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Summer time has always been my favorite season. Tax season time-crunch has passed and practitioners have the opportunity to take a deep breath and relax. However, that's not to say that this is an idle time. Summer has traditionally been the time when practitioners can take a long look at their firms and explore opportunities on how to refine and enhance them. This is the perfect time to explore the addition of new services.

Offering new services enables your accounting firm to generate additional revenue, and build stronger relationships with existing clients while adding new ones. While a majority of firms may offer seasonal/tax time services, offering new ones, such as bill pay, can significantly impact your bottom line.

The recent economic improvement has helped create an opportunity for business development. A [recent survey by the AICPA](#) of more than 1,000 CPAs from various sizes of firms revealed that their business focus has shifted from retaining clients in 2011 to bringing in new clients in 2013. This signals a significant trust in the economy that can support business expansion.

With this in mind, let's explore how to manage expansion and how to implement new services.

How to Manage Expansion

First and foremost – expansion is always an opportunity. With any good opportunity comes potential success and some challenges:

Find a service that is in demand. Take time to assess the demand of new services.

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allocate to the new services in a manner that upholds your record of excellent client service. Additionally, remember that word of mouth is powerful. Plan accordingly.

Utilize the right technology. Are you trying to play soccer with a golf ball? Or win a NASCAR race with a go-kart? Oftentimes, accounting firms underestimate the importance of technology when expanding into new markets. Ideally your technology should be able to scale with your business, adequately support new offerings, and enhance your client services efforts. In fact, adopting the right technology can provide significant time and cost savings. For example, by adopting the automated workflow and online payments provided by a cloud-based solution, accounting firms can bypass the need to hire new employees or avoid wasting a large portion of time on manual processes such as data entry.

How to Implement New Client Services

Now that you have determined the rewards – and challenges – of setting up new client services, it is time to act.

Leverage technology for collaboration: Technology can easily make the addition of new services a viable reality. Cloud-based services can offer ideal collaboration platforms, reporting functionality, and mobile access for clients. Work with your clients to help them adopt these new services and help them efficiently grow their businesses.

Communicate your new client service offerings: Never underestimate the power of strong, consistent communications. Ensure that your new services are supported with clear documentation and marketing and be sure to measure the results. Add the information to your website, include it in client communications and proposals to prospective clients, and create slides that can easily be added to existing presentations. Be sure to prominently address the benefits of the new service. For

example, with bill payments, the communication could be that handling bill

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