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the question of how they should expand their non-traditional services. Some of the more common service areas include technology, wealth management and specialized ...

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As more and more CPA firms venture into consulting services, they will be faced with

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opportunity. Technology is a great example. While the idea may have started with a CPA firm member, most firms often find that CPAs aren't the best people to run that part of the business. There are many reasons for this, but it really boils down to not having the right training or mindset. CPAs are trained to do something very particular and much of a firm's consulting services and affiliated entities will ask CPAs to go against all their training. Finding the right people to lead and deliver services is critical to its success. When you study the firms that are diversifying successfully, they don't usually have CPAs running their groups.

- **Manage it differently.** Probably the number one challenge I see and hear revolves around management clashes between the affiliated service line or entity and the firm. Firms want to manage these groups in the same way they manage their CPA firm, but that model won't always work. CPA firms are often highly leveraged. In some fields that works, but in other areas, like consulting, it doesn't. While some leverage is possible, it cannot be nearly as leveraged as most accounting firms. Recognize that you may have to manage this area differently. It doesn't mean you can't expect results and profitability, it simply means the normal key performance indicators and benchmarks might be different.
- **Pricing.** In almost all cases, pricing must be more transparent. Time and billing rarely go over well in non-traditional areas. How you price your work will change and the firm must come up with a standardized approach to the way it bills its time. Check out our blogs on pricing [here](#) and [here](#), and our [webinar](#) on How to Build a Consulting Practice for more on this topic.
- **Selling.** Many of the services being provided are either not recurring or are only partially recurring. The primary exception might be wealth management services. Selling is going to be an important part of your growth. Referrals alone won't be enough because you will constantly need to replace revenue, especially when you start consulting. Having dedicated sales professional or a mix of people comfortable in more proactive sales efforts will be important.

- **Marketing.** *How you market and where you market* may also change depending on

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your firm can diversify their services, [contact one of our growth professionals](#) today!

Ranked twice by Accounting Today as one of the Top 100 Most Influential People, Sarah Johnson Dobek of Inovautus Consulting is an [accounting marketing growth advisor](#). She helps Accounting firms identify and implement strategies to help them grow their firms and distinguish themselves in the marketplace. Connect with Sarah to learn more at 773-208-7170, sjohnson@inovautus.com, or www.linkedin.com/in/sjjohnson.

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