As I write this article, I'm on a flight to the California Accounting & Business Show & Conference — the venue for announcing this year's Innovation Award winners. In

addition to the awards presentation, we will also be recording a series of interviews

All the work we've done to make the magazine and website a premier resource for the profession is a good example of staying ahead of the curve. That is, staying ahead of change and making sure we are always providing current, relevant information and tools to you. I hope that each of you is also working to keep your firm ahead of the curve. I know that running a professional accounting services firm is no easy task; it requires a lot of effort. And that is why we strive to share as much information as we can on technology, best practices, the Cloud and more — to help make your job a bit easier.

I speak at numerous events across the country, and what I've seen is a big divide between firms that manage to stay ahead of the curve and those severely falling behind. What I mean by falling behind has nothing to do with technical skills, but rather falling behind in the best uses of technology ... or falling behind in building services that current and future generations are interested in buying.

Think about technology and services for a minute. Many of the services accountants provide today are those that the profession has been offering for decades. How services are delivered has not changed much either; far too many firms are still doing things manually. It's time to challenge yourself and really think about providing and delivering services that clients want. Client expectations have changed. They don't want paper anymore. They want 24/7 online access to their documents. They want to communicate in real-time via the web. They want products and services that are visually appealing, like advanced, personalized portals (see www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com/10248304 for an excellent article on establishing an effective portal strategy). It's time to identify these needs and make changes to your technology infrastructure and services accordingly.

I was recently informed of an alarming statistic. One of the large tax software vendors informed me that prior to the 2010 filing season, 50% of its customers

(firms) had not purchased their e-filing product before. It astounded me that as

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