

Opening Up Your Accounting Team's Capacity

Introduction

If you're serious about getting your resource levels right, which means you're serious about servicing your clients well, you'll be serious about working on opening up the capacity of your accounting team.

The time has come to focus on better utilisation of your accounting team, including the partners. It's much easier to recruit people with an office management or administration background than those with accounting and tax experience.

Better utilisation accounting resources

One of our key industry focuses is to ensure that precious accounting resources are not wasted on a myriad of practice administration tasks, and non-accounting and tax-based client services. This typically involves a complete review of who does exactly what in a practice.

The results of such a review can be surprising. We've been into practices where partners are adamant that the accounting team are focused solely on tax and accounting tasks. After reviewing (more or less auditing) their activities, these practices have found that chartered accountants are photocopying and binding financials or e-filing tax returns.

Review tasks

A list of administration functions, and non-accounting and tax-based client services, is in the 'Finding the 90 Minutes Each Day You Need to Spend Quality Time with Clients' white paper.

Most practices find that, when they review this list, many tasks are being completed by the accounting team. You may be surprised how many of these tasks are being completed by your scarce and precious accounting resources, when they could be delegated to a client services assistant (CSA).

Management

For the medium to larger practice, depending entirely on the level of autonomy the partners are ultimately prepared to delegate, it may be necessary to appoint someone to attend to practice administration and even management matters.

Whether this person is an office manager, business manager, general manager or CEO, depends entirely on how comfortable the partners are with letting go of decision-making.

The plain fact is that we all went into practice to look after a bunch of clients. Yet many of us are instead spending inordinate amounts of time managing a practice, and some of us are pretty bad at it. Our background is that of technician (accountant), not business manager. We need to reflect this simple fact in the team we build around us.
