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We just completed the first Strategic Partner Retreat as I write this. This was the first in our series of three, and was hosted in balmy Tampa, Florida. I'm happy to report that we presented to a room full of firm partners and several of their trusted administrators—al eager to learn how to elevate their firms to Next Generation Accounting Firm status.

Over the course of day and a half, we discussed the processes and challenges to building a Next Generation Accounting Firm within a peer-supportive and highly interactive forum. Participants were active with their questions, concerns, challenges, and in many cases, insecurities, about how to move their firms forward given the environment we live in. Overall, we focused on strategy to get firms going.

Randy Johnston and I took turns facilitating the different sections during the two-day event. The following is a list of the big takeaways that I believe will be helpful for you:

- **Vision Challenged** — Most firms, and I see in firms across the country, have not taken the time to define exactly what they want from their businesses. The fact is that more than 90% of firms in the US are small firms, and the partners within these firms are continue to "just do their thing" each day with no clear vision on where they want their business to go.

Michael Gerber, author of the popular E-Myth book, talks about the E-Myth Five

certain level of client service, they might indicate: "we believe that the information we create for our clients should be available anytime, anywhere, and on any device." However, if their vision for how to offer this level of service is unclear, often they will select technology that does not work together—such as a document management system that does not integrate with their portal solution.

- **Firm Infrastructure** — Many of the firms we see are really struggling with the decision of whether to move to the Cloud, stay on premise, or go with a hybrid. This is not an easy issue to solve. And it's even more difficult to solve if you have no idea about what your firm infrastructure should look like.

This is just a sampling of the many topics covered in our Strategic Partner Retreats. Randy and I lead these events and do our best to help firms develop the key components they need to advance their firms. It's important to understand that advancing one's firm is not an event; it's a process. And it's a process that is ongoing and requires thoughtful focus and help from those who have already been down this road and found success.

There are still two Strategic Partner Summits on the calendar. Don't miss the opportunity to see how your firm can reach Next Generation status. For more information, check out our website at cpapracticeadvisor.com and register today.

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