



ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS: Roundtable 2: Imagining the Future

Accounting Technicians
Webinar Series
27 Jan
2022

To Explore 'the Future AT'
Open Discussion



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Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA)



We asked attendees to consider three questions:

1. Will there be a market need/demand for this type of accountant?
2. What roles (and critical skills) are envisaged?
3. What, if anything, needs to change in how this type of accountant is perceived?

Accounting Technicians Webinar – 27 Jan 2022

Imagining the future.....

.....Will there be a market need/demand for this type of accountant?

Directly relevant responses:

- Yes, but role will be different

What we have heard to date:

- Yes - for developing jurisdictions
- Yes – for the public sector which has too few accountants in many countries
- Yes – where the provision of cost-effective services is demanded. Can be in-practice or in business, especially SMEs
- Uncertainty over impact of technological change and AI:
 - No – advances will reduce the demand
 - Yes – roles will evolve

What might this mean?

This cohort of individuals already exists, especially in developed markets – just not easily identified for various reasons.

Undoubtedly, given the general nature of their work, it is the impact of technology and AI that is the main uncertainty – a threat or opportunity?

The opportunity for PAOs and the profession would seem to be to embrace existing and new cohorts (growth) and ensure appropriately skilled (professionalise and meet market needs, eg new client services)

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Imagining the future.....

.....what roles (and critical skills) are envisaged?

Directly relevant responses:

Critical skills for accountants are expected to be:

- Technology related:
 - Big Data/Data analysis
 - Blockchain, Cloud-based
- Communication skills
- Ethics and governance
- Focus on advisory

(CAPA note: the relative emphasis placed on these for PAs and ATs may be the key question)

What we have heard to date:

- In developing economies (in early stages of accounting reforms and professionalisation), current roles/skills are needed, eg basic bookkeeping
- Technology and digitalisation skills – ability to manage and interpret data (true for all accountants?)
- Critical thinking:
 - analyse and interpret data,
 - problem solve
 - make appropriate judgements and decisions
- Softer skills – communicate the information
- Privacy, ethics and accountability

What might this mean?

The skills journey will continue to evolve for all accountants – PAs or ATs. The continued improvement in critical thinking, softer skills, ethics, etc, appears to be a demand for “increased professionalism” which ought to be a natural result for ATs if part of PAO membership, CPD, etc.

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Imagining the future.....

What, if anything, needs to change in how this type of accountant is perceived?

Directly relevant responses:

- Establish a common base and understanding of ATs
- Will need to change perceptions:
 - locally, regionally, globally
 - with all stakeholders

The challenge will be 'how?'

What we have heard to date :

- Global recognition required and acceptance that there is a role for the AT equivalent
- Need to include ATs in the wider vision and strategy for the profession (ie how ATs fit into long-term growth and sustainability of the global accountancy profession)
- A better understanding is needed of
 - ✓ Who the future AT is;
 - ✓ What the future AT can contribute

What might this mean?

The words 'Accounting Technician' may mean different things to different people – so a common definition will assist. However, perhaps moving the conversation towards "the mid-tier of the accounting sector" may assist others to understand the position of this cohort and how they can complement "the senior tier" (the CAs, CPAs):

- Eliminate 'competitor threat'
- Focus on efficiencies and opportunities

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Forward Program – What next?

(including Key Questions)

Defining an AT

Aim: To explore a common definition for an AT

- ✓ Is 'Accounting Technician' the right term/name for the desired designation?
- ✓ How could the designation be defined?
- ✓ What education program would be required?

Recognising the benefits

Aim: To explore the benefits of ATs and if these warrant the separate recognition of ATs

- ✓ Can compelling benefits be identified?
- ✓ What stakeholders have an interest in this cohort of accountants?
- ✓ How do these support the concept of separate recognition?

Positioning the qualification

Aim: To explore if qualified ATs can be established as a recognised element of the broader accountancy profession

- ✓ Why has it not become a widely recognised qualification?
- ✓ Can the related issues be overcome?
- ✓ How could the qualification become an established part of the professional accountancy supply chain?

Imagining the future

Aim: To explore 'the future AT'

- ✓ Will there be a market need/demand for this type of accountant?
- ✓ What roles (and critical skills) are envisaged?
- ✓ What, if anything, needs to change in how this type of accountant is perceived?

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Forward Program – Dates



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