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the upcoming budget and forecasting season. The fast pace and extended hours can be difficult even for the most seasoned accountants. To get ahead, employees should be ...

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As we enter the beginning of Fall, accountants everywhere are preparing to navigate

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digitization also raises the risks of marginalization and irrelevance. By leveraging cutting-edge technological tools, accountants can apply more brain power for more complex tasks and relationship-building, rather than simply “crunching numbers.” There are two broad areas in which digital tools are creating major disruptions in the way things are done in accounting departments:

- **Cloud computing** – Accountants who want to be seen as leaders in the industry are not sticking to the traditional spreadsheet for budgeting and forecasting these days. Instead, they're using cloud computing to automate often time-consuming and repetitive work wherever possible. By leveraging the latest technology, updates become automatic, information can be accessed from anywhere and at any time, fees are predictable, and insights into key performance indicators are available in real time and at your fingertips. This allows CPAs to focus less time on routine paperwork and more on building relationships with clients. Doing so increases speed and accuracy, workload productions, and also allows professionals to take work on-the-go, if necessary, because everything is centralized.
- **Big data** – Companies are collecting an increasingly massive amount of data, both financial and non-financial, every day. As a consequence, many finance professionals are being asked to model and benchmark information, generate new insights to improve executive decision-making and assess investment risks and budgeting based on predictive analytics. So, what's the point of reading all of this data? Professionals can analyze the past to forecast the future much more rapidly and accurately than before. This helps accountants develop strategies, budgets and upcoming forecasts over time that increase profitability and better serve clients.

Develop proficiency with essential technology tools today

By leveraging the right tools, accounting professionals have the ability to shed their roles as number crunchers and focus on higher-value work as advisors and

consultants on finance and business strategy. And with so much information

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- **Online training opportunities** – There is online training available to help finance professionals increase their technical proficiency through training and certification programs like Microsoft Certification Programs (MCPs) and ISACA certifications. Professionals can upskill and learn about cloud migration as well as data security. For in-depth training, without the certification component, there are also paid offerings from online learning portals like [Lynda.com](#).
- **Find a mentor** – Connect with a senior-level employee at your employer and ask them for advice and guidance. Find out how they [stay abreast of the technology advancements](#) in the workplace. Listen to what works for them, try to create your own path and ask them to hold you accountable when needed.
- **Join a social group** – Along with the addition of technology tools in the workplace, there is also an increased need for [soft skills](#) such as relationship-building and complex communication for accounting professionals. Consider joining an organization like [Toastmasters International](#) to sharpen your public speaking and client-facing skills, which will help you stand out at work.

Ready to equip yourself with tools and skills to increase your clients' satisfaction — and at the same time make yourself an invaluable part of the finance team? By arming yourself with the latest technology, you'll be positioned for success this budget season.

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With more than 22 years' experience in the staffing industry, Jodi Chavez is president of Randstad Professionals and Life Sciences, where she oversees the field organization and

provides direction for Randstad's life sciences, finance and accounting, human resources,

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