

THE GROWTH STORY

Five Years of Momentum

Late 2020 PPC Partnership Begins

Dark Horse was founded in 2015 and spent years grinding and cycling through agencies that couldn't deliver. They came to WISE in late 2020 to turn around their paid strategy. Operating from one primary office with a few satellite locations, the goal was clear: stop the bleeding on ad spend and start growing with a reasonable ROAS.

Starting point • San Diego-based • PPC engagement kicks off

2021 SEO & Website Strategy Kicks Off

Confident in the PPC results, Dark Horse expanded the engagement. WISE took on SEO and quickly identified a core problem: the existing site couldn't support real growth. A full website rebuild was scoped and consumed most of the second half of 2021 — and with the Principal Accelerator Program going live, Dark Horse stepped onto a national stage.

SEO engagement begins • Website strategy underway • Principal Accelerator launches

2022 Launch of an Award-Winning Website

WISE launches a new Dark Horse website that sets a new standard for the accounting industry — built for multi-market scale, attracting clients and principals nationwide. **Accounting Today** features Dark Horse as a CPA disruptor. Paid and organic strategies begin working in concert, and by year-end the digital engine is dialed in. Revenue reaches \$6M.

Industry-best website live • Press coverage begins • \$6M revenue

2023 The Principal Accelerator Ignites

New principals launch monthly, each with press releases and local SEO pages, a repeatable growth machine WISE helped build. Dark Horse merges with independent CPA practices, absorbing their digital presence under the brand. Coverage in **Accounting Today**, **CPA Practice Advisor**, and **Insightful Accountant** cements their national reputation. Revenue doubles to just over \$12M.

Monthly market launches • Mergers accelerate • National press • \$12M+ revenue

2024 Explosive Growth

Dark Horse hits \$21M across 50+ markets. Chase Birky emerges as a thought leader and vocal advocate, calling WISE a true strategic partner and their website "the best in the industry." Cannabis CPAs and Dark Horse Private Wealth push the brand into new verticals. They're now one of the most recognized CPA brands in America and the fastest organically grown firm in the industry.

\$21M revenue • 50+ markets • New verticals launched • Industry-leading brand

2025 Scaling with Structure

Surpassing 200 team members, intentional structure becomes the competitive advantage. Systems and leadership frameworks get dialed in to support the scale they've built. Principal expansion keeps adding markets and momentum. The digital engine WISE built keeps compounding — every layer of SEO, paid, web, tools, and content working harder as the brand grows.

200+ team members • Operational structure takes shape • Principal expansion continues

THE DARK HORSE ECOSYSTEM

Three Brands. One Vision. All Built with WISE.

As Dark Horse's ambitions expanded beyond core CPA services, WISE helped architect, design, and launch each new brand — creating a cohesive ecosystem that amplified the Dark Horse name across multiple markets and audiences.



DARK HORSE CPAS
darkhorse.cpa

The flagship — a fully remote, flat-fee CPA firm serving small businesses and individuals across 50+ U.S. markets. The award-winning website and SEO system WISE built powers client and CPA acquisition in every city.



DARK HORSE WEALTH
pw.darkhorse.cpa

Financial and tax advisors working together to grow client wealth. Built as a premium extension of the Dark Horse brand for high-net-worth individuals and families seeking integrated tax and wealth planning.



CANNABIS CPAS
cannabis.darkhorse.cpa

A dedicated CPA practice for cannabis businesses — a high-complexity niche that requires specialized tax knowledge. WISE built the brand, positioning, and SEO strategy to make Dark Horse the go-to firm for this industry.

WHAT MADE THIS POSSIBLE

Four Things That Had to Be True



A True Partnership

WISE didn't just execute campaigns — we helped shape the expansion strategy. When Dark Horse decided to go national, WISE had the infrastructure to support it immediately.



Infrastructure Built to Scale

The NEST™-powered website was architected from the start to support dozens of markets. Every new city could be launched with a location page, local SEO, and paid campaigns in days — not months.



A Brand Worth Building On

Dark Horse's disruptive positioning — remote, flat-fee, relational — gave the digital work something genuine to amplify. WISE built the stage. Dark Horse filled it with a story worth telling.



Commitment to the Long Game

Dark Horse partnered with WISE for more than five years to create this growth. The compounding returns — in revenue, brand equity, and market position — are the result of staying the course when other firms would have changed direction.

Ready to Build the Next Dark Horse?

Whether you're a single-location firm with national ambitions or a growing practice ready to accelerate — the WISE Growth System™ was built for firms that refuse to stay ordinary.

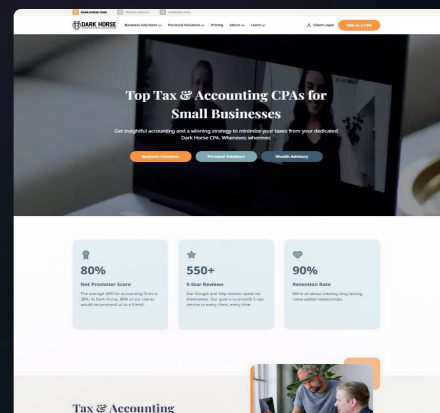


CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

From \$1.5M in San Diego to \$21M Across 50+ U.S. Markets

In just over 5 years, WISE helped Dark Horse CPAs go from a single-location firm to one of the most recognized CPA brands in America — and build three distinct brands along the way.

CLIENT	LOCATION	STARTED	ENGAGEMENT	REVENUE GROWTH
Dark Horse CPAs	San Diego, CA — Nationwide	Late 2020	Full Growth System + Expansion Strategy	\$1.5M → \$21M



14x
Revenue Growth

50+
U.S. Markets

3
Brands Built

69.5%
Avg CAGR

WHERE IT STARTED

A Disruptive Vision. No Digital Infrastructure to Match It.

Chase Birky and Max Fritz had already built something different. Dark Horse wasn't a typical CPA firm — no billable hours, flat-fee pricing, fully remote, deeply relational. The model was disruptive. By late 2020, the firm was doing \$1.5M out of San Diego with a handful of satellite locations and a clear ambition to expand nationally.

There was one problem: Chase had been through multiple agencies before WISE and kept hitting the same wall. No one could understand his vision, let alone execute it. Dark Horse's model was too unconventional, too technology-forward, too ambitious for vendors who were used to building standard CPA firm websites. He needed a partner who could think at his level — and build digital infrastructure that could actually keep pace with where he was taking the firm.

DARK HORSE IN 2020

\$1.5M Annual revenue, single primary market

- San Diego base with a few pilot satellite markets
- Disruptive model: remote, flat-fee, relational — but not yet national
- Strong brand identity and culture — no digital engine to match
- Principal Accelerator model developed but not yet at scale
- Leads coming in from the website and ads, but CPL was too high

THE GOAL

National Build a platform for nationwide expansion

- Award-winning website that could serve dozens of markets
- SEO and digital strategy to dominate local search in every new city
- Digital presence that attracted both clients and entrepreneurial CPAs
- Brand architecture to support multiple sub-brands
- Marketing infrastructure that could scale with the Principal model

WHAT WISE BUILT

Not Just Marketing. A Growth Platform.



01

A Nationwide SEO & PPC Engine

As each new Principal Accelerator launched in a new market, WISE activated local SEO, location pages, and targeted paid campaigns to capture high-intent searches from day one. Every city got its own digital presence — structured, optimized, and ready to attract clients and CPAs alike.



02

An Award-Winning Website

A completely reimaged digital presence built on WISE NEST™ — multi-market architecture, location pages for every new city, pricing tools, and a brand experience that immediately communicated Dark Horse's differentiation. Chase himself called it "probably the best in the industry."



03

A Multi-Brand Architecture

As Dark Horse expanded beyond core CPA services, WISE helped design and launch the digital presence for Dark Horse Private Wealth and Cannabis CPAs — each with its own positioning, website, and SEO strategy — all within a coherent brand family.