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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

Shift From DIY (Do-It-Yourself) to DDIY (Don't-Do-It-Yourself) Puts Accountants Back In Control Of Client Accounting

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Chandra Bhansali, PhD • Sep. 21, 2016



Have you ever seen patients going to their physician with an over-the-counter medication and asking the physician to treat them with that drug? Of course not. No physician would run his practice on over-the-counter drugs.

But unfortunately that's precisely how accounting has worked for years. Accounting is dominated by over-the-counter DIY (Do It Yourself) solutions created for small businesses. This environment creates significant pain for both accountants and their clients. If you were to ask your clients if they love doing accounting, how many hands would be raised? Hardly any.

The truth is, most small business owners would rather spend their time focused on their businesses, and not accounting work. What's more, every good accountant knows that the more their clients are involved in bookkeeping (without any accounting knowledge), the more mistakes they'll be left cleaning up. Despite all these shortfalls, DIY software was the only viable option in the desktop era. But the cloud changes all that. Today, cloud-based professional accounting systems put accountants back in the driver's seat by giving accountants two important capabilities they never had before.

New capabilities from professional cloud solutions

First, these professional cloud-based solutions make it possible for accountants' staff to do all of the work that their clients or clients' staff performs, only faster, easier and more accurately... all without leaving the office. Second, these solutions allow accountants to collaborate with their clients while they remain in full command. As a result, accountants can customize their services for each individual client, based on their needs and preferences. Accountants can completely eliminate the need for clients to perform any accounting work if they despise doing accounting. By taking over all the accounting work, they don't just eliminate their clients' pain; they also eliminate their own pain that was caused by the bookkeeping messes those clients made.

For clients who prefer to have some involvement, accountants can set up the system for them and then give them access to the specific functions they can perform comfortably without making errors. Professional systems like Accounting Power give accountants that capability.

How can accountants change the conversation and convince their clients to adopt a "Don't-Do-It-Yourself" (DDIY) model? The conversation is pretty straightforward. Accountants need to communicate to their clients that, thanks to advances in accounting technology, they are able to customize their services to best meet their clients' needs and offer important services they could not offer in the past. That includes relieving clients of accounting headaches.

Emphasize the unknown benefits of DDIY

By showing their clients how easy and cost-effective it can be to hand over all of their accounting to their accountant, accounting firms can both save time and make more money using DDIY solutions. For the reluctant client, accountants can use a more collaborative approach and allow them to perform specific functions in areas they're familiar with, to satisfy both the client and accountant.

For example, some clients may only want to use accounting programs to write checks and enter deposits. Accountants can tailor the program to let them perform those functions quickly. Other clients may want their own well-trained staff to handle account receivables and account payables. Accountants can personalize the solution for that ability.

This customized and collaborative workspace keeps clients involved while minimizing errors. This frees up more time for accountants to focus on providing

value, such as identifying growth opportunities or flagging discrepancies or threats to the client's business.

Build strong relationships

According to a survey by SCORE, 40 percent of small business owners said dealing with bookkeeping and taxes are the single worst part of owning a company. CPA firms can take advantage of this by offering complete accounting and payroll services.

With collaborative cloud-based solutions, accountants can use that comprehensive view of a client's finances to offer real-time strategic advice, and provide significantly deeper value beyond preparing simple financials and doing taxes.

The more services that an accountant can offer their client, the stronger their client relationships become, which can boost retention and create a strong referral network for the accounting firm amongst existing clients.

While desktop computing popularized DIY accounting systems for small business owners and created pain for accountants and their clients, cloud-based professional accounting systems put accountants back in the driver's seat. They enable a paradigm shift from DIY to DDIY that benefits both accountants and their clients, and leads to accountants offering more strategic value to their clients' businesses.

Dr. Chandra Bhansali is CEO of [AccountantsWorld](#), a pioneer in cloud-based software solutions designed exclusively for accountants. He has been a thought leader on how technology can improve accounting firms, and has been named one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting" by Accounting Today for over 10 years.

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