

Issue
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On purpose

Setting a purpose for your practice isn't about being 'fluffy'. Set a goal and use that as your practice's foundation for growth

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Goal first, growth later

Being 'purpose-driven' isn't a fluffy goal. Practices that set a strong direction are preparing to succeed, explains AdvanceTrack MD **Vipul Sheth**.



What is your practice's purpose? You might say: "It's to create tax returns and accounts." You could go bigger, bolder and broader: "To be the best accountancy firm in the world."

I went to Australia a couple of weeks ago with a couple of tasks to undertake. Firstly, to help develop our standing; secondly, to attend the Clarity/Smithink/AdvanceTrack-sponsored 'Accountants Re:Bootcamp'.

The bootcamp saw some 50 accountants gathered, across three days, to really question their approach to what their firm does.

It made the practice leaders delve into the fundamentals of what the practice is there for, and why – while challenging them to understand and prioritise what they need to change in terms of maintaining or improving its success.

And, to go through this process, the first thing that is broached is: "What's your firm's purpose?"

Nailing down the 'why'

From my experience in both working in practice, and alongside side them as AdvanceTrack's clients, I think many accountants struggle to nail down what their purpose is. A large proportion of them

complete higher education and choose accountancy as a 'good payer and solid career'. A vocation...? It is often not.

Some of the most successful accountants I (and AdvanceTrack) have worked with have an entrepreneurial background – in terms of parents and close family members. This drive and mission-focused mindset is supported by the financial and technical expertise they learn.

Making sure that tax returns and accounts are calculated correctly is very important. But, ultimately, practices' end-clients see greater value from being supported in their various missions and ambitions.

Our purpose (or mission) is to support practices in their growth ambitions. We do this through providing high-quality and secure outsourcing/offshoring services – while keeping front-of-mind what their end-goal is.

Set your firm with an ambitious goal, and let us support you achieve that goal by handling your productivity burden.

Vipul Sheth is founder and managing director of AdvanceTrack Outsourcing

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



FAQ

Do AdvanceTrack's data and security standards matter?

In our latest FAQ, we put forward a popular question that we hear. Namely, do AdvanceTrack's attained standards 'mean anything' to clients?

Q Do AdvanceTrack's data and security standards matter to me as a client?

A The simple answer is YES, absolutely. The standards we have been awarded are solid, external, assurance that prove we are being run in a well-managed and responsible manner. Ultimately it means that we protect our customers' data – and that of their clients – as well as we can, and look to mitigate against continuity or security issues.

So, how does it work? We'll run through the actual standards later, but let us explain how we are audited. An external auditor from the British Standards Institute (BSI) spends several days with us each year.

The auditor goes through all our procedures, risks and controls to make sure we do what we say we do. We currently have five standards (see below) and, whether security, privacy, quality or continuity, they are all risk-assessed.



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We identify risks, and then evaluate them in terms of impact on confidentiality, integrity of information and availability of information. We then look to minimise the chance of those risks occurring.

Then we implement controls, and look at the residual risk: is there anything else can we do? Those controls could be as simple as making sure laptops have anti-virus on them – or as complex as managing redundant data centres or updating our business continuity plan.

The external auditor reviews all our controls – reviewing whether we follow them. They'll take samples and we then demonstrate how we follow things through, including taking action to fix any issues that have arisen.

We've now had several audits – our last one was three days with the auditor and they spent a day writing up their findings. The external,

independent auditor works for BSI – a very prestigious organisation.

The standards themselves don't change what we do – but they are a key quality control check for us. In turn, this gives our accountancy clients peace of mind.

Our standards

- ISO 9001 Quality Management
- ISO 27001 Information Security Management
- BSI 10012 Personal Information Management System
- ISO 22301 Business Continuity
- ISO 27701 Personal Information Security

■ *We are proud to be the first organisation in the UK to attain the updated ISO 27001. Details of how our team achieved this can be found by [clicking here](#).*

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- ✓ UK headquartered, ICAEW member firm
- ✓ Run by UK qualified chartered accountants
- ✓ ISO 9001 certified for quality management
- ✓ BS 10012 certified for personal information management
- ✓ ISO 22301 certified for business continuity
- ✓ ISO/IEC 27001 certified for information security
- ✓ ISO/IEC 27701 certified for privacy information
- ✓ Secure platform with full job management
- ✓ Job tracking as standard since 2006
- ✓ Process-driven mass customisation



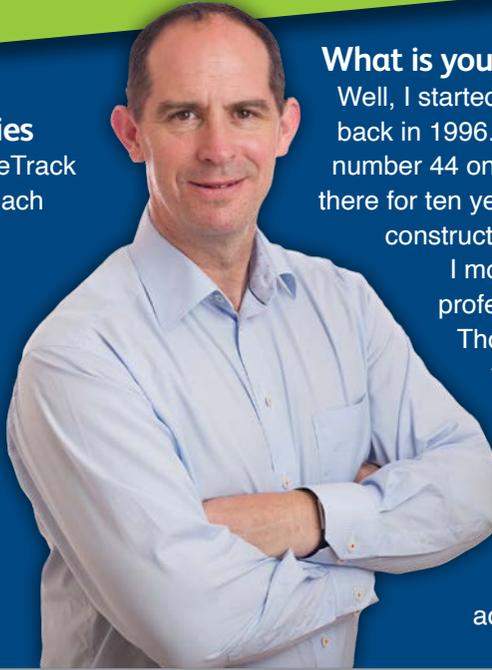
In profile: Dermot Hamblin

We catch up with AdvanceTrack's new sales director **Dermot Hamblin**, and discuss his current role, along with his storied background in accountancy and tech.

Current role and responsibilities

I'm the new sales director – AdvanceTrack MD Vipul Sheth and I have known each other for a long time. Vipul has high values and lives by them, which I support.

He's asked me to help continue AdvanceTrack's growth. I've always had a passion to ensure that existing clients are well looked after, so I'm not just here to win new work. The opportunity in this sector is great, and I want to play a positive part in the AdvanceTrack team.



What is your background?

Well, I started in accountancy tech way back in 1996. I was, in fact, employee number 44 on IRIS's payroll. I was there for ten years before working for a construction company.

I moved back into the professional tech sector with Thomson Reuters Digita and then launched Panalitix's entry into the UK – my expertise is supporting vendors with their go-to-market strategies. I've also been a long-standing coach to accountants.

What is the future for you and AdvanceTrack?

Accountants want someone who tells it to them straight: no crazy demos. I'll speak sensibly with them and discuss the business case. We want to make accountancy practices greater than they already are. Firms are realising that outsourcing and offshoring are viable options to enable them to be more productive, flexible and to scale up.

I also see geographies that AdvanceTrack can expand into, as well as a broadening of its services – it's a very exciting time. I'm really excited by our audit offering.

How can accountants contact you?

I can be reached [here](#) and I'd welcome the opportunity to chat with either potential or existing clients.

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