

Checklist: Getting Started in Advisory

The tax and accounting profession is undergoing a shift, from a focus on traditional tax preparation and accounting to proactive advisory services. Use this checklist to help you transform your practice to a tax practice of the future by meeting your business clients' advisory needs.

Lead with tax planning

- Align on your vision:** Define a vision for your practice that reflects your values and the changes you would like to make.
- Develop tax planning strategies:** Standardize five to 10 tax planning strategies for your industry specialty or client niche.
- Announce your vision to clients:** Put your new vision and client-focused purpose on your website to make clients aware of the change and attract the right new clients.
- Lead client engagements with tax strategy:** Bundle tax planning with every client engagement.
- Communicate savings:** Document and share the tax strategy savings and results your firm provides on an annual and cumulative basis for every business client.

Create an advisory workflow

- Automate cloud accounting:** Engage your small business clients in cloud accounting software to automate information and data exchange.
- Train your staff:** Ensure your client advisory services staff is trained on using cloud accounting software and tools.
- Schedule video meetings:** Video conference with business clients on a monthly or quarterly basis to review financial information and update tax strategies.
- Create capacity for advisory services:** Automate information collection, data entry, and categorization; eliminate non-value work like time tracking.

Deliver bundled services

- Define bundles for business clients:** Use a "good, better, best" model to develop three bundles for your business clients to choose from.
- Price each bundle:** Structure and price the "better" bundle for 60% to 80% of your client base, "good" for the 10% to 20% of clients with more basic needs, and "best" for the 10% to 20% of premium clients. Pricing can be 20% to 50% higher than your compliance-only fees. It's okay to adjust pricing over time.
- Test bundles and pricing:** Test your new bundles and pricing with at least three loyal clients.
- Automate billing:** Create a monthly subscription to your cloud accounting platform to deliver more value and eliminate traditional time, billing and collection processes.