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**Sandra Wiley** • Sep. 15, 2022



A common complaint from firm leaders these days is, “We can’t find any CPAs to hire!”

If you’re in that boat, I wish I had a quick fix for you. But the truth is that there’s a shortage of CPAs and CPA candidates, and the situation isn’t going to improve any time soon.

## The CPA shortage

Fewer college students are pursuing accounting degrees, and those that do aren’t necessarily interested in working in a CPA firm or pursuing a CPA license.

Among accounting graduates who do not plan to become CPAs, the top reasons for not pursuing the credential include [not seeing value or relevance to their careers](#)

(32%) and not seeing the return on investment (28%).

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So who will you hire. It's time to start looking for people who aren't CPAs.

## New talent for new jobs

Today's workforce demands that we focus on the unique abilities of individuals and plug them into where they're needed the most. Our focus can't be solely on education, experience or letters after a name, but on who can do the work that needs to be done.

That's going to require firm leaders and recruiters to seek out different types of people than they've ever looked at before.

Consider your tax and audit team members. While there are certainly aspects of their job that require an accounting degree and CPA license, they likely spend a good portion of their time on non-CPA tasks, including:

- Marketing
- Business development
- Data analytics
- Consulting
- Project management
- Content creation
- Wealth management
- Training others

And more!

In the past, when your tax and audit team members were out of capacity to take on additional work, you would simply hire another tax accountant or auditor member.

Today, that's not always an option. Rather than trying to hire another accountant,

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include:

- Conducting initial pre-screening conversations with potential clients that come in from referrals, phone calls, social media platforms, or website contact forms
- Performing data analysis as part of assurance, advisory or consulting engagements
- Consulting with clients on technology, growth, leadership, human resources, wealth management and other non-accounting areas
- Writing blog and newsletter content for the firm
- Managing non-client-facing projects

## Profiling, recruiting and hiring changes

If hiring non-CPAs is part of your strategy, you must change whom you're looking for. Start by creating new candidate profiles. What is the new employee's job description? What skills do they need? What personality traits would help them be successful in the role? What experience or certifications (other than in accounting) should they have?

Now that you know whom you're looking for, you can acquire talent from all over the world. The pandemic proved that employees don't have to be on-site 100% of the time to be productive, and there are many aspects of the work your team does that don't require them to be in the same physical location or even in an overlapping time zone.

Talent is the most critical asset in any CPA firm, and while accounting professionals are still vital, they're not the only type of talent you should be looking for. When you open your mind to hiring beyond accounting professionals—when and where it makes sense—you'll enjoy greater stability on your bench, more room to grow organically, and a diverse team that generates the creativity and innovation to move forward into the future.

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