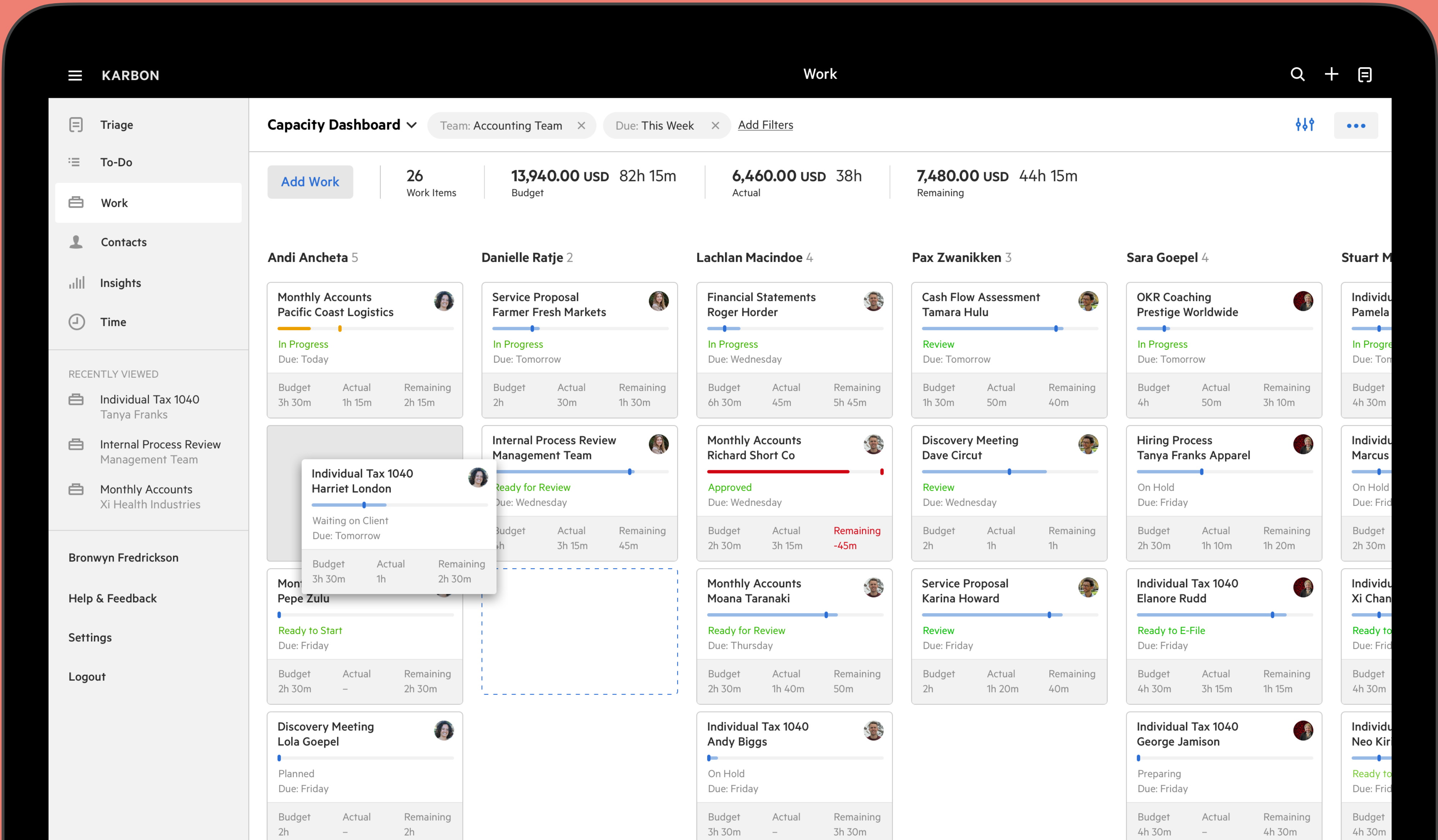
# Dynamically update due dates of tasks based on the progression of work.



- ⚡ When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the status of the work to 'Review'
- ⚡ When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the status of all of the tasks in this section to 'Ready To Start'
- ⚡ When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the assignee of the work to Reviewer
- ⚡ When all of the tasks in the section above have the status 'Completed' change the due date of all of the tasks in this section to 1 days after this Automator is triggered



# Utilize pull production to enable First In, First Out (FIFO).



# Key principles to better manage tax season

## Account & Workflow Setup

- Bake in your workflow expected client interactions and queries to chase the client for needed info.
- Protect your valuable resources by using managed queues.
- Leverage generic roles to assign work based on free capacity.
- Manage extensions within the same workflow to keep everything together.
- Over-engineer your workflow.

## Real-time Work Management

- Use work statuses to monitor & manage work at a high-level.
- Automate the hand-off & communication of work between staff as you complete tasks.
- Dynamically update due dates of tasks based on the progression of work.
- Utilize pull production to enable First In, First Out (FIFO).



# Operations Management: Tips & tricks



# Tips & tricks of managing capacity

1. **Talent:** Resources define capacity. Sadly, talent can't be brought on quickly so plan for demand months ahead of time.
2. **Team:** Make sure to get the right resources in the right seats.
3. **Budget:** In the absence of actuals, use budgeted numbers. Use worst, best and expected case method to pinpoint.
4. **Availability:** Since resources are defined by talent, you need to best understand the available time for work in future periods.
5. **Capacity:** Even if using a rough % of work complete, with the #s listed above, you can get a quick sense of your capacity.



# Tips & tricks of managing work

1. **Work statuses:** Easily see where we are in a process, why things might be delayed, and where the bottlenecks are at a glance.
2. **Variability:** View time spent on an account (over time). If high or low, investigate to see what transpired between client & staff. Helps identify areas to improve, trends, & capacity.
3. **Kanban:** Leverage Kanban to visually view capacity. Use work types to view relative workloads per staff and balance as needed.
4. **Checklists:** Build checklists to give a proper sense of progress. Not too thin and not too long. Quick to read and quick to check.





# Customized Dashboards



# 12 Karbon work dashboards

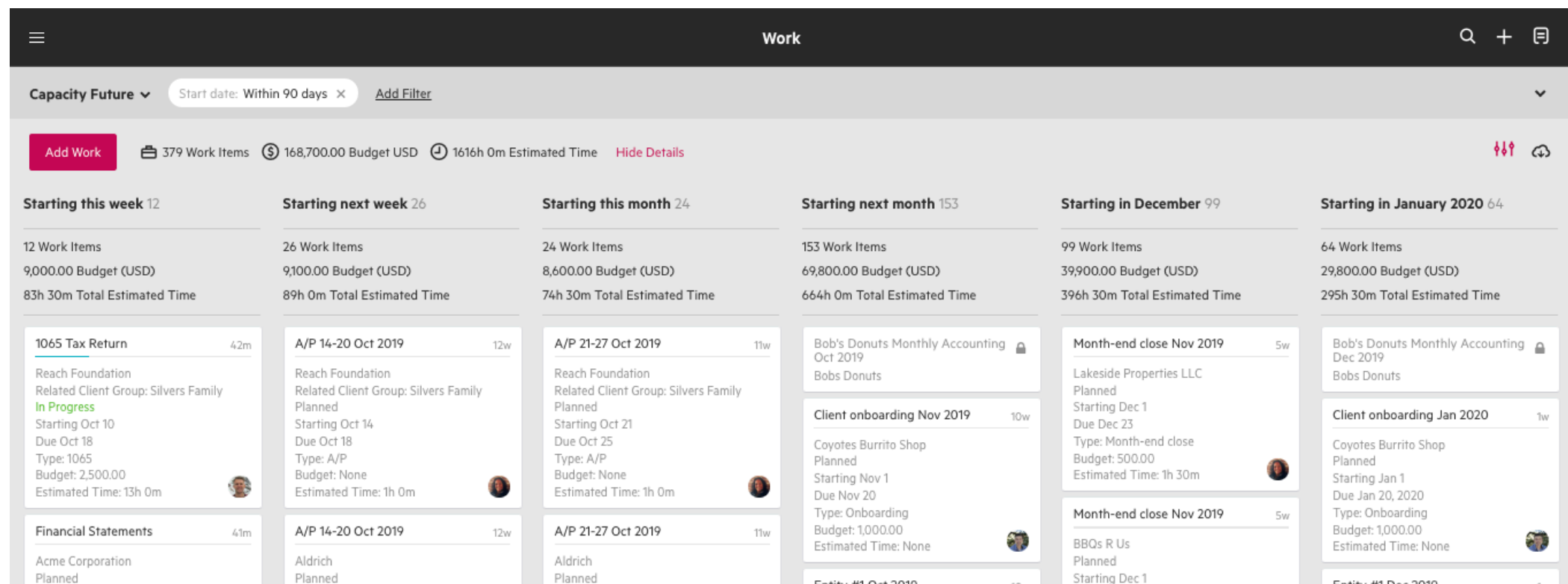
Read the article: <http://bit.ly/2VQydo9>

- Plan your own day
- Progress of a specific team
- Identify bottlenecks for similar jobs
- View all work for clients you own
- Stay across work for clients managed
- Manage team capacity
- Plan for future capacity
- Report on output
- Identify common bottlenecks
- Monitor a specific client group
- View all work for similar clients
- Manage your sales process



# 12 Karbon work dashboards that will give you complete clarity

Read the article: <http://bit.ly/2VQydo9>



## Manage team capacity

**Dashboard name:** Capacity Weekly

**Filters:** Due date = This week; Overdue

**Columns sorted by:** Assignee

View the work items assigned to each team member over a period of time, monitor workload and capacity, and redistribute work as needed.

You might find it useful to add a due date filter, and only show work items that are due this week or overdue. This allows you to see a digestible amount and highlights the highest priorities.

Look at the estimated time totals for every team member to compare everyone's workload and capacity in the short-term.

*Advanced tip: Create a new user in your team called “1 – New Client Queue”. Any new work items for newly signed clients can be assigned to this user, ready for you to drag & drop and assign to a team member who has the capacity to take that work on.*

## Plan for future capacity and understand hiring needs

**Dashboard name:** Capacity Future

**Filters:** Start date = Within 90 days

**Columns sorted by:** Start date

This second capacity view focuses on work scheduled for the short to mid-term. Filter by start date and choose a time period to show every confirmed work item scheduled to begin within the chosen period. Predict how busy your team will be and determine the right time to hire someone new.

You can replicate this dashboard for specific teams, work types, clients or more, by adding more filters on top of one another.







# Introducing Karbon

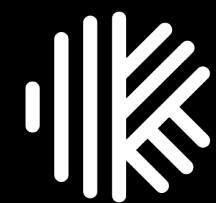
**Work Management Software *for* Accounting Firms**

[karbonhq.com](https://karbonhq.com)

# Wrap up



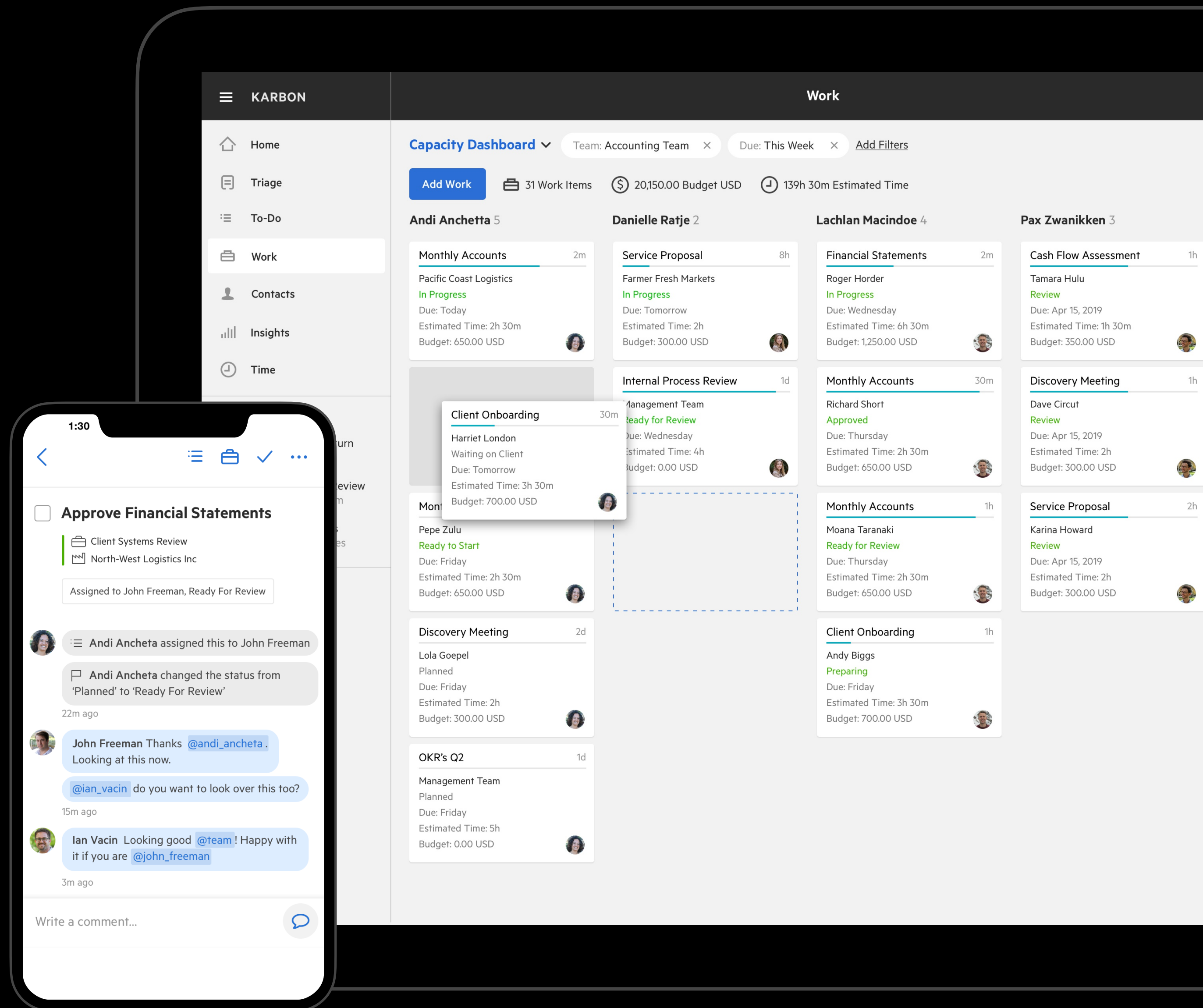
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# Work Management Software *for* Accounting Firms

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# Questions?



# Thank you

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