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financial planning as a natural extension of their current skill set.

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By Ona Bolton, CFP®, CPA/PFS.

As more and more accountants look to broaden their careers, many will look to financial planning as a natural extension of their current skill set.

New developments and technologies, such as integrated technology stacks and AI-powered software applications, continue to improve the daily workflow of accountants, removing mundane tasks while opening exciting career development paths for the profession. Many accountants have seized the opportunity to expand

their practices beyond traditional CPA duties into advisory focused roles, including

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trademark symbol with their acronym. *CPA Practice Advisor* has accommodated this preference.]

Pivot Away From Commoditized Services

While nearly any CPA can file a tax return, most clients don't expect their accountant to provide detailed, personalized financial advice. With the introduction of new accounting technologies that remove many of the tedious and manual daily tasks of the profession, many accountants have found that they have more free time to expand into new offerings and services. Many accounting firms are taking advantage of this free time, encouraging their accountants to pursue new certifications and develop advisory services and practices for their clients.

The expansion into financial planning is a natural extension of the relationship a CPA will have with their clients, which inherently involves a personal touch. However, the advice offered by a CPA often addresses the tax implications of financial decisions that have already been made, compared to the forward-looking, goal-based insights offered by a CFP® professional. Some CPAs may even feel commoditized by the interchangeable nature of some accounting services, or maybe they feel like they've been left out of the decision-making process.

This phenomenon is not limited to accounting. It's also relevant to investment advice, which, given the rise of call centers and the widespread availability of robo-advisors, is now commonly seen as a commoditized service. CFP® certification enables any advisor who aspires to act as a strategic counselor to offer goal-based financial advice to clients.

Move From Tax Filer to Strategic Advisor

With the CFP® certification, I have expanded my practice to meet clients at all stages of their financial journey. The additional education required as part of the CFP®

exam pushed me to become a stronger and more well-rounded advisor, expanding

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confidence boost to make tailored recommendations for each client's individual needs. The additional education also doubled as reassurance to my clients and prospective clients that I am a reliable resource for those tough financial decisions.

Stand Out in the Alphabet Soup of Designations

With over [260,000 financial advisors](#) and [over 669,000 CPAs](#) in the United States, the CFP® certification is a great way for accountants to stand out in a crowded field. CFP Board's [Accelerated Path](#) program allows CPA applicants to skip much of the required coursework and sit for the CFP® exam sooner, putting them on the fast track to CFP® certification.

While I personally held the AICPA's PFS designation for a number of years, it simply didn't resonate with clients in the same way that the CFP® certification does. With nearly 94,000 CFP® professionals across the country, CFP® certification has significant brand awareness, and my clients trust that I have their best interests at heart. Additionally, [89% of CFP® professionals](#) say they have a competitive edge over other financial advisors and earn 26% more than other financial advisors. For many CPA professionals their clients appreciate the added convenience of having all financial advice under one roof, especially during tax season!

For CPAs looking to level up their client advisory skills while expanding their knowledge of financial planning, I highly recommend pursuing the CFP® certification via the Accelerated Path program. This program helped me to improve my financial planning skills to provide holistic and strategic financial advice to my clients who trust that I have their best interests at heart.

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