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Young finance professionals at small and medium-size practices are a mobile group who seek out professional development and are well-equipped to deal with changes being driven by globalization and technology, finds a new report by ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants).

*Generation Next: Managing Talent in Small and Medium Sized Practices* (SMPs) dives deeper into ACCA's 2016 global survey examining the career aspirations of the younger generation in finance today. You can read the report at [www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/professional-insights/pro-accountants-the-future/generation-next-managing-talent-in-small-and-medium-sized-pract.html](http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/professional-insights/pro-accountants-the-future/generation-next-managing-talent-in-small-and-medium-sized-pract.html)

“Our research on young finance professionals globally suggests that this is a

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“Encouragingly, this research shows that the new generation of young finance and accountancy professionals entering the world of SMPs is well-equipped to deal with the changes being driven by globalization and technology,” adds Johnston.

From an employer's perspective, a focus on attraction, engagement, and retention should lead to wider changes in how many approach talent-management strategies. Generation Next as a whole is particularly mobile, and that pattern holds for those employed at SMPs: 31% would like to move to their next role in one year, and 64% in two years.

For attracting young finance professionals to SMPs, job security and work life balance are a major factor; 86% agree that job security with an employer is important; 83% agree that work-life balance is a priority; and 71% say that flexible working arrangements are an attraction.

For Generation Next, the key to retention is development: 93% agree that the availability of opportunities to learn and develop skills is key to remaining with an employer. They are nearly split on whether those development opportunities are available at their SMP: 41% say their employer does not have enough roles available to allow for career progression, while 40% say their employer offers sufficient opportunity to achieve career goals.

These career goals include significant entrepreneurial ambition among young finance professionals; 81% of respondents want to start their own company at some point, with 12% harboring ambitions to do so as a next career move. The report notes that employers should tap into this and promote the advantages of practicing entrepreneurial skills ‘intrapreneurially’ to identify new growth opportunities.

Additionally, much has been written over the past few years on the threat of automation to jobs, but for the next generation of accountants, including at SMPs,

the rise of the robots presents an opportunity, not a risk. Globally, 80% of Generation

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