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competition and provide their clients with the highest quality services.

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*By Richard Lavina.*

The accounting profession has been facing a staffing crunch brought on by fewer college graduates entering the profession and experienced tax practitioners transitioning to different careers in accounting. Due to the increasing demand for bookkeeping, taxes, compliance, consulting, and audits, especially with more people and businesses in the United States, tax season becomes increasingly difficult for

short-staffed firms across the U.S. However, with the rapid evolution of technology,

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Usually, whenever many in the industry think of outsourcing, thoughts of sending sensitive client information overseas enter our minds. However, outsourcing domestically is, in actuality, an ideal solution to protecting your firm against tax season's stressors. Outsourcing domestically allows you to shed excess work off your staff's back so that their time is freed up to leverage client engagements for more value-added services. In return, your firm can have CPAs or enrolled agents acting as independent contractors from the service provider's network to prepare or review tax returns. Additionally, there's a benefit to domestic outsourcing because there's more assurance that your clients' sensitive records are kept secure.

Automation has become another significant innovation that can help your firm become more efficient and productive. Automation can provide your firm with increased time savings, accuracy, clientele growth, and work-life balance, making them more effective and valuable in their industry.

One of the most significant benefits of financial automation for CPAs is saving time. Financial automation can save you thousands of hours of avoidable work annually. As we all know, each second during tax season is a precious resource, and with the extra free time saved through automation, your staff can have more room to pursue other opportunities for generating revenue or learning new skills, allowing them to grow your firm efficiently, effectively, and provide clients with financial information in a fraction of the time, which can increase customer retention and acquisition.

In addition, automation can reduce human errors, which can be costly and affect your success. Consider the hours spent meticulously filling out client details. One mistake means going back and redoing the work. Automated systems can ensure workflow efficiency and accuracy, with data being autogenerated rather than manually gathered and entered. Many accounting software can automate a wide

range of tasks, such as data entry and report generation, providing accurate and

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various benefits for CPAs. Even if you already have a CRM, upgrading to a more robust system can act as an investment for your firm that would optimize various processes. Clients demand convenience, and they want to feel valued and prioritized. A CRM tool can ensure that your firm fosters strong relationships with clients by staying on top of client communication by providing your staff with email templates that they can personalize and schedule to be sent, keeping communication flowing and productivity levels high. This makes your staff's lives easier and provides clients with peace of mind that their requests are being handled professionally.

Furthermore, a CRM platform allows your firm to set up a client onboarding strategy for a more streamlined experience. Features such as document storage, client portals, email templates, and scheduled reminders ensure that new clients receive the right information at the right time, making the onboarding process more efficient.

CRMs can also streamline the cross-selling process, allowing CPAs to increase sales significantly. With a CRM, CPAs can create a database of their clients' needs and preferences, enabling them to provide tailored services and offer additional services that their clients may need.

Time is the most valuable resource during tax season. But each year, tax practitioners nationwide find themselves burning the candle at both ends from January through April. However, domestic outsourcing, financial automation, and CRM systems are revolutionizing the accounting industry, allowing CPAs to become more efficient, productive, and valuable than ever before. With the benefits of increased time savings, accuracy, clientele growth, and work-life balance, CPAs can provide much more during tax season without adding to their stress and risking burnout. Accounting firms that embrace these technologies will be able to stay ahead of their competition and provide their clients with the highest quality services.

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