



Strategy to Avoid Voids & Retain Clients

Rollout Guide



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Introduction

Looking at your hold and void rate and scratching your head? Thinking about accepting the number as the “new normal” for your business? Wondering how many clients you could’ve retained if only you had the chance to talk to them?

Stop thinking and start doing! Both franchised and company owned operations have lowered their Hold/Void (H/V) Rate by using a proactive collaborative approach that involves everyone in the organization; operator, management team and tax preparers.

This document outlines the steps to take to deploy the strategy in your own operation. Follow these simple procedures and improve your ability to respond to clients that are ready to ‘walk’ and turn them into happily retained and referring clients.

Overview of Strategy

| | OPERATOR / MGMT TEAM | MANAGEMENT TEAM | TAX PREPARER |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Goal | Determine H/V rate goal | Communicate H/V rate goal | Recite H/V rate goal |
| 2. Authorization Rights | Use Account Mgmt & Location Settings to assign Void, Hold, and Discount authorization rights | Communicate policy to tax preparers | Execute the policy in hold and/or void situations |
| 3. Remote Office Software | Install / set up remote office software on all computers. Define and communicate procedures. | Become proficient using remote office software. Communicate procedures to tax preparers. | Be proficient in using remote office software and familiar with procedure. |
| 4. Protocol | Select code word, assign Go-To person, and design protocol. | Communicate protocol tax preparers must use in high-risk situations. | Execute protocol in high-risk situations. |
| 5. Price Comparison | Create Price Comparison Chart and use in offices. | Locate and use Price Comparison Chart. | |
| 6. Training | Add 'How to Avoid Voids' training to curriculum & ensure it's completed. | Complete management level training; manage tax preparer level training. | Complete tax preparer level training. |
| 7. Progress | Use At-A-Glance, Tax Office Dashboard, & Return Conversion to manage H/V rate daily. | Use Tax Office Dashboard & Return Conversion to monitor H/V rate daily. Conduct office visits and audit Hold drawers. | |
| 8. Appointment Calendar | Use Appointment Calendar to log ALL clients at ALL locations ALL season Monitor daily.. | Monitor Appointment Calendar daily. | Log all potential clients using Appointment Calendar. |
| 9. Follow Up | Get frequent updates from management teams. Mail letter to voids and holds within 48 hours. Conduct call campaign. | Use Return Conversion tool to follow-uo with holds/voids/unserved WITHIN 24 hours. Identify ways to improved process & skills. | Frequently review and contact clients with returns on hold using Return Conversion tool. |
| 10. Celebrate Success | Reward & celebrate success! | Reward % celebrate success! | Celebrate success! |

1) Determine your Goal

Use your At-A-Glance Report, Tax Office Dashboard Reports, and Return Conversion to analyze your hold and void rate at each level of your operation; PCTR level, office level and Tax Preparer level.

Use the chart below to help determine your goal for the coming season and communicate your message to ensure everyone in your operation understands the importance and shares your enthusiasm about achieving success.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| H/V Rate last year (i.e. number of clients) | | |
| | | |
| X average fee last year | | |
| | | |
| Total revenue LOST! = | | |
| | | |
| Goal to reduce H/V Rate (i.e. number of clients) | | |
| | | |
| X anticipated average fee current year | | |
| | | |
| Growth in revenue by reducing H/V Rate = | | |

Sample: Just Think About It!.....

| | | |
|--|--------------|------------------|
| H/V Rate last year (i.e. number of clients) | 18.9% | 2409 |
| | | |
| X average fee last year | | \$194 |
| | | |
| Total revenue LOST! = | | \$467,346 |
| | | |
| Goal to reduce H/V Rate (i.e. number of clients) | 5.0% | 120 |
| | | |
| X anticipated average fee current year | | \$194 |
| | | |
| Growth in revenue simply by reducing H/V Rate = | | \$23,280 |

2) Determine Authorization Rights

Setting controls in your operation is a critical component of the strategy to reduce your H/V rate. Assign a limited number of individuals with the ability to:

- place a tax return on hold,
- provide a discount that exceeds a maximum amount

And, even fewer specifically trained individuals to authorize voids.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Allow Office Managers to authorize holds, but only a few in the entire organization/market to authorize voids.
- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Disable permissions for all Level 1-Tax Preparers. Once you determine which individuals in your operation will be assigned these rights, use the Account Management eService to enable and disable permissions.

Disable Permissions to Void a Tax Return and/or Place a Tax Return on Hold

To begin:

1. Login to **JHnet**
2. Select the **eServices** Tab
3. Select **Account Management** from the A-Z menu
4. Select the **Groups** Tab
5. Select **Level 1 Preparer**
6. Scroll down to **ProFiler – Hold Tax Return**
7. Click on the box to the left to remove the checkmark (this will disable the permission)
8. Scroll down to **ProFiler – Void Tax Return**
9. Click on the box to the left to remove the checkmark (this will disable the permission)
10. Scroll down to the bottom of the list and click on the **Save** button in the bottom right-hand corner
11. Repeat these steps for any additional groups, as determined by you.

Assign Permissions to an Existing Select Group

If you plan to assign permissions to a default group such as Office Supervisors and/or General Managers, Area Manager etc., no action is required considering the permissions are defaulted as “enabled” to persons identified in these groups.

Create a New Custom Group and Assign Permissions

If you decide to create a new group, please understand that you will essentially be starting with a blank slate. This means you must assign permissions to all the functions they will need, beyond voiding a tax return or placing a tax return on hold. (Note: JH Corporate processing centers should NOT add new groups.)

Login to JHnet

1. Select the **eServices** Tab
2. Select **Account Management** from the A-Z menu
3. Select the **Groups** Tab
4. Select **New Group** at the very top of the list
5. Enter a Name and Description for the Group
6. Assign Various Permissions by clicking on the appropriate boxes.
7. Scroll down to the bottom of the list and click on the **Save** button in the bottom right-hand corner
8. Next, select the **User** Tab
9. Enter the first four characters of the employees last name into the **Name** field
10. Click the **Apply Filter** button
11. Drill down on the employee's username in the Name column.
12. Click on the Custom Group name
13. Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page
14. Complete an FTS transfer

Set a Maximum Discount Limit to \$0

Control your Discounts!

Providing clients with a discount greater than this amount would require authorization by a specific individual in your operation.

✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Limiting your tax preparers' ability to issue discounts that exceed \$0. This is an important component of the hold/void strategy.

Using this control requires you to alter information in both Location Settings and Account Management eServices following this two-step process.

Step 1: Set a Maximum Discount Limit for your operation

1. Login to **JHnet**
2. Select the **eServices** Tab
3. Select **Location Settings** from the A-Z menu
4. To set the maximum discount limit for everyone attached to the PTCR, select your 3 letter code. To set the maximum discount limit for everyone attached to a particular office, select the office number
5. Select the **Product/Print Options** Tab
6. Click on **Edit** (which is located on the far right side of the top of the screen. If you cannot see it, scroll to the right)
7. Scroll down to the **Coupons and Discounts section** (near the bottom of the list)
8. Click on the drop-down box to display a list of values and select the desired Discount Threshold amount of \$0

9. Click on the **Apply to All** or **Save** button in the bottom right-hand corner

Notes: This functionality only limits the dollar discount amount, not the percentage discount.

Step 2: Assign Permission for Override Discount Limit

If you plan to assign these permissions to Tax Office Supervisors and above, no action is required considering the current defaults assign these groups with the permission to override a discount limit. If you plan to assign these permissions to another group such as Level II Tax Preparers or a Custom Group follow these steps:

1. Return to the eServices home page by clicking the **eServices** Tab
2. Select **Account Management** from the A-Z menu
3. Select the **Groups** Tab
4. Select the Group that you wish to assign this permission (e.g. Office Supervisor)
5. Scroll down to **ProFiler Mgmt – Override Discount Limit**
6. Click on the box to the left and a checkmark will appear (this will enable the permission)
7. Scroll down to the bottom of the list and click on the **Save** button in the bottom right-hand corner
8. Repeat these steps for any additional groups, as determined by you.

3) Install Remote Access Software

This is a valuable resource that provides tax preparers with the ability to contact and share their screen with a designated individual remotely through their desktop, even when the designated person is not physically present in the office.

Situations in which a tax preparer may request assistance include:

- help with ProFiler
- answering a tax question
- analyzing the client's tax situation
- requesting authorization to void a return
- placing a return on hold

If you do not currently have this software on your computers, investigate your options. Software such as LogMeIn[®] (www.logmein.com) and GoToMyPC[®] (www.gotomypc.com) provide basic services for free and/or a trial period for free.

You'll need to select, install and setup the software on all your computers and define communication procedures.

Reminders:

- Limit use to the United States
- To safeguard client confidential and personal information, third-party software must be managed & maintained using the security requirements as outlined in the Operations Manual.
- As with all third-party software, the Jackson Hewitt Support Center is unable to provide support for this software.

4) Establish Protocol

In order for this strategy to work correctly, it must include policies and procedures that support and assist tax preparers when their local efforts are not working and the client is ready to “walk”. The tax preparer must be able to escalate the issue and receive immediate assistance.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Consider designing a protocol that includes the following components:

Go-To Persons:

Identify a group of Go-To Persons. Create and communicate schedules. Any time a tax preparer is working they must know who they can contact when their local efforts to resolve a client’s issue is not working.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Don’t make it too complicated for the tax preparer. Identify a few Go-To Persons in your organization that can specialize in resolving client issues. Go-To Persons should be readily available and possess excellent tax knowledge, customer service skills and the ability to mentor tax preparers. This group should be the only individuals in your organization that can authorize a void.

For some operators this may be a new role and/or responsibility in your operation, but well worth the investment.

Code Word

Select a Code Word for your operation that will automatically identify the tax preparer is dealing with a client that is ready to “walk” and needs immediate assistance in an effort to retain the client.

The process works like this:

The tax preparer contacts their Go-To Person over the phone. Rather than uttering something like, *“Hey I’ve got a void here and I need to talk with someone about it”*, they’ll use a code word such as “Vince” or “Valerie”. Using this specific code word informs the person on the other end of the phone of the exact situation and sense of urgency. Tax preparers should be trained to use the following dialog, *“Hi, this is (tax preparer’s name). I need to speak to Valerie, because we have a client here that needs our help.”*

Procedure When Client is Dissatisfied with Tax Preparer

What will happen if the client tells the Go-To Person they have an issue with the tax preparer? An effective response is to offer the client the opportunity to meet with a “senior” tax preparer at a time and location that is convenient for the client. Create a procedure now so your Go-To Persons are able to respond to this client issue. You need to do the following:

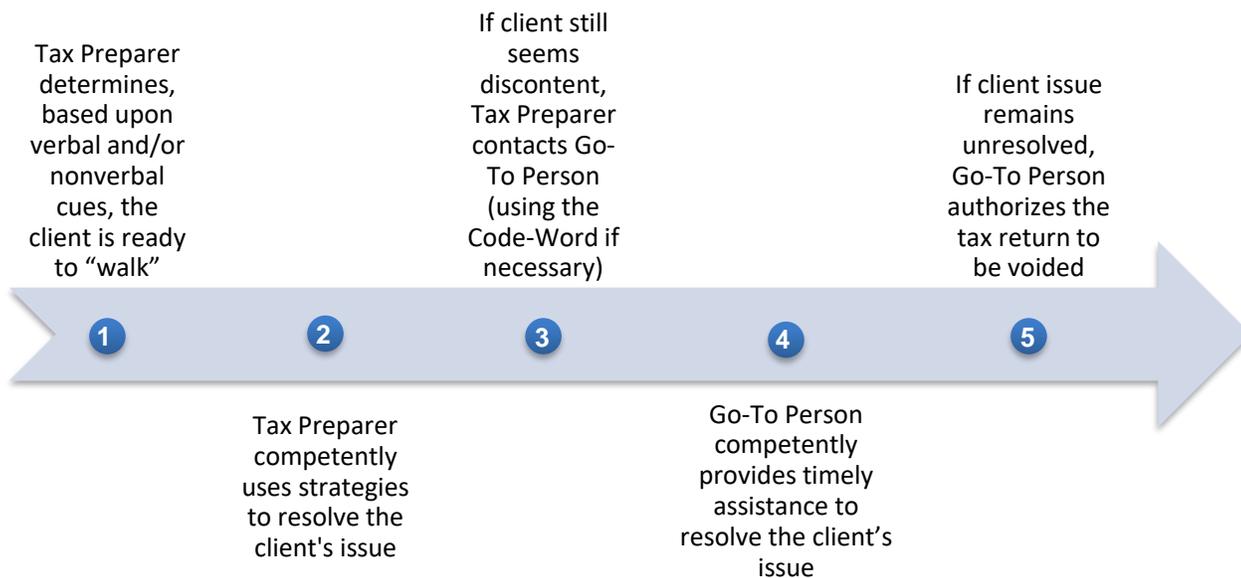
- ✓ Identify and notify the group of senior tax preparers the Go-To Persons will call upon to help in these situations.
- ✓ Determine how Go-To Persons will set the appointment for the client. Will they use the Appointment Calendar?

- ✓ Determine how Go-To Person will notify the senior tax preparer about the situation with the client. Will they use ProFiler Notes, email or phone?

Procedure to Void a Tax Return or Place it on Hold

If after executing all the steps in the protocol, the Go-To Person (or other individual assigned these permissions) must authorize the void or hold, they must input their User ID and Password after the tax preparer selects this option in ProFiler. If the Go-To Person is not physically present to perform this function, they simply use the remote access software to share access to the tax preparer’s desktop and enter the information remotely.

Overview of Protocol



5) Create a Price Comparison Chart

BEST PRACTICE: Create a Price Comparison Sheet with local competitor information and distribute to your Go-To Persons. Train these individuals to use this information in the event they are required to assist tax preparers to resolve issues with a:

- Do-It-Yourself (DIY) client – a client that comes to Jackson Hewitt and has already prepared but not yet filed their tax return online.
- Or, a client that has shopped around and wants to compare the Jackson Hewitt price to the price charged by a local competitor.

6) Commit to Training Your Staff

Commit to training your tax preparers and management staff to be ready to respond to the most common reasons clients will walk. Follow up to ensure that your team has completed the appropriate training and have the opportunity to practice the entire process together.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Important - *don't skip the role play exercises*. They are a necessary element that enables your team to increase their skill level by allowing them to practice how they will respond.
- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Make it easy for your staff to complete training. Be sure to communicate your expectations with your entire staff and to provide the materials and resources, as well as the time and environment they need to complete their training in an uninterrupted manner.

There is training available on the Learning Center for both your managers and tax preparers including:

Management Level / Go-To Person:

- ✓ Resource Guide (you'll need to update with local information)
- ✓ Role Play Exercises

Tax Preparer Level:

- ✓ Job Aid
- ✓ Online Module
- ✓ Role Play Exercises

7) Analyze Your Progress

Monitor Your H/V Rate

Your H/V Rate is a key measure that needs to be monitored daily – not weekly, not monthly and certainly not something you'll get to post-peak!

Use the following reports to monitor your progress frequently:

- ✓ At-A- Glance Report
- ✓ Tax Office Dashboard
- ✓ Return Conversion

Require your management team to:

- ✓ Monitor the Tax Office Dashboard & Return Conversion daily.

Conduct Office Visits

Considering that placing a tax return on hold requires authorization, the surprise of finding client envelopes with no tax documents in the Hold Drawer during office visits should be eliminated. However, it's certainly in your best interest to 'inspect what you expect'.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Require your management team to conduct office visits at least 2-3 times per week and analyze the files in the Hold Drawer to identify holds that are really voids, i.e. client envelopes that do not contain tax documents. If they question the validity of any return on hold, they can simply open it and review the Preparer Notes. If the tax preparer failed to log detail about the status of tax documents it's probably a void and not a return on hold.

Share Results

Help motivate, encourage and foster the spirit of competition by providing your team with frequent updates about the progress your operation is making towards your goal. Use visual cues, email correspondence etc. Expect your management staff to do the same.

8) Use Appointment Calendar for Every Client

Some clients will speak to a tax preparer and "walk" even before their tax return is started. Their decision may be based upon price, hesitation with the tax preparer, the physical environment etc. Use the Appointment Calendar in all offices throughout the entire tax season and create a policy that EVERY client must be entered before they meet with a tax preparer.

For clients who walk in without an appointment, make sure that they are entered into the Lobby Management program in the Appointment Calendar. This can be done by either the client using the QR code or a staff member in the office. If the client is being entered by a staff member make sure to capture their phone number. Set a policy to try and call that client immediately if they leave and offer up an appointment time.

For clients who have a scheduled appointment and have either missed the appointment or left the office, utilize the Missed Appointments tab in the Start Conversion Tool on JHnet to contact them to make another appointment to come back into the office.

With Your Team

Conduct frequent status meetings with your management team to review progress, challenges, common issues, new ideas, etc.

With Clients

Via Phone: Require your management team to contact all holds AND void clients daily. This process may yield some interesting insight such as returns that were placed on hold but really should've been voided, or clients

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Don't have the same tax preparer that met with the client call to follow up on the Hold and/or Voided return. If the client had an issue with the preparer they will most likely be reluctant to discuss that with them.
- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** When calling, ask about their experience instead of asking why their return is on hold or voided.
- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** Contact clients **WITHIN 24 HOURS** of their office visit. Exceeding this timeframe reduces your success rate, considering clients may file elsewhere.

that were dissatisfied with their tax preparer and may be willing to return if you offer them an appointment with a senior tax preparer. Or, maybe the only way to convince the client to return is to offer them a substantial discount. Considering most of the work has probably already been done – it's better to get paid something, rather than having to void the return and collect nothing.

Train your team to use the Return Conversion tool to follow up on HOLDS and VOIDS daily:

1. Login to **JHnet**
2. Select the **eServices** Tab
3. Select the **Return Conversion** tool.
4. Click on the **Holds** Tab.
5. Click on the **Put on Hold** title to sort the list by date. Focus on the clients with the oldest hold date.
6. Select the **See Details** button. This will open the details screen for the first client.
7. Using the phone information, contact the client with the goal to make an appointment to complete their return. Utilize the **Appointment Calendar** button to open the calendar and create the appointment.
8. Choose a disposition from the **Call Disposition** pull-down menu.
9. Enter a detailed note that describes the interaction with the client. This is important for any future interactions with the client. *NOTE: The notes field is required in order to save the record.*
10. Repeat this procedure for all clients on the list.

For clients with voided returns, click on the Voids tab and follow the same steps above. For more detailed information on using Return Conversion, see the Return Conversion Tool Job Aid located on the Learning Center.

Via Mail: Create and forward follow-up letters and/or postcards to clients with a voided tax return or a tax return placed on hold.

- ✓ **BEST PRACTICE:** This correspondence should be mailed within **48 HOURS** of the return being placed on hold or voided.

9) Reward and Celebrate Success

Take the time to enjoy the results of everyone's hard work. Plan exactly how you will reward success. Ideas to consider include incentives, public recognition, throw a party etc.

Reduce H/V Rate Strategy TASK LIST

| Task | Assigned To |
|--|-------------|
| Determine and communicate goal | |
| Determine Authorization Rights – make necessary changes in Location Settings and Account Management | |
| Define policy to void a return, place a return on hold and issue a discount that exceeds the tax preparers’ maximum discount limit | |
| Install and set up remote access computers on all computers | |
| Define and communicate procedures for using this remote access software | |
| Select ‘code-word’ | |
| Identify Go-To Persons, assign offices and communicate expectations Note: Editable Resource Guide is available in the Learning Center Catalog | |
| Create and communicate Go-To Person schedules | |
| Establish weekly meeting schedule with management team to discuss results, challenges, opportunities for improvement, etc. | |
| Edit and distribute Price Comparison Sheet to Go-To Persons | |
| Include How to Avoid Voids content in local training program, e.g. Tax Season Kick-off/Orientation. | |
| Print and distribute job aids to Tax Preparers and Go-To Persons Note: Job aids are available in the Learning Center Catalog | |
| Communicate requirement to complete How to Avoid Voids online module | |
| Monitor completion of online module | |
| Coordinate and conduct Client Practice Scenarios (i.e. Role Play Exercises) | |
| Use AAG, Tax Office Dashboard, and Return Conversion to monitor H/V Rate DAILY | |
| Communicate policy to use Appointment Calendar in ALL offices, ALL tax season for ALL clients | |
| Monitor and review the list of clients listed as “not being served” in Appointment Calendar DAILY | |
| Contact clients who have missed appointments using the Start Conversion Tool DAILY | |
| Contact clients with returns on hold AND voided within 24 HOURS of their office visit using Return Conversion | |
| Coordinate appointments for clients that would like to come back to Jackson Hewitt and have their taxes prepared by a senior tax preparer | |
| Use the Return Conversion Tool to analyze/follow up with returns on Hold | |
| Create a follow-up letter that can be forwarded to clients with returns on hold or voided | |
| Mail follow-up letter to clients WITHIN 48 hours of their office visit | |
| Coordinate plans to celebrate success with entire operation! | |