

Case Study

SCG Uses MindBridge to Help Improve Client Value

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SCG needed to implement data and artificial intelligence into its audit approach to stay relevant and competitive, but technology solutions were creating **process bottlenecks**.

SCG turned to MindBridge to provide users with **visualizations and in-depth resources** for stronger analyses, assessments, and advisory services.

Equipped with automation, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, SCG can now **spend more time developing teams**, focusing on client challenges, and thinking critically about **problem resolution**.

Overview

SCG Chartered Accountants is a top-10 public accounting firm in Ghana. It provides accounting, audit, tax, and payroll services to medium-size businesses. As a growing and progressive accounting firm committed to developing its staff, SCG exemplifies how firms can successfully use technology within their existing business frameworks to expand into advisory services. With pioneering technologies, SCG empowers the digital workforce, enabling energized and smarter productivity in audit engagement for its clients.



Challenges

George Katako, managing partner at SCG, has led the firm to A1 classification by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ghana (ICAG). This is the top classification for firms, including the big four, in Ghana. SCG understands the industry can no longer ignore technology in the accounting audit and assurance space. Through incremental deployments of various tools over several years, technology has become an advantage for SCG. Building technology into its strategy and methodologies is imperative and innovative for the business requirements and SCG clients.

The implementation and use of advanced technology have become critical in attracting and retaining candidates who come to SCG to begin careers in many facets of the firm. Auditors, for example, expect to use advanced tools that are central to remaining relevant in a changing world. However, it is challenging to identify

staff who want to expand their skills and embrace technology solutions to benefit SCG clients.

SCG knew that data and AI would change the audit approach, but it was uncertain it could find a suitable solution for a small firm in Ghana. The company began its journey into data analytics with CaseWare IDEA Inc.

The data team ran various analyses, but to understand the data or gather insights, SCG would call a meeting with the audit team to collaborate and make sense of the data across various engagements. This caused a bottleneck within the audit process. SCG was open to exploring and using AI audit tools if it could find an affordable solution to improve audit risk and assurance abilities.



Factors That Led SCG to Consider MindBridge

It's difficult for a small data team to assist with many ongoing audits.

SCG's approach shifted to make every audit team an analytics advisor able to apply analytics across all audits.

Identifying risk within large data sets requires individual skills.

MindBridge AI tools highlight areas to probe. The SCG audit team owns the analyses and insights and can focus on what matters most for a particular audit.

AI is not going away. SCG wanted to get in early and become familiar with audit AI tools.

MindBridge provided a means to grow into advanced data analytics with the support and pace the firm required.

SCG chose MindBridge to help its auditors, accountants, and financial professionals become more efficient, deliver better services, and add value to clients. The firm's primary objective for investing in an AI data analytics solution was to focus on risk identification and gain business insights, but the implementation has driven greater exploration than anticipated.

"MindBridge is easy to pick up and run with. The whole team can use the tool, everyone can learn from it at the same time, and everyone is able to make meaningful contributions to our discussions. We always encourage discussions. It's ingrained in our business culture."

— James Etu, Data Analytics Manager, SCG

How SCG Got Started With MindBridge

SCG began using MindBridge on a small scale, primarily for just a few engagements. SCG built a data team, led by James Etu, to allow the firm to collaborate on data requirements with auditors and clients. With a dedicated team, SCG quickly established expertise in data cleansing and ingestion for MindBridge. With this efficient process in place and support from MindBridge, SCG began to direct more responsibility to the auditors by helping them ask for the right information from clients on general and other ledger data, running analyses through MindBridge, and interpreting outcome scores and results for more effective low- to high-risk discovery.

This approach allowed SCG audit teams to familiarize themselves with MindBridge at a less burdensome pace with their audit and resource schedules. They also gained awareness of the power of AI to assist with their judgment.

Incorporating technology into its methodology and using MindBridge as a matter of policy for more compliant and confident results in risk assessment proved to be a winning combination for SCG. MindBridge delivered complete trust to the data and auditing teams.

Solutions

SCG chose MindBridge for its leading proprietary core controls and anomaly detection. Enabling audit teams to analyze 100% of transactional data helped SCG improve its audit quality and assurance for its clients. The firm receives data from more than twenty different accounting packages, such as QuickBooks, Sage, and Xero. By implementing MindBridge into its audit methodology, the firm can explore deeper accounting issues and surface insights on the volumes of data, which traditional sampling can't do. Once data is ingested, MindBridge takes care of the rest. The entire audit team has access and can follow through on results. The team can see risks sooner, assess high risks, and plan more effectively while reporting more accurately, making the audit very efficient.

From transactional risk assessment to organizational process improvements, MindBridge users have access to visualizations and the in-depth resources

they need for stronger analyses, assessments, and advisory services.

"Technology is disrupting accounting. We follow the developments in accounting technology," says George Katako. "AI and blockchain concerned SCG in terms of being part of the changing dynamic and staying relevant. We do not have the resources to develop AI, and building a

larger data team is resource-intensive. Tools like MindBridge give us what we need to be competitive and efficient."

SCG now spends more time learning about the intricacies of how the business is operating and building skills in critical thinking and professional judgment while leaving manual tasks to automation.



Results

MindBridge complements the core values of SCG.

“As a public firm, we seek to do an outstanding job every time. To do that, we must have the right attitude, knowledge, and tools,” says Katako.

SCG is committed to lifelong learning and providing relevant advice and knowledge to its clients. The firm creates expectations for clients and strives to deliver with integrity. To stay relevant, SCG must constantly be curious about developments in the accounting field and learn alternative theories and techniques to provide better results for clients and the firm.

“We have greater confidence in our work and output using the tool because of how thoroughly it works,” says Emile Vorgbe, audit partner at SCG.

MindBridge has provided SCG with more time to think through its clients’ challenges, therefore helping develop more effective systems for problem resolution. MindBridge’s machine-learning capabilities also surface insights that would be otherwise undiscoverable in traditional audits.

“This is a good disruption in the industry,” Katako says. After going through the MindBridge Academy, SCG took the step to clean up data and improve the audit process. Teams enhanced the quality review of transactions. Once the data is ingested, SCG reviews the control points assessment and groupings of transactions into high, medium, and low risk. The audit team can then focus on its high-risk transactions with clear insights into the low- and medium-risk data.

In addition, we assign courses on MindBridge Academy to our own staff so that they can come to training sessions with questions and contributions. Learning is the key to a stronger and more effective business model for SCG as a firm.

“SCG records time spent on each engagement. Before MindBridge, it would take a day to run a full analysis of a data set, but with MindBridge, this analysis was significantly reduced,” Katako says.

For example, an audit client once had multiple transactions going to suspense accounts. When we ran the data through MindBridge, the powerful analytics flattened out these transactions. This necessitated further questions on why the suspense account was used so often. Upon questioning, we concluded that the finance manager was focused on other accounts and unaware of the issue. The outcome of this further investigation led to the client’s decision that its legacy accounting tools were no longer adequate to accommodate its business operations. MindBridge’s machine learning provided the audit team with more details on the source of the transactions, allowing for proper problem resolution.

By the End of 2021:



Everyone within SCG's audit unit was ramped up to use MindBridge.



SCG added 14 clients and completed 20 more engagements with MindBridge.



Usage and consumption went from one user to 13 users with more than 5,000 action counts.



SCG went from two clients with two engagements to 18 clients with 22 engagements in two years.



SCG went from 100,000+ rows of data in 2019 to more than 1 million in 2021.

Why MindBridge

SCG had adopted cloud technologies, such as Xero and Office 365, and was comfortable with cloud computing. However, SCG did not think it could find an affordable AI risk discovery solution for the size and needs of its firm. When SCG began looking at AI options to help improve its audit engagements, MindBridge stood out because it is the world's leading AI risk discovery solution and because of its software-as-a-service cloud platform and potential to fit within SCG's technical requirements and cost parameters.

SCG wanted to be sure the deployment and facilitation of the tool it chose would be manageable for the audit team, who would own the relationship and technology used across the client base. This value add meant that accounting staff could use the solution without relying on a data team for testing or additional complex support. This way, SCG could avoid the bottlenecks that popped up with other tools.

MindBridge reenergized the SCG staff with an AI platform for advanced risk discovery that provided rapid efficiency across the varied skill sets of the firm.

MindBridge made the transition easy. With dedicated CPAs to help with deployment and customer needs, an in-depth Knowledge Base, and the MindBridge Academy for training and ongoing professional development during the low season, MindBridge made sense for SCG's technology journey.

“Big and small businesses are automating in varying degrees. Artificial intelligence and industry expertise set the MindBridge platform apart to support risk assessment and execution of audit.”

— *George Katako, Managing Partner, SCG*

What's Next?

SCG will continue to focus on data, deploying MindBridge into other assignments that are not audit-related and centering efforts on the core of the SCG business. This means getting feedback from the primary audit team and clients to improve the scope of data analytics.

Near-term use cases:

- Use MindBridge for transaction testing and substantive testing:
 - Income: Proceeds from sales
 - Expenses: Capital expenditures, expenses on goods and services
- Intensify analysis on receivables and payables
- Deploy the tool for control testing

SCG is also continuously educating and training the audit team. It uses MindBridge Academy for targeted courseware and online learning and maintains a connection with the MindBridge customer success team to provide champions and audit teams with updates on new capabilities and features within the MindBridge cloud platform.

"There are so many things that we've done with data related to audits that have actually opened our eyes," says Katako. "MindBridge has completely changed how we see our clients' audits."

For more information on how MindBridge can assist your team, please contact info@mindbridge.com.

