



Challenges in Practice

Practice Management Strategies

Clientele and Fees

Ingredients to Successful Practice



Growth Strategies

Specilization/ New Areas

Practice and Technology

Office Management



Current Position of Chartered Accountants In Practice

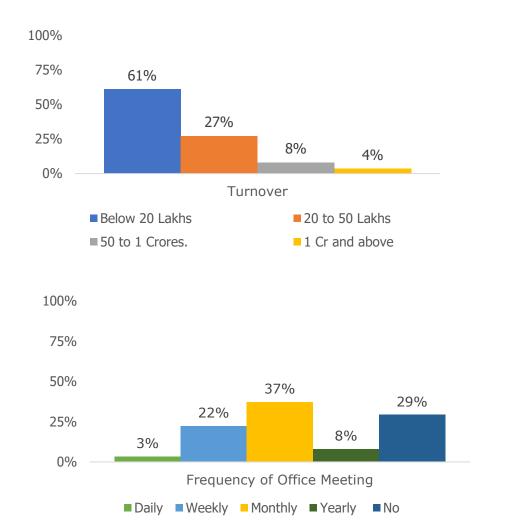
- Risk has gone up substantially
- Several scams have surfaced where CAs are found involved or presumed to be involved
- Increased expectations of Regulators / Stakeholders / Society
- NFRA is set up
- Stiff penalties / regulatory action against CAs
- E-governance in almost all government administration
- Increasing impact of technology
- Constant amendments in GST, Companies Act, Ind AS, Bankruptcy code, Valuations
- Constant changes in practice due to introduction of Rotation of Auditors, UDIN, Valuation rules, Technology etc.
- Recommendation by Company Law Committee (CLC) on Joint Audit
- Sharing recommendations on business expansion, profit enhancement, joint venture programme
- General Practice vs Specialization

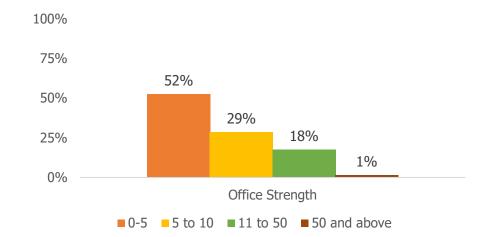
Noteworthy Changes – Taxation and Compliance Reforms

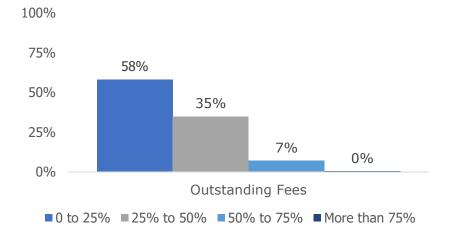
Government of India enforced stringent tax and other compliance reforms such as:

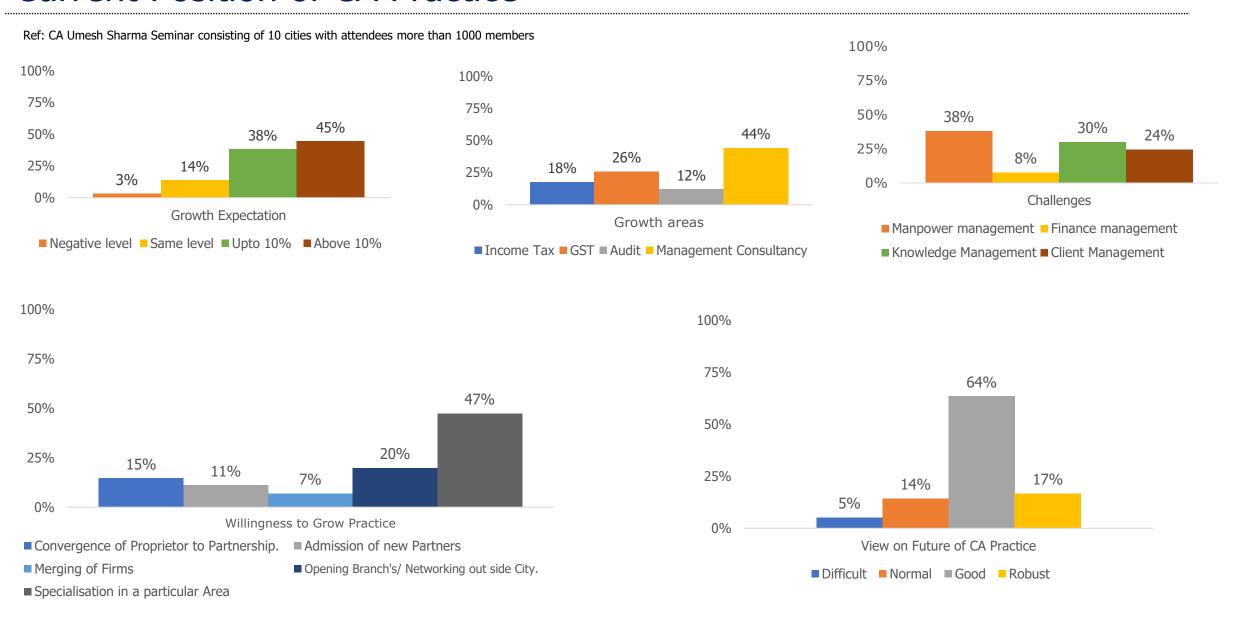
- Jan Dhan Yojana
- Aadhar
- Income Declaration Scheme
- Demonetization
- Cash Transaction Reforms
- MCA struck of 3.8 lakhs Shell Companies identified, struck off during FY 2018-20
- Money Laundering and Benami Transaction
- Mergers of Banks
- Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)
- Goods and Service Tax (GST)
- Atmanirbhar Bharat

Ref: CA Umesh Sharma Seminar consisting of 10 cities with attendees more than 1000 members



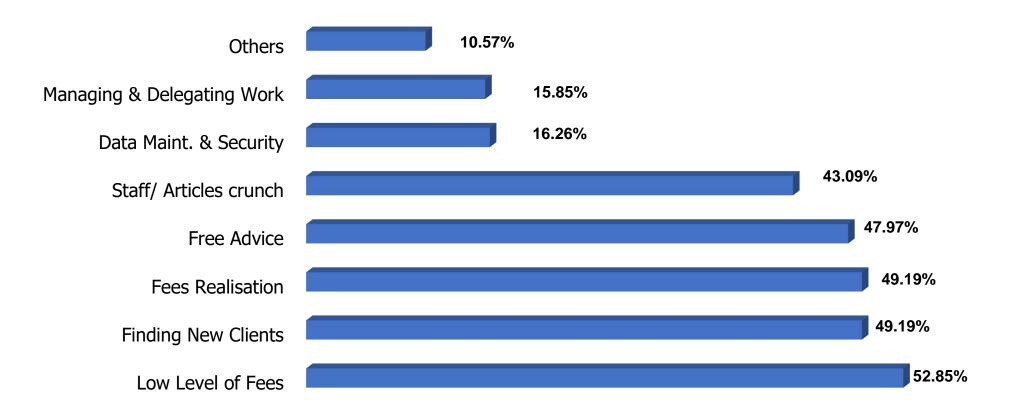




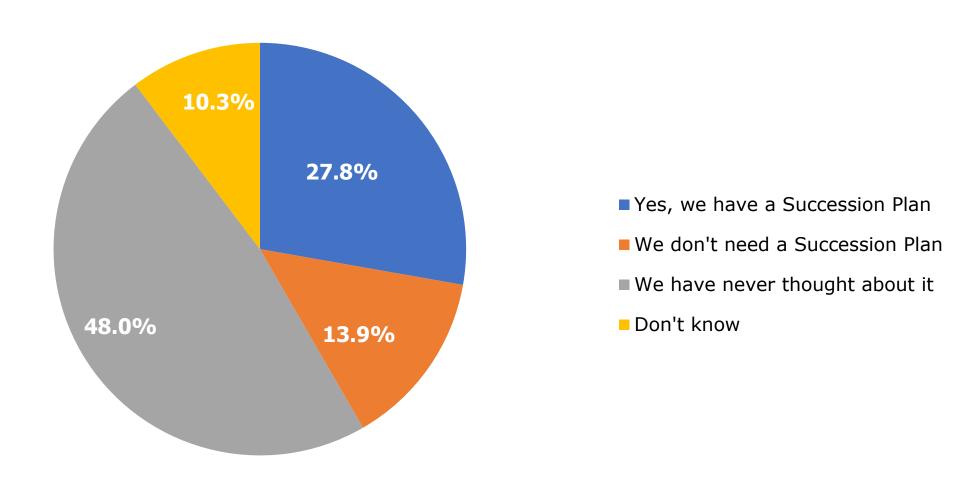


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Main Problem and Issues you face in your office



Is your firm equipped with a Continuity Plan/ Succession Plan to succeed the senior partners





Challenges in Practice

Balancing 3 S

Balancing the 3 S - Service, Satisfaction, and Success

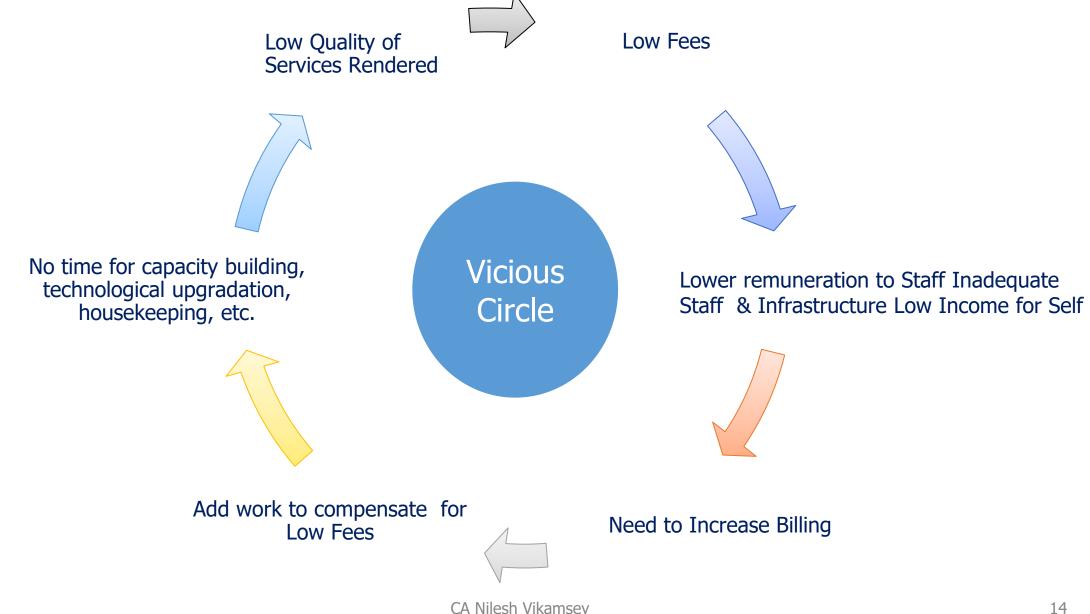


Source: Strategy and positioning of professional service firms - Ashish Nanda (Harvard Business School)

Challenges in Practice: Economic

- Rapidly increasing costs
- Inadequate projection of services Rendered (Value of assuring no material misstatement or of no major non-compliance in Taxation is not adequately projected and made known to clients which results in accepting lower fees)
- Competitive environment
- Client loyalties are no longer as stable as earlier (more of professional relationship)
- Retaining clients who are growing big is a challenge (if PU does not grow)
- Traditional Areas of Practice like Audit, Tax etc 'appear' over-crowded
- Increasing cost of executing Assurance Functions (more time taken in compliance of Auditing & Accounting Standards, Regulatory matters, increasing costs of Manpower etc) without corresponding increase in fees
- Lack of Billing Skills throws the smaller firms into the 'Vicious circle of Low Fees'

Challenges in Practice: Economic



Challenges in Practice: Regulatory

- Income Tax reduced no. of Deductions / Exemptions, Simplification & lesser no of scrutiny cases
- Professionals are prone to regulatory action (NFRA / Peer review / QRB / FRRB / SFIO / Disciplinary Proceedings & other regulatory issues)
- Too many changes in Laws, Standards & Guidelines at alarmingly rapid speed (GST / Demonetization / Ind AS / ICDS / IBC / Company Law /NBFC)
- Plethora of internal compliances—Standards of Auditing , Code of ethics,
- Cumbersome procedures
- Implementing process for complying with Code of Ethics
- Series of due dates in GST Laws
- Burden on GST practitioner for non-compliance/default of Client
- GST Authorities taking stringent views/actions for tax collection

Challenges in Practice: Technological

- Constant updations on technical front (unlearning a big challenge)
- New technologies coming rapidly (Robotic Process Automation, Machine Learning, AI, Block Chain)
- Increasing use of technology is making the clients more independent and self reliant
- Impact on the Business Processes and Internal Control Processes
- Missing audit trail due to automation
- Understanding complex IT environments in which clients are functioning
- Increasing Threat to Data security / Privacy
- Knowledge is available at click of button !!!



Enduring Challenge of Computerisation

- Use of Sophisticated Algorithms to do repetitive tasks
- John Keynes prediction of Technological Unemployment cited prediction of widespread technological
 unemployment "due to our discovery of means of economising the use of labour outrunning the pace at which
 we can find new uses for labour".
- Oxford University research on Susceptibility to computers Jobs relating to Accounting and Auditing
 has 94% probability of susceptibility
- Requirement of client as One Stop Solutions: Due to increased complexity in the business clients look out for one stop solutions. This could lead to requirements for establishment of multidisciplinary firms.

Challenges in Practice: Human Capital

- Staff Loyalty and High attrition
- Inadequate Training and Practical Experience
- Stressed Relationships
- High expectation of Salary
- Dilemma of retaining experience resources Increased Pay Same Fee
- Lack of Managerial skills
- Lack of patience among staff
- Preference for routine / mechanical work
- Challenge of good staff with Clients—increasing our work
- Changing the HR dynamics being less dependent on articles/intern. Qualified professional should form the main stay

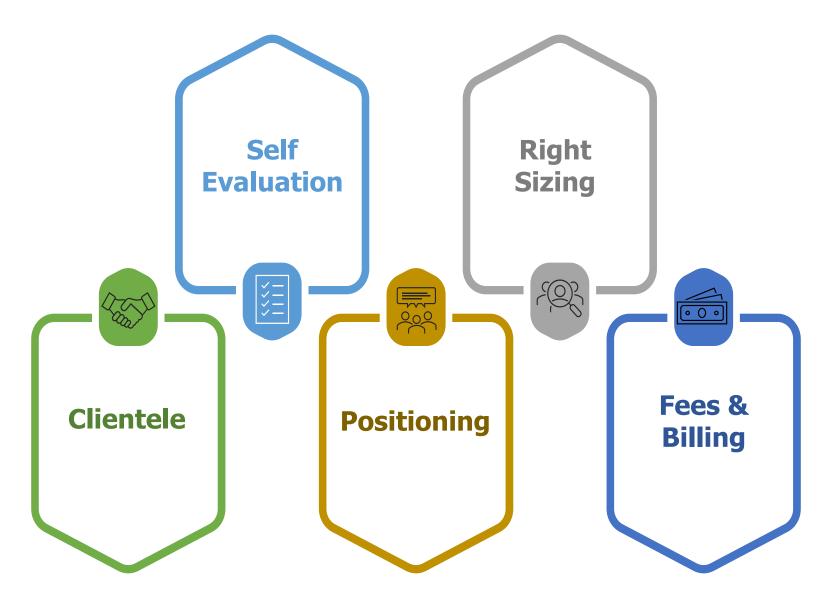
Challenges in Practice: Personal Challenges

- Docile / Passive nature of CAs (accept lower fees and delays)
- Greed to increase volume of work at any cost
- Inadequate / Improper communication skills to showcase oneself
- Society's perception Necessary Evil !!
- Lack of time management (peak and nonpeak periods)
- Not billing clients for telephonic consultations like lawyers or doctors
- Imbalance between knowledge and execution skills
- Inadequate funds and improper financial management
- Inability to keep pace with Technology changes
- Shift in practice from knowledge to Branding, Size, Organization, Management



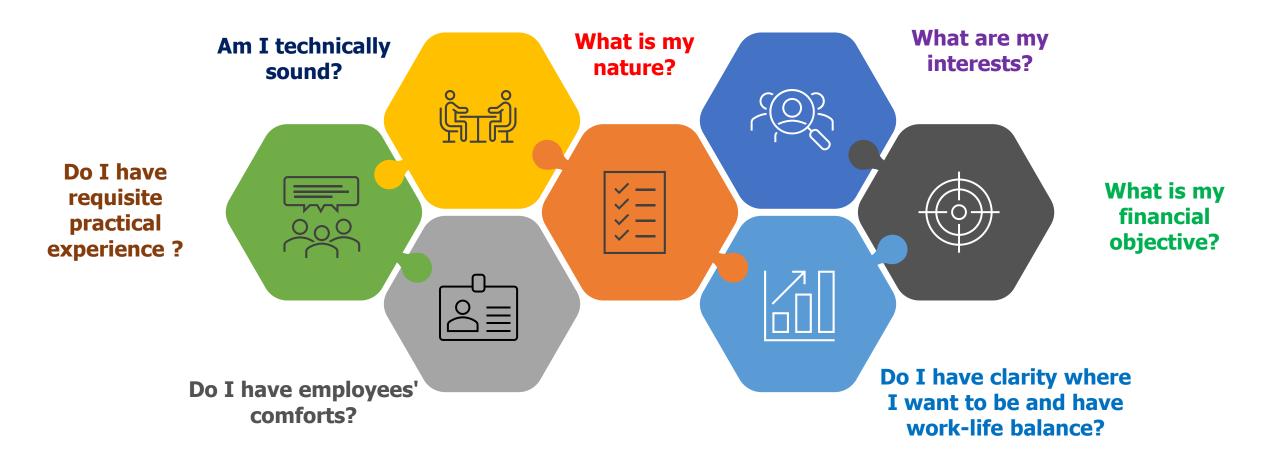
Practice Management Strategies

Practice Management Strategies



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Self Evaluation Puzzle



Addressing the Self Evaluation Puzzle

Specialize In an Area

And grow to establish a specialized firm

Work in a Firm

Then set-up my practice after gaining experience?

Be a Retainer

And have my own small practice as well?

Join an Existing Firm

And grow into the partnership role in the same firm?

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Positioning – Specialization – What you want to be?



POLYCLINIC

BOUTIQUE



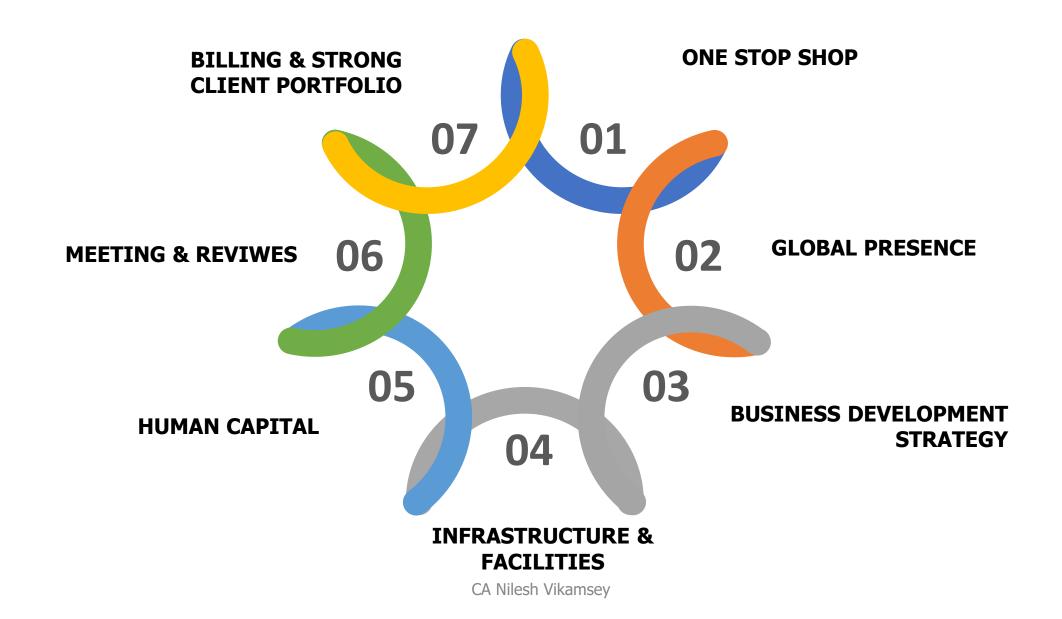


Advisory

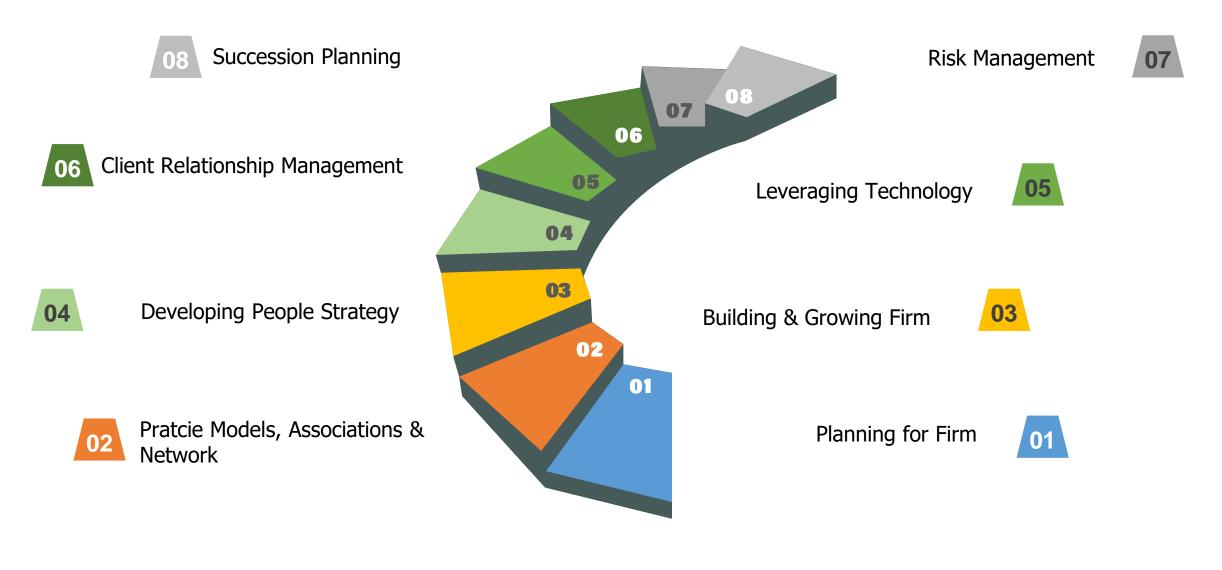




Practice Scenario – Large Accounting Firms



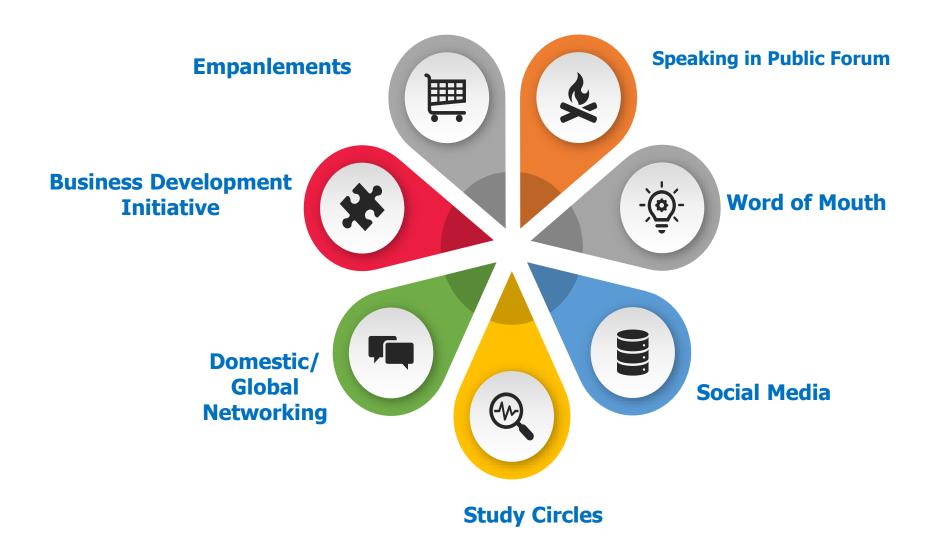
Practice Management for Small and Medium-sized Practices



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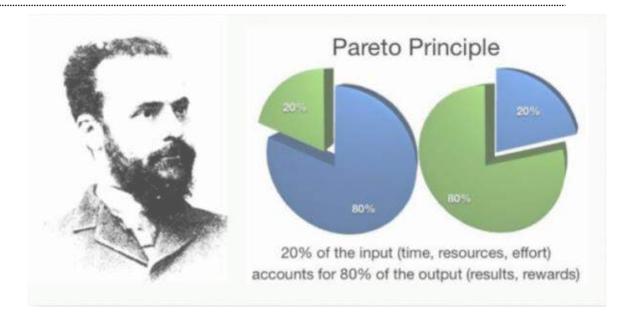


Clientele and Fees



- While initially, a firm would like to grab as many assignments as possible, as a firm grows it becomes important to identify those clients which have the potential to add value to the firm.....
- Know your Client (Geography, Size, Industry)
- Understand Client needs and Exceed Expectations
- What is "value" for your clients Compliance vs Cost optimization vs high specialized advisory
- Build a Client Profile "Who is our ideal client?"
- Don't feel comfortable taking on the Client SAY NO!!
- ICAI does not allow firms to advertise
- Tap the Start-Ups
- Clients can be classified under 3 categories:
 - ✓ Quality lover and fair
 - ✓ Moderate and Practical
 - ✓ Miser
- The third type of clients can describe by the definition of Cynic given by *Oscar Wilde* "What is Cynic?" a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing
- After few years, dispense with 3rd category of clients since they take precious time without commensurate revenue

Pareto Principle



80% of the events / activities in life contribute to 20% of the results and 20% of the events/ activities contribute to 80% of the results. Hence, successful people concentrate on "important few" and pay less attention to "trivia many"

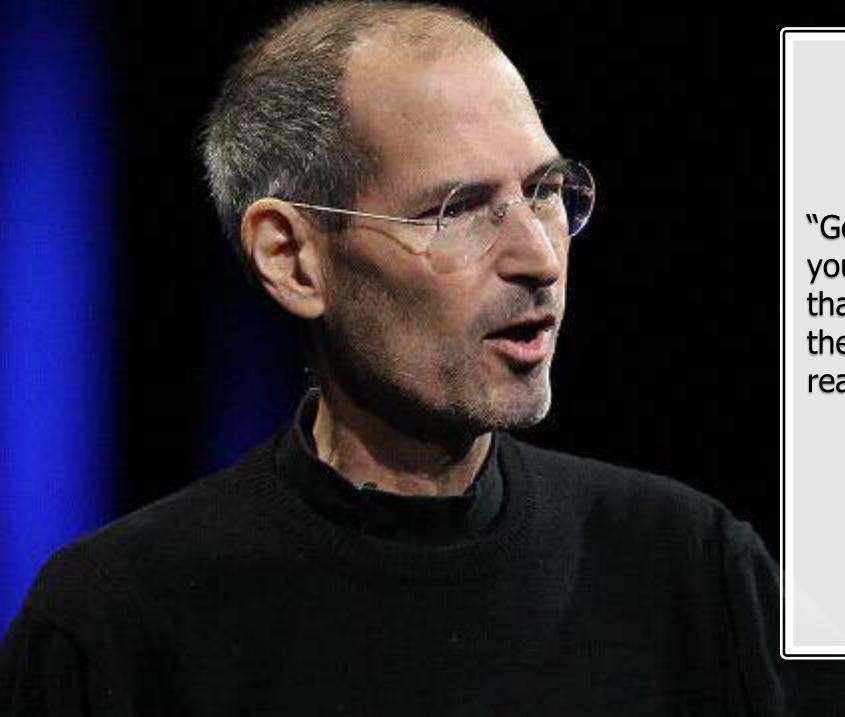
Focus on 20% clients giving 80% revenue

ABC Analysis / Client Rating based on....

- Fees per client Good / Moderate / Poor
- Quality of client Progressive / Good Housekeeping
- Potential of growth of client
- Profile value Clients adding profile to the firm

Client Management





"Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves."

Fees & Billing

- Man-hour rates
- CA's earning is dependent on time
- Hence apart from generating good fees out of advisory, maximize earning
- Time sheets are must !!
- Bill clients for telephonic consultations
- Specify clears terms and condition
- Develop policy of advance and credit
- Develop policy for reimbursements
- Regular reminder mails and second line of escalations
- Be courteous, Be professional
- Charge as soon as the assignment gets over



Time is money.

~ Benjamin Franklin

Fees & Billing - Calculation of Man-Hour Rate



Fees & Billing - Calculation of Man-Hour Rate

Minimum Expected Net Monthly Remuneration for a C.A.	50,000	100,000	200,000	500,000	10,00,000
Minimum Expected Net Yearly Remuneration	600,000	1,200,000	2,400,000	6,000,000	1,20,00,000
	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	10,00,000
Add: Overhead Expenses	1,600,000	2,200,000	3,400,000	7,000,000	1,30,00,000
Therefore, Rate per Day	6,667	9,167	14,167	29,167	51,587
Therefore, hourly rate (assuming 4 hours chargeable) * (assuming 6 hours chargeable) *	1,667 1,111	2,292 1,528	2,542 2,361	7,291 4,861	12,897 8,598

^{*} Substantial time of a day goes into Administration, training, etc. i.e. non billable time

Fees & Billing – Considerations for Man Hour Rates

- Normal working days in a year (240-260)
- Normal working hours devoted to clients (i.e. excluding time spent for administration, continuing education, research, reading etc)
- Overheads
- Opportunity Costs
- Specialized Skills required
- Nature and type of assignment / client
- Seniority in profession
- Quality & Service Levels
- Peak and non-peak season
- Consider Minimum Scale of fees as recommended by ICAI



Fees & Billing – General Guidelines

- As far as possible when raising the Bill, **break-up all services rendered** and mention each service separately.
- Try to make your Bill as **exhaustive** as possible by detailing all the services rendered to make the **client realize the efforts** put in by us.
- Raise the Bill **immediately** on completion of work and realise the value of service when rendered, as thereafter the significance may be lost.
- Monitor outstanding bills and try to realise the bill in the shortest possible time.
- Try and provide value addition to clients. A satisfied client will honour your bills with pleasure.
- Be firm with your Billing and as far as possible do not settle for lower amount.
- The recommendatory scale of fees is in the interest of the members as well as profession at large, hence members should adhere to the schedule of fees.

Reality Check Agreement v/s Expectation

Agreed scope of work

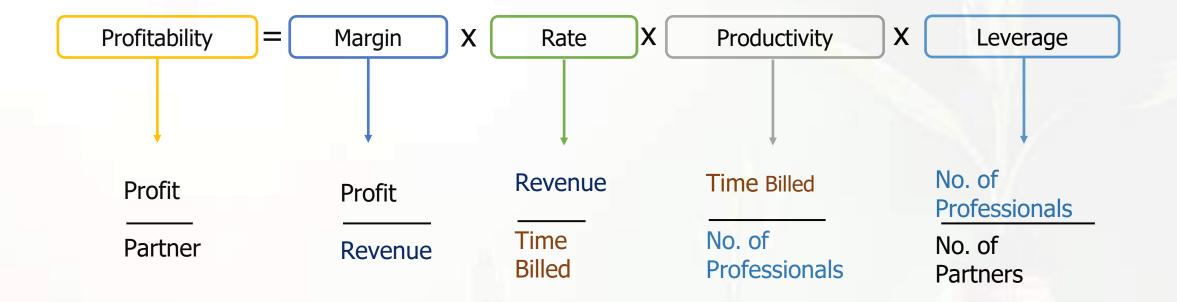
- Filing GST returns = Rs. 3,000 per registration as reduced after discussion (Original quote Rs.4,000)

• What is expected by client?

- Segregation of sales data and purchase data in the prescribed format
- Preparation of returns (GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B)
- Verification of eligibility of input tax credit (ITC)
- Reconciliation of ITC with GSTR-2A
- Send mismatch reports to client
- Computation of GST liability
- Preparation of payment challans
- Sometimes, make payment on behalf of client
- Filing the GST returns (GSTR-1 by 11th and GSTR-3B by 20th) within due date.
- Regular advice on HSN codes and GST rates to be charged
- Advice on HSN codes and GST charged by supplier in their Invoices
- Answering calls of the department officers
- Advice on contract clauses in agreement with suppliers/customers
- Negotiation with supplier for ITC mismatches and invoicing issues
- Making correction in the subsequent returns due to errors in previous return

Efforts put in and fees for doing all this = 30,000

Drivers of Profitability





Service First Attitude -

- ✓ People with a money-first attitude become so money-conscious that they forget money cannot be harvested unless they plant the seeds that grow the money. And the seed of money is service. That is why "put-service-first" is an attitude which creates wealth. Put service first and money takes care of itself.
- Demonstrate better performance for increase in the fees
- There never is a demand for anything second-class, especially when it is given a first-class price tag.
- Make sure your proposal is Impactful First Impression Lasts and making presentations to client as part of your deliverable
- Value addition to client even in compliance work e.g., Management letter (suggestion letter)
- Remove the perception of being a "Necessary evil" in audit and taxation in the minds of the client. One needs to add value to clients on an ongoing basis and document value added to client.
- Be patient as there may be a long gestation period of at least 3 years or more
- Increase delegation of work as practice starts growing
- Plug Revenue Leakages (Certification, Oral advisory on phone / meeting etc.,)
- Do Proper Client Appraisal- whether he has the ability & willingness to pay proper/ reasonable fees
- Quote fees for work only after proper analysis of work, time & man- power required
- Systemize work procedures in writing

- Job assignment should be clear to the CA and the client by documenting it in the quotation / engagement letter to avoid unpleasant expectation gaps
- In case of new work/ large work (non-audit), take advance payment/ installment of fees as the work progresses
- Better Office culture and working environment and adequate trainings
- Technology use technology effectively for improving quality, productivity, management, knowledge, research, tracking work, etc...
- Rendering Personalized Service with a broader exposure covering Audit, Income Tax , GST etc)
- Make Products of Services (Preparation of Manuals, Company Formation, Compliance audits, etc.)
- Discuss issues with peers and seniors and get different perspective
- Need to network / collaborate / merge
- Provide multi-Disciplinary services and challenging assignments
- Define Engagement Letters for assurance and non-assurance services
- Making presentations to client as part of your deliverable
- Regular updations of knowledge through reading various professional publications and staying connected with recent updates

Use of Power of Social Media

- Increase in Visibility
- Regular update of Website
- Regular updates on Laws, Regulations, Notifications, Circulars
- Webinar : Key Events and Conferences
- Client Engagement Activities

















Interpersonal Skills

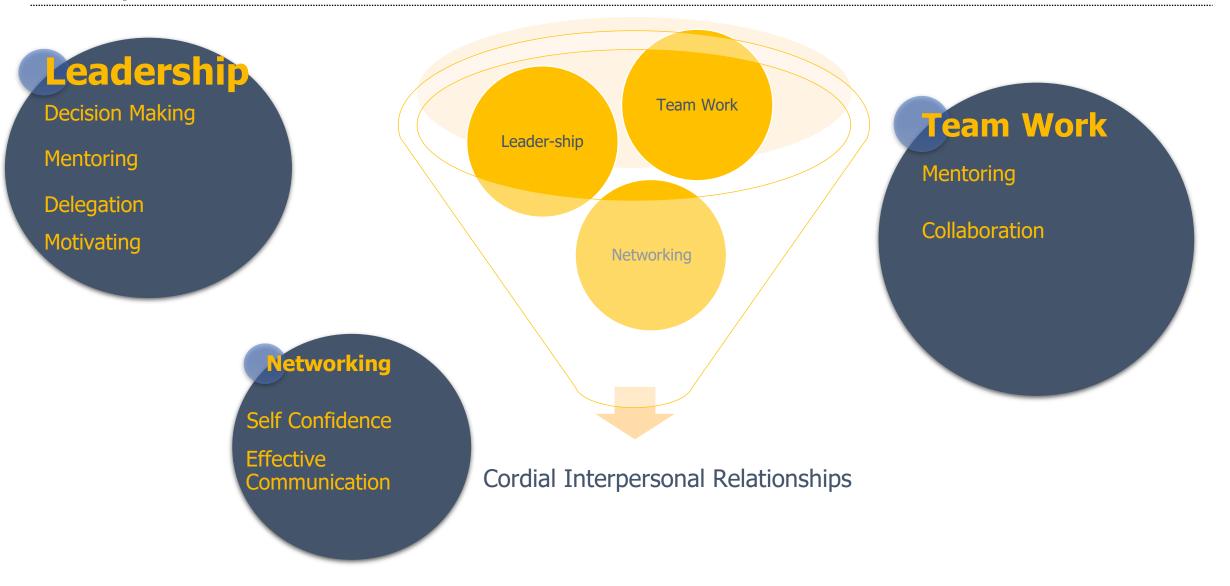
➤ Amongst Partners – **Team Work**

➤ With Clients - **Networking**

➤ With Employees – **Leadership**



Interpersonal Skills



Human Capital Management

Building Human Capital

- Structured Work Assignment Systems
- Coaching during work assignments by providing stretched but realizable challenges and providing constructive feedback
- Development of junior partners by senior partners specifically if rainmakers' departure
- Adding to Knowledge base by developing industrybased departments, interdisciplinary (or interoffice) committee to encourage communication between isolated and other professionals
- Managing Project Mix is such way it will not only exploit firms existing skills but provide for the further development

Surviving People Crisis

- Productivity Strategies
 - ✓ Reallocation of costly resources to handle higher value work
 - ✓ Reward Seniors for explicitly for good coaching
 - ✓ Performance based pay schemes
 - ✓ Drop "up-or-out" system to reduce turnover
- Reduce Need Strategies
 - ✓ Withdraw from some services and markets that cannot support new salary levels
 - ✓ Rethink fast growth strategies
 - ✓ Emphasize profitability more, volume of fees less
- Substitution Strategies
 - ✓ Hire "non-traditional" candidates and offset by trainings





Meeting and Reviews

Meetings ensure that firms quality standards are maintained and improved

Regular Partner Meetings:

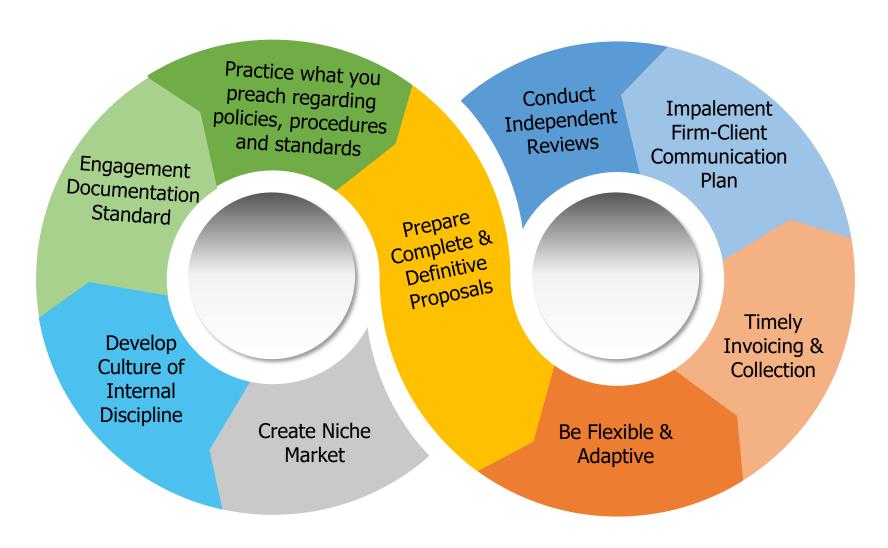
- ✓ Growth strategy discussions
- ✓ Discussion regarding Human Resources etc
- ✓ Discussion regarding enquiries / proposals
- ✓ Discussion on updations and use of technology
- ✓ Improvements in systems & processes
- ✓ Firm Policies- updations & introduction of new policies



Ingredients of Successful Practice – Protect your Intangibles

- Human Capital
- Existing Good Clients
- Client's satisfaction
- Own Investment & Fund Management abilities
- Knowledge & Skills
- Professional Networks
- Health and Happiness
- Enhancing the quality of documentation
- Enhancing review mechanism
- Internal succession planning
- Periodic and timely dialogue with client

9 Rules of Managing Professional Service Delivery



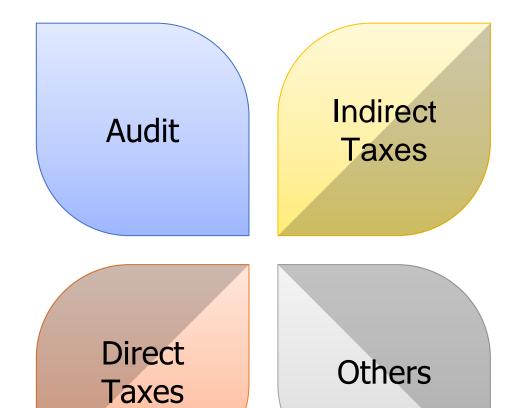


Growth Strategies

Traditional Areas

- Company Audit
- Tax Audit
- Co-op Society Audit
- Internal Audit
- Specialized Audit

- Compliance
- Appellate
- TDS
- International Tax
- Transfer Pricing



- Compliance
- Advisory Appellate

- ROC Compliance
- Annual Returns
- 15CA / 15CB

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Emerging Areas – Post COVID

Artificial Intelligence Blockchain Valuation Digital Forensic / Data Analysis **Cloud Computing** Inbound and Outbound services Forensic/ Fraud Investigation **RPA & Digital Accounting** Risk Assessment Advisory Cyber Security & Management IFC, Systems, Process Bankruptcy **Business Support Services** development

Opportunities from Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission and Digital India

- Increased Client Servicing to Agriculture Sector
 - ✓ Allocation to Fisherman through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (Rs. 20,000 Crores)
 - ✓ Allocation for formalization of Micro Food Enterprises to attain FSSAI foods standards (Rs. 10,000 Crores)
- Increased Client Servicing to NBFCs
 - ✓ Partial Credit Guarantee Schemes to NBFCs (Rs.45,000 Crores)
 - ✓ Special Liquidity Scheme (Rs.30,000 Crores) housing finance companies, microfinance firms with Government Guaranteed Securities
- Advisory Services to MSMEs
 - ✓ Revised Definition of MSME
 - ✓ Equity Funding for MSME upto Rs.50,000 Crores
 - ✓ Collateral Free loans to MSME
- Export of Accounting Services listed as Champion Sector for Export Promotion
- Big 8 Indian Accounting Firms where 4 firms are Indian by 2022, Hon'ble Prime Ministers Vision
- Opportunity for Indian CA firms for pooling of resources, expertise and build a pan India presence
- Tap global opportunities without compromising with their identity

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Specialization/ New Areas

Why to focus on New Areas/ Specialization?

- Be jack of all but **master of few** areas
- Need to go up the value chain and get higher fees
- Better job satisfaction / liking of the work being done
- Venture into New areas of liking



- Better client perception and solutions to complex problems (good response / service/ office / advice)
- **Churning** the portfolio of **clients** (existing clients will always have mental resistance in paying higher fees)
- Have Economies of scale, better organization, improved services to client in routine services
- Improve systems/ process of doing practice
- In case of services of one time / specialized nature rather than annual / routine the client will not mind paying higher fees than for routine practice
- To sum it up Better Potential



Positioning – Specialization – What you want to be?

- Initially, one may have to provide all services for getting new clients... However, specialization is the need of the hour!!!
- Select your area of expertise and provide specialized services
- There are several small firms in the market providing core business services to a large number a bigger firms. Such firms have gained great respect and recognition from the professional and the business community
- Growth does not necessarily mean expansion in size.....It also means excelling in what you do!!!



How to Enter New Areas

- Decide your own USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and areas / services of your liking
- Be on the lookout and try to enter areas having "First Mover" advantage, e.g., IBC, Environment Audits, IFRS, GST, Liquidation, Outsourcing, Asset Reconstruction, NCLT, etc.
- Analyze competition in those areas and know to live and thrive with it
- Do a project report, business plan and activity chart how to be successful in the new area
- Decide strategy on:
 - ✓ High end specialization or lower end mass repetitive working
 - ✓ How to create and need in the mind of clients.
 - ✓ How to attract the clients
 - ✓ Using jargons like SRS (Systems Review), ABCD (Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Cyber Security, Data)
- Have commitment / determination to devote time and to succeed
- Do landmark assignments which may not make money but will create a brand for future jobs

Problems in Venturing into New Areas

- Lack of vision, awareness, conviction, desire, willingness to accept change
- Cost of entering new area
- Losing opportunities / work in existing area
- Last mile syndrome Inadequate efforts put to succeed in the new areas
- Not identifying gaps / weaknesses and ways to overcome it
- Continuous up-gradation of knowledge / skills not done
- Inadequate clients / contacts
- Lack of Practical experience
- Inadequate financial backing

Positioning – Where you want to be?

- In marketing, **positioning** is the process by which marketers try to create an image or identity in the minds of their target market for its product, brand or organization
- Need to position in the market to ensure that we get the right kind of work and the right kind of clients
- Since the bigger segment is virtually out of reach of a start-up business, identify whether you want to be in the small service provider segment or in the middle service provider segment
- You can gradually and eventually grow from small to medium and then big!!!!



Few years after the practice.

- Consider merging small firms which leads to specialization
- Each partner can look after a specific area.
- Increasing networks and client base.
- It also increases the capacity of the partners to absorb huge costs e.g., Personnel, IT Costs, overheads etc.
- Considering competition from the bigger firms with multinational presence, prospective clients' need, demographics and market trends, consider networking and merger

Leveraging Growth Using



Growth Strategies

- Networking
- Merger and Demerger



Networking

- Network amongst two or more firms registered with ICAI.
- Object -use the collective resources of affiliates for execution of professional services of one or more types at one and/or at multi-locational points
- Resources -- financial, technical and other logistic support required to execute
- Stepping stone for the mergers and acquisitions of the firms
- Once one is comfortable with networking one can go for bigger partnership firms & get the advantage of the big work to follow.
- Helps the firms to build competitive advantage over others, also be able to build up brands.
- Survival of small firms depends on their ability to re-engineer. Networking is one of the ways of re-engineering.

Networking – Advantages/ Disadvantages

National / Global presence

Common & Professional branding

Technical Support

Knowledge Sharing

Advantages

Quality Enhancements

Referral from all over the world/ Country

Clients can be serviced all over the globe

Competitive advantage

Less intrusive than merger

Limited 'Quality review 'process

Inability to get "big work" as consolidated strength i.e. network may not be approved by regulatory authorities like CAG, SEBI, RBI etc

Work given to "Non – network CA friends" due to poor quality of some network firms

Lack of mindset to merge in long run

Consensus building is very time consuming

Disadvantages

Merger and Demerger

- For growth of CA firms- desirable that the firms begin with networking and then mature to mergers.
- Mergers should be affected to develop core competencies and to render professional services of a larger range spread over bigger geographical area. A merged big entity will always be superior to a network arrangement.
- Demerger can be demanded within a period of 5 years from the date of merger
- Demerged Firm is entitled to practice in its old trade name, which existed at the time of merger.

Practice in Corporate Form

- To empower the members to face the emerging challenges in the service sector as well as to equip them for the opportunities in the non-audit service area, the Council decided to allow members in practice to hold the office of Managing Director, Whole-time Director or Manager of a body corporate.
- The body corporate should be engaged exclusively in rendering Management Consultancy and Other Services permitted by the Council



Practice & Technology

Practice & Technology – Future Opportunities

- Most Important is to UPGRADE
- Harness technology to improve efficiency of current practice area
 - ✓ Increase coverage / Speed up in Internal / External audit
 - ✓ Income Tax Filings
 - ✓ Use software to solve administration problems
 - ✓ Use of cloud computing for saving data and thereby reducing cost of physical space
- Requisites for data driven practice
 - ✓ Acquire good technical skills
 - ✓ Develop environment to attract tech-savvy millennials
- Increased Training and soft-skill development (Webinars/Seminars)
- With uberisation, relevance of office place is losing. Develop concept of work from home,& Flexi-time
- Knowledge Management Database
- IT policies
- IT Network securities and Anti-viruses

Practice & Technology – Future Opportunities

TeamMate®

















Office Management

Office Space

Office Sharing

✓ You may also want to consider sharing offices whether this means sharing with other companies or just sharing a desk with your colleagues. This would not only cut costs and boost social awareness and new friendships

Location

✓ The Location of your business is an essential aspects to your overall success. You want your business to be in a safe neighborhood, eco-friendly and ideally, one that is convenient for your clients or customers

Building

✓ A healthy building one that has lots of natural light, good ventilation, and eco-friendly materials, paints and flooring is always a plus

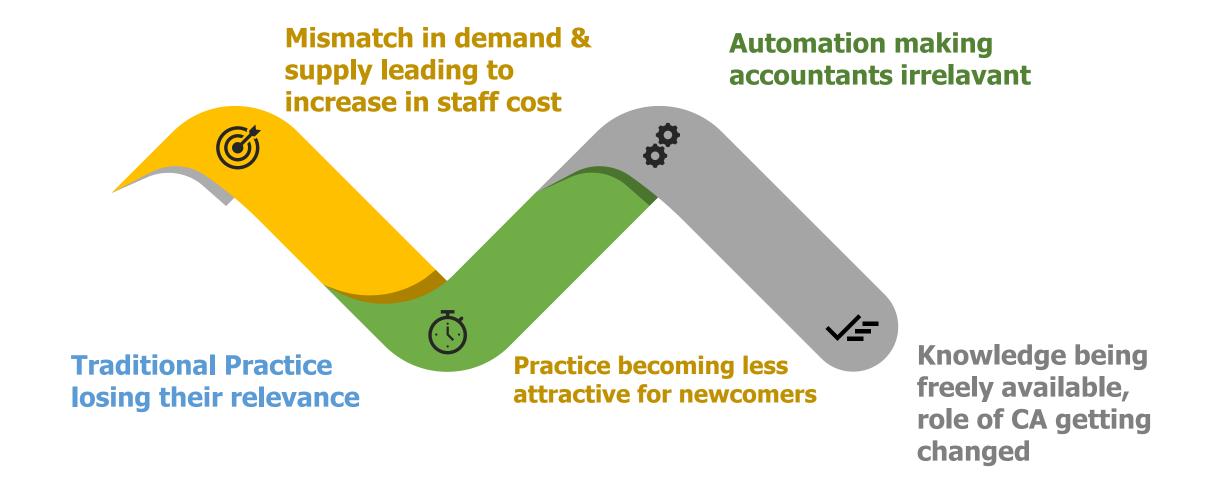
Space

✓ Many businesses make the mistake of selecting an office space that is too small for their requirements. When selecting your business spot, ensure that you are choosing a space that is large enough not only to accommodate you now but, in the future, if needed



Final Thoughts

What future holds for us?



Asset Management for Growth

Achieving a good income statement result is a necessary condition for professional firm criterion. To have been judged a good year, a firm must not only achieve its volume and relations.



Assets

Vision

