

Issue
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Summer's here – it's time to turn up the heat

The AdvanceTrack team have helpfully put your 'going away' checklist together...

Whether you're planning for the summer holidays with kids in tow, or you're trying to get away before the summer term price-hikes, we at AdvanceTrack thought it a good idea to help you put your 'going away' checklist together. Here goes:

- Passport (important)
- Sun-tan lotion
- Toothbrush (very important)
- Sunglasses
- Phone chargers
- Clients' tax returns...?

Well, who else is going to do the work?

However, if you can automate data exchange between your firm and its clients, keep on top of workflow, utilise resources support (such as that offered by AdvanceTrack) where required, there's no reason for your focus to be on anything else but deciding whether to have a fry-up or continental breakfast every morning while you're away.

Bear in mind that it might not be you going away, but your team will be. Is your firm structured so they can be left to sunbathe without checking their work emails? Mental health, in the current climate, is a critical issue.

The irony, as you will well appreciate, is that

workflow and productivity often grind to a halt in the summer. So, rather than worrying about bringing work away with you (or not being able to take a break because you're too busy), instead what happens is... very little. This is worse, because the holiday period is spoilt knowing that, from September onwards, it will be a huge slog to turn everything around for 31 January.

Not everything is automated – the reality is that clients very often still need to send data across to their accountant. So, something else to bear in mind is finding ways to incentivise them to provide info earlier than normal. Can you offer them a 10% discount? Or... add 10% for information filed after 1 September (we appreciate that this is a bit punchy).

Ultimately, some clever marketing (i.e. prodding) could pay dividends.

Wouldn't it be great to check your phone and, rather than wince at your emails each day, you receive a report that tells you there are 50 tax returns ready to be signed off? Or even better, that your team has signed them off for you?

■ *If you'd like to chat to us about supporting your practice's workload, please contact us by [clicking here](#).*



FAQ

What are the three things that make AdvanceTrack stand out?

In our latest FAQ, AdvanceTrack MD **Vipul Sheth** sets out the firm's 'elevator pitch'.

In some ways this question is difficult, because I believe we have numerous outstanding traits that make us a brilliant outsourcer and offshorer.

But, if pushed to provide a three-pronged elevator pitch, this is the response:

Why we do what we do

My parents ran a business that, without the support of their fantastic accountant, wouldn't have got to where it did. His advice and insight has proved inspirational to me and, as I developed as an accountant, I saw an opportunity to develop a business that would be a critical business partner to the advisers themselves – you.

This forms the start of my elevator pitch because I feel that it sets out the stall, the foundation, for everything we do at AdvanceTrack. We want to make lives better, and we want our practice clients to want the same for their clients. Our relationship is formed on this basis. Read our FAQ on [how we begin working with practices](#).

Technology as a foundation, led by people

We are a technology-driven business. We've been paperless from the start, developing and evolving our cloud platform for many years. The tech

enables us to keep our promises around the most robust security combined with good workflow and processes. How do we prove that?

Firstly, we have [case study material](#) – our most recent case study is on page 4. Secondly, and much more fundamental to our operations is the consistent high-level external audits that we face every year. Our many BSI certifications covered international standards on security, data privacy and business continuity. We recently broke ground by achieving a UK-first security standard – details of which [can be viewed here](#).

Honesty

We're an ethical business, which includes a company-wide commitment as an ICAEW member firm (and for me as an ICAEW-qualified chartered accountant). Honesty and complying with the law are things we do as a matter of course. Proving this is not so straightforward – again, the quality and long-term nature of our client base is probably the best evidence in providing demonstration.

■ *If you'd like to chat to us about helping you develop your practice, please get in touch by [clicking here](#).*



CASE STUDY

Surmounting scalability

A multi-office accountancy practice expanded during Covid, but had begun to over-reach itself. This case study explains how AdvanceTrack supported the firm to solidify its growth ambitions.



Tell us about your practice

We're a multi-office practice in the Midlands, serving owner-managed businesses. Alongside handling the standard compliance tasks, we see real benefit in getting to know the clients better and them providing them with greater-value insight. OMBs in the £1m-£5m space can find it a lonely place – we become their trusted adviser.

What problem did you need solving?

We had bought firms during 2020 and 2021; they were short-staffed and under-pricing work. While being part of a bigger business helped mitigate some of those issues, the amount of work kept piling up.

Then, in 2022, it was the 'Great Resignation' year. We had some churn – not a great deal, but enough to make it difficult to have a net increase in people to handle the work.

Our work would take too long, and we were not being as responsive to clients as we would like. We were falling behind.

How did you begin working with AdvanceTrack?

We arranged to take on people across the board: audit/accounts; business services; and two in tax in an offshoring arrangement with AdvanceTrack.



This meant that they were effectively 'our staff' to utilise. Ironically, we went 'over-capacity' to help us catch up.

The process of integrating them into our way of working had its challenges – we're all working in a massively regulated environment and the remoteness means it can take offshore staff longer to get up to speed, than if in-house. However, we got there.

The second issue was from within our practice – our teams were reluctant to change how they worked. And, because they were also under pressure, they saw change as an obstruction to getting things done.

But, after investing in the process, it's worked

great. While it seemed to take a long time to bed in, I think that in reality it was probably very quick – but change is painful and so it felt like longer.

How has the relationship between your firm and AdvanceTrack progressed?

I came back from holiday last year to find two people we were looking to employ hadn't come through. Having successfully road-tested AdvanceTrack through the accounts department, we were comfortable to acquire more resource to help with bookkeeping, management accounts and tax returns. The turnaround was incredible.

While it was time-intensive, the reality was that in three-to-four months we'd again cleared a backlog of work – phenomenally quick.

And from December 2022 we were again

overstaffed! It was an epic success, from running long lead times and thinking we might fail clients – to business as usual within months.

How has your firm developed, and what does the future hold?

The offshore team require more managing, but in some ways there's less review work at the end of it, which has meant we've restructured roles to manage during the process rather than at the end. And that's made us do that more internally too – we're better at managing our own people.

I think there will always be a case for us working with AdvanceTrack.

Certainly, when we undertake acquisitions, which is a disruptive process, having a resource of people who know your systems will always be powerful for us.

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