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James Walter • Mar. 07, 2014

As an accountant, one might think managing a business and growing revenue would come naturally. But taking the time to focus on marketing, sales and business development objectives is one of the hardest aspects of building a company. That's why we wanted to share some proven ideas to help save you time, money and grow your business.

1: Understand the technology that's available

It's time for accountants to move outside of the box – or Excel in this case. There's a plethora of new cloud-based software programs that automate portions of the accounting process and enable you to offer your services anytime, anywhere. These tools allow you to spend less time in the books, and more time building relationships with clients both new and old. Here are some of the ways new SaaS (software-as-a-service) programs have changed the accounting game:

- Provide instant visual access to financials in under a minute
- Create customizable reports within a set criteria
- Incorporate multiple vendors' tax preparation software
- Quickly identify red flags and pinpoint risk indicators
- Compare financials across industry-wide averages
- Share reports in real-time with company stakeholders

A majority of these new accounting technologies offer no-risk free trials, so you can

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estate planning, implementing financial IT, managing investments, analyzing loan transactions, and representing your clients before tax authorities. Don't confine your business to the months of tax season; be sure to stay connected with your clients all year long.

3: Find your niche and understand your clients

While upselling your highest value services is important, it's also helpful to narrow your focus to one specific industry or a certain type of service. Become an expert in particular areas that go beyond traditional checks and balances. This could encompass business valuations, dispute resolution services, litigation support, fraud detection and financial loss investigation.

Once you've established your firm's identity, it's time to move your focus externally. Determine how your services coincide with the needs of your clients, and the demographic of your potential new clients. During your client meetings make sure to ask about their specific pain points, any seasonal changes they might have in income/inventory and focus on the KPI (key performance indicators) of that specific industry. Using new cloud-based services, you can pinpoint these KPIs, identify red flags and provide valuable recommendations for the future of their business. This wealth of information positions you as a trusted advisor, growing your repertoire of client testimonials and ultimately, your business.

4: Grow your community and become an influencer

Once you've found your place in the accounting realm, it's time to build brand recognition. With thousands of firms out there, it can be hard to stand out. One way to boast your skills is to become an influencer in the industry by speaking at local events or perhaps in an accounting/ finance class at a local university. Joining a

specific association or organization is also great for networking both with others in

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future of growing a business and it's high time to start building your audience. Here are the ways we suggest utilizing the most popular social networks via your company profile.

- **LinkedIn** = Connect your company with the B2B community through articles, images, events, and group discussions
- **Facebook** = Connect with your clients on a personal level, join groups, create events, connect with peers and showcase your company culture
- **Twitter** = Share brief updates, links, images and hashtags with your clients, partners and peers
- **Yelp** = Monitor your current reviews and encourage your customers to share their experiences on Yelp
- **YouTube** = Create videos to showcase some of your highest value services. The general rule of thumb is the more quirky and interesting a video, the more likely it will go viral

Once you've created a social media presence, it's time to start engaging your audience with useful and interesting content. The best way to approach this is to create a blog on your website. This is a great way to leverage your knowledge in the community, without having to stand up in front of a crowd. When deciding what to share, always ask yourself what your audience wants to read before you post.

After you've explored the vast accounting technology landscape, cross-promoted all of your offerings, discovered your niche, touted your expertise in the community and connected with your clients over social media – the next step toward growing your business is just a click away.

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