

ICAJ/PAB webinar

*Staffing issues of the
accountancy profession
in a post-Covid era*

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DaSilva*

Agenda

- 1 The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the accountancy profession
- 2 Shifts in staffing patterns
- 3 Talent acquisition and retention challenges
- 4 Workforce well being and mental health
- 5 Hybrid work arrangements
- 6 Work from home
- 7 Team building



Question # 1

▶ How did Covid-19 impact you as an Accountant?

A

Increased working hours

B

Increased use of Technology

C

Implementation of mental health strategies for team members

D

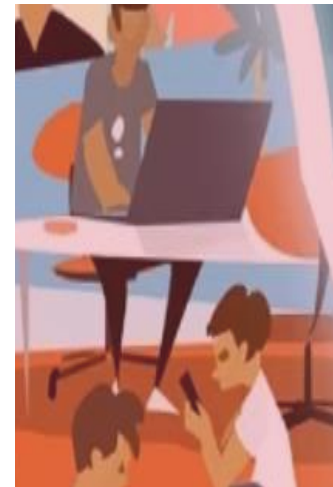
Not much impact

E

A, B and C

1

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the accountancy profession



The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the accountancy profession

The Great Resignation

Less candidates entering the accounting profession.

Technological evolution.

Increased hiring of nonaccounting graduates.

Impact on mental health.

Consideration for cybersecurity-related controls at clients and firms.

Consideration for accounting standards – assessment of impairment indicators and going concern.

The Great Resignation

Retirement

Workers were *retiring* in greater numbers.

Relocation

They were not *relocating* in large numbers.

Reconsideration

They were *reconsidering* their work-life balance and care roles.

Reshuffling

They were making localized switches among industries, or *reshuffling*.

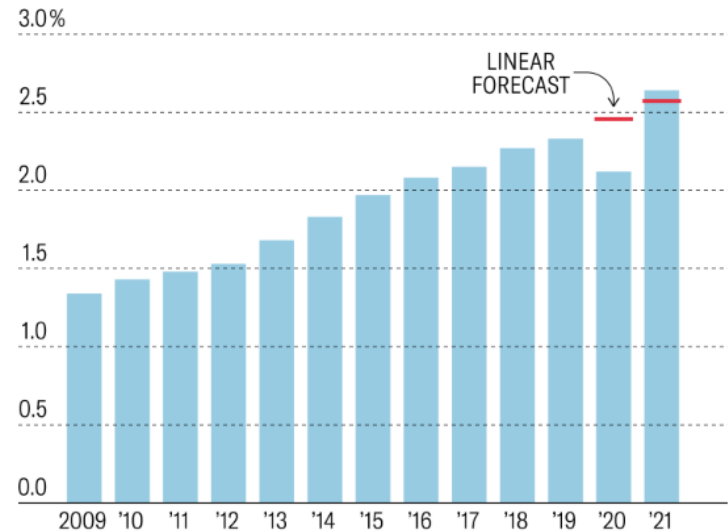
Reluctance

Rather than exiting the labor market entirely; and, because of pandemic-related fears, they were demonstrating a *reluctance* to return to in-person jobs.

Average Monthly Quit Data

Data on total employment from 2009 through 2019 reveals that the Great Resignation is not a pandemic-driven anomaly.

Share of workers voluntarily leaving jobs



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, author's calculations



In 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, over **47 million** Americans voluntarily quit their jobs .

Staffing issues in the media

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CFO JOURNAL

Why Graduates Aren't Hot on Accounting Careers: Low Starting Pay, Onerous Testing

Academics and recruiters say sluggish salaries and tough requirements to become a certified public accountant are damping demand for accounting degrees and discouraging graduates from pursuing accounting careers

By [Anna Mutoh](#)



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BUSINESS

Accountant shortage?

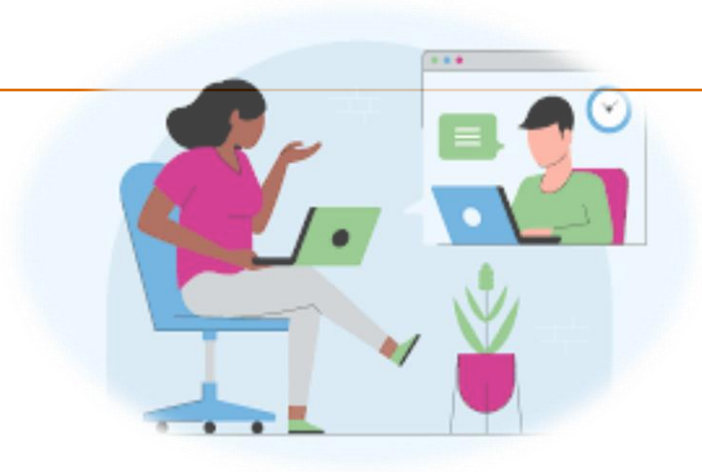
Post Covid-19 era and the
impact on the
accountancy profession



2 Shifts in staffing patterns

Shifts in staffing patterns

Remote working



The pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote working.

Benefits

Remote work offers flexibility and cost savings.

Potential staffing challenges

- Implementation of infrastructure and technology to work remotely.
- Implementation of mechanisms to monitor and supervise employee's productivity.
- Maintenance of team cohesion in a remote environment.

Shifts in staffing patterns (Continued)

Skills and Competencies

The pandemic accelerated digital transformation, making certain skills more critical than ever.

	Accounting firms are upskilling employees	Educational institutions have started to incorporate technology-related courses and certifications
Expertise but also proficiency in data analytics.	✓	✓
Expertise but also proficiency in automation tools	✓	✓
Expertise but also proficiency in cloud-based accounting systems	✓	✓

Practical Experience: Bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience is crucial. Establishing partnerships between educational institutions and accountancy firms can facilitate internship programs, apprenticeships, and mentorship opportunities. This allows students to gain real-world exposure and also improves possibility of future recruitment opportunities.

Question # 2

What do you see as the main obstacle that prevents improved staff retention?

- a) Better pay/compensation packages
- b) Better working arrangements (full office reporting, work from home, hybrid)
- c) Growth and development opportunities
- d) Alignment with vision and mission of the company

3 Talent acquisition and retention challenges

Talent acquisition and retention challenges

- Accountancy firms are competing for talent in an increasingly globalized and digitized marketplace.

Considerations	Recruitment opportunity or challenge?
The remote work trend has opened up opportunities for professionals to work for firms located anywhere in the world.	Challenge
Retaining talent is equally crucial, as employees may be more likely to switch jobs due to increased remote work options.	Challenge
Firms must focus on building strong company cultures, offering competitive compensation packages, and providing opportunities for professional development to attract and retain skilled accountants.	Opportunity

Question # 3

What do you think can be done to improve staff retention?

- a) Revisiting pay structure / alignment with market
- b) Better training and growth opportunities
- c) Revisiting working arrangements (full office reporting, work from home, hybrid)
- d) Other

4 Workforce well being

Workforce well being


Mental health



- The pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals' mental health and well-being.
- Remote work blurs the boundaries between personal and professional life, potentially leading to increased stress and burnout.
- Accountancy firms must prioritize employee well-being by implementing strategies such as flexible working hours, mental health support programs, and fostering a supportive work environment.

- **Long hours**
- **High stress**
- **Demanding deadlines**

➤ *Has the 'Great Resignation' turned into the 'Big Stay'?*

 Yahoo News

"Great Resignation" is over, workforce data suggests

Research from the human resources management company ADP suggests the "Great Resignation" is over and the "Big Stay" is here.

4 hours ago



 Business Insider

Happy at your job? Great Resignation is turning into the 'Big Stay'

Americans are quitting jobs a lot less than they have been as pay bumps slow down. Welcome to the Big Stay.

3 days ago



 Forbes

The 'Big Stay': More Workers Are Hunkering Down And Staying In Their Current Jobs

Fewer people are quitting their jobs in 2023, which signifies that the United States is phasing out of its Great Resignation era.

23 hours ago



Question # 4

Where do you currently source your accounting staff?

- a) Local market through direct hires
- b) Local market through headhunters/recruiters
- c) International market through direct hires
- d) International market through headhunters/recruiters

5 Hybrid work arrangements

Hybrid Work Arrangements

Hybrid work arrangements have emerged as a viable solution for the accountancy profession.



Flexibility: Hybrid work arrangements offer flexibility to accountants, allowing them to balance their personal and professional lives more effectively. They have the freedom to work from home or the office, based on their preferences and work requirements.



Enhanced Productivity: Research has shown that employees often experience increased productivity when given the autonomy to choose where they work.



Cost Savings: Hybrid work arrangements can lead to cost savings for both employees and organizations. Employees save on commuting expenses, while organizations can reduce their overhead costs by downsizing office space or adopting shared workspaces.



Improved Work-Life Balance: Hybrid work arrangements enable accountants to have a better work-life balance. They can spend more time with their families, engage in personal hobbies, and pursue activities that promote well-being, leading to greater job satisfaction and overall happiness.

Hybrid Work Arrangements (Continued)

Challenges with Hybrid working	Possible strategies to mitigate
<p>Communication and Collaboration: Remote work can present challenges in maintaining effective communication and collaboration within accounting teams.</p>	<p>Adoption of robust communication tools and platforms that facilitate seamless interaction, information sharing, and project collaboration.</p>
<p>Employee Engagement and Team Cohesion: Hybrid work arrangements may pose challenges in fostering employee engagement and team cohesion.</p>	<p>Implementation of strategies such as regular virtual team meetings, team-building activities, and mentorship programs to promote a sense of belonging and collaboration among team members.</p>
<p>Technology Infrastructure: Hybrid work arrangements rely heavily on technology infrastructure.</p>	<p>Provision of access to secure networks, reliable internet connections, and appropriate software by employees to carry out their work effectively and securely.</p>
<p>Performance Evaluation: Evaluating employee performance in a hybrid work environment can be complex.</p>	<p>Establishment of clear performance metrics and regular feedback sessions to ensure that employees are accountable and motivated to deliver their best work.</p>

➤ *Hybrid Work Arrangements (Continued)*

Other Effective Implementation Management strategies

- *Clear Policies and Guidelines:*

- ✓ Outline of expectations,
- ✓ Work schedules,
- ✓ Communication protocols, and
- ✓ Performance evaluation criteria for hybrid work arrangements.

This ensures consistency and clarity for employees and helps maintain organizational standards.

- *Focus on Well-being:*

- ✓ Encourage regular breaks,
- ✓ Promote work-life balance, and
- ✓ Provide mental health support resources.

This contributes to a healthier and more productive workforce.

6 Work from home

Question # 5

True or False

Where work from home (WFH) arrangements are in place, there is no longer a work / life balance issue.

Question # 6

True or False

More staff are WFH because they are uncomfortable with going back to the office.

Question # 7

Which of the following are benefits of WFH arrangements?

- a) Employees avoid lengthy commutes.
- b) Employees spend more time with family.
- c) Employers have access to wider talent pool.
- d) Employers reduce expenses.

Question # 8

Which area is most impacted when a significant portion of staff members WFH?

- a) Productivity
- b) Culture
- c) Retention
- d) Job satisfaction

Work from Home

Technological Infrastructure**

Data Security and confidentiality

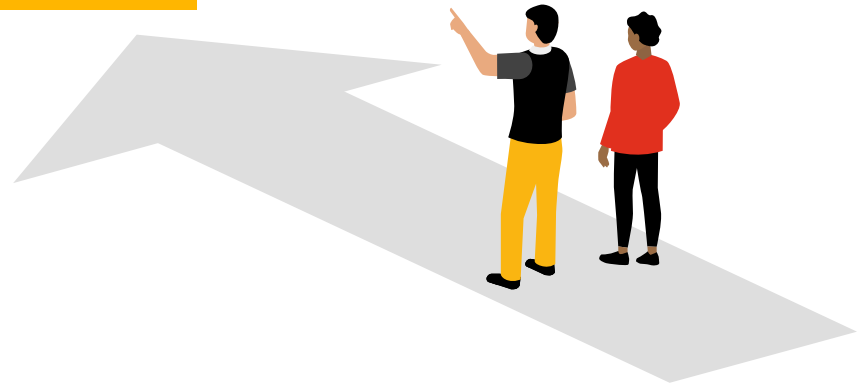
Communication and collaboration**

Work-life balance**

Professional development and training

Social interaction and cohesion

Performance monitoring and evaluation **



Work from Home

Areas of consideration

Possible strategies to mitigate

Data Security and Confidentiality: Accountants deal with sensitive financial information, making data security and confidentiality critical.

Establishment of robust security protocols, including secure file-sharing systems, virtual private networks (VPNs), and encryption methods. In addition the execution of employee training on data security best practices and compliance with privacy regulations.

Professional Development and Training: In a remote work environment, the availability of professional development and training opportunities may be limited.

Accountancy firms should explore virtual learning platforms, webinars, and online courses to provide their employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and career advancement.

Social Interaction and Team Cohesion: Remote work can potentially lead to feelings of isolation and reduced social interaction among accountants.

Organizations should encourage virtual team meetings, organize online social events, and foster opportunities for informal interactions.

7 Team building

Team Building

Areas of consideration

Team Building Activities:

In the post-COVID era, where remote and hybrid work arrangements are prevalent, team building activities are essential.

Regular Team Meetings: Regular team meetings, whether in-person or virtual, provide opportunities for team members to connect, share updates, and discuss ongoing projects..

Social Interaction and Team Cohesion:

Remote work can potentially lead to feelings of isolation and reduced social interaction among accountants.

Possible strategies to mitigate

Organizations can conduct team-building sessions to promote engagement and interaction among team members.

Accountancy firms should explore virtual learning platforms, webinars, and online courses to provide their employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and career advancement.

Implementation of mentorship and buddy programs to facilitate knowledge transfer and relationship-building. Pairing experienced accountants with junior professionals promotes learning, guidance, and support.

Organizations should encourage virtual team meetings, organize social events, and foster opportunities for informal interactions to create a sense of camaraderie among team members.

Additional strategies

Alumni Outreach

When firms keep in contact with Alumni, in some cases, former staff end up coming back to their firm years later.

Staff Welfare

The roll out of “well-being” Fridays where no meetings are scheduled. In addition staff are encouraged to invest in themselves and firms offer informal sessions with staff focused on well-being.

Varying Views on Remote Work Arrangements

- Some employees prefer to work in the office rather than at home.
- Many staff have become accustomed to some level of work from home and expect that to continue even though restrictions have been lifted.

Staff Shortages

- Engagement of short term staff and interns.
- Establishment of incentive bonuses for staff who provide referrals.
- Implementation of outsourcing work to contractors, even in other regions, to fill the labor gaps.

Question

What did COVID-19 teach us about staffing?

- a) Upskill or die
- b) Be agile
- c) Reimagine what is possible
- d) Communication is important
- e) Support resilience

Thank you

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