

Hey! What's New? 2025-50

Attracting Accounting talent: A plan for Action

According to an article in *FM Financial Management*, written by David A. J. Axson, finance professionals face a confusing job market. On the positive side, the accounting services market globally is forecast to grow 4.4% annually through 2028. "With supply largely flat, average salaries increased by 12% in 2022 and 9% in 2023. In June 2024, EY's US arm announced a \$1 billion investment over three years to improve the attractiveness of the accounting profession. At the same time, however, PwC, KPMG, RSM and Grant Thornton have announced job cuts across the range of audit, tax and advisory services, and many forecasters are projecting a softening of the job market in 2025. Given these conflicting signals, how should finance professionals view the market for their talents?"

As we move through 2025, says Axson, "three trends appear to be driving the market for finance and accounting talent: the accelerating impact of AI and associated technologies on the nature of work; a growing divide between employer needs and employee expectations; and post-COVID-19 market stabilization."

Axson notes that the past 50 years have been defined by a series of technological advancements. "From mainframe systems through ERP, data warehousing, e-commerce, analytics, and now AI, finance and accounting has been at the forefront of the tech revolution. Today is no different. Accounting, auditing, budgeting, forecasting, tax, and treasury are fertile areas for the application of AI and other advanced technologies."

Professionals will, therefore, "continue to migrate to more decision-based or project-oriented roles that drive necessary changes within an organization. These roles will increasingly be part of cross-functional groups that combine finance with other disciplines, which will place more emphasis on communication and collaboration skills."

Another factor, according to Axson, is "a growing disconnect between the needs of employers and the aspirations of employees. It is often framed around differing expectations relating to work/life balance, work-from-home policies and generational differences in attitudes to work and careers. The impact has been both positive and negative.

"On the positive side, employers and professional bodies have worked hard to adapt to changing expectations. Yet some concerning long-term trends are signalling potential challenges ahead. There has been a decade-long decline in the number of students pursuing accounting degrees and professional qualifications. Increasing numbers are also leaving the profession, often attracted by higher pay and better work/life balance. While demand has remained relatively strong, the profession has an image problem. If that is not corrected, a severe talent shortage is just around the corner."

If you are an employer trying to attract and retain top-flight talent, Axson suggests the following strategies:

Understand prospective employees' expectations: "Global demographics, generational expectations and demand and supply trends in the finance and accounting profession all point to long-term shortages for top talent. Understanding how prospective employees make decisions is essential. The days of attracting the best with a job for life and a good pension are long gone. Today, prospective employees seek meaningful work, fulfilling experiences, a life

outside of work, access to the latest tools and technologies, opportunities for collaboration and learning, and compensation that rewards both capability and contribution.”

Rebrand for the future: “Accounting and finance offer numerous opportunities to engage in interesting work, collaborate with top-flight talent in other areas, use the latest tools and technologies and make a meaningful impact on value created by any organization. Employers need to construct career paths that look to the future rather than sustain the past.”

Adapt to today’s work environment: “To attract and, more importantly, retain talent, finance must compete with other functions by offering comparable working conditions and development opportunities,” Axson says, noting that “uncertainty and change will remain constants, but they are also the catalysts for creating new and exciting opportunities. Though some of the traditional, repetitive finance tasks are being automated, finance and accounting professionals now have an opportunity to shift and expand their role to become more central to decision making.”

Individuals and organizations that can adapt and update their skills will thrive and secure the most fulfilling work experiences, Axson concludes. “The next few years will be an interesting and potentially lucrative time to be a finance and accounting professional if you are prepared to develop the right skills, seek out the most attractive opportunities and embrace the changing dynamics of work.”

Learn considerably more at [Accounting talent: A plan for action](#).