

Inside⁺ **OUTSOURCING**[®]

The newsletter for forward-thinking professionals

Collaborate to accumulate

Working closer with service partners is essential in a resource-constrained environment

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Collaborative accounting: the profession's future

What is collaborative accounting, and how can it help deliver long-term success for you and your clients?

IT'S BOTH AN EXCITING and challenging time for the accounting profession. Client expectations, regulatory landscapes and technology in the sector are all evolving at pace, which is fundamentally changing how some accounting work is done and delivered.

In this kind of fast-moving environment, trying to futureproof your accounting firm can feel daunting, as you need to have a foundation that is client-centric, resilient, scalable and flexible to meet demand, all while growing your business sustainably.

In this guide, we explore what collaborative accounting is and how an outsourcing model that is built on partnership, transparency, aligned workflows and great communication can help deliver long-term success for you and your clients.

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE ACCOUNTING IN OUTSOURCING?

Collaborative accounting is a way of working where an accounting firm and its outsourcing partner operate as a single, integrated team rather than as totally separate entities. It goes beyond task delegation and focuses on shared understanding, ongoing communication and mutual accountability.

Instead of simply handing off compliance work or bookkeeping tasks, collaborative accounting involves:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- consistent communication and feedback loops;
- shared access to systems, data and documentation;
- aligned quality standards and turnaround times; and



- a joint commitment to continuous improvement.

In this model, the outsourcing partner is not merely a back-office vendor, but an extension of the firm's own team. One that understands your firm's processes, clients and expectations.



WHY COLLABORATIVE ACCOUNTING IS BECOMING ESSENTIAL

Outsourcing for accountants has matured in recent times. Firms are no longer outsourcing just to reduce costs; you're outsourcing to access skilled talent, manage capacity issues and focus your internal teams on higher-value advisory work.

However, without effective collaboration, outsourcing can potentially introduce risks, such as miscommunication, inconsistent quality and client dissatisfaction. Collaborative accounting mitigates these risks and helps to unlock the true strategic value of outsourcing.

The firms that thrive over the next decade will be those that can blend internal expertise with external capability seamlessly. Collaboration is the mechanism that makes this possible.

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THE RISKS OF NON-COLLABORATIVE OUTSOURCING

Traditionally, outsourcing accounting services is totally transactional. Work is sent to the outsourced team, who complete and return it, usually with minimal context or feedback. While this approach can work for the simplest of tasks, it soon falls down if there is anything unusual or complex involved. Common issues can include:

- lack of clarity around scope and responsibility of work;

- delays caused by back-and-forth clarification;
- inconsistent application of firm standards;
- limited accountability for errors or omissions; and
- frustration on both sides.

These issues are not caused by outsourcing, but instead by poor collaboration as part of the process.

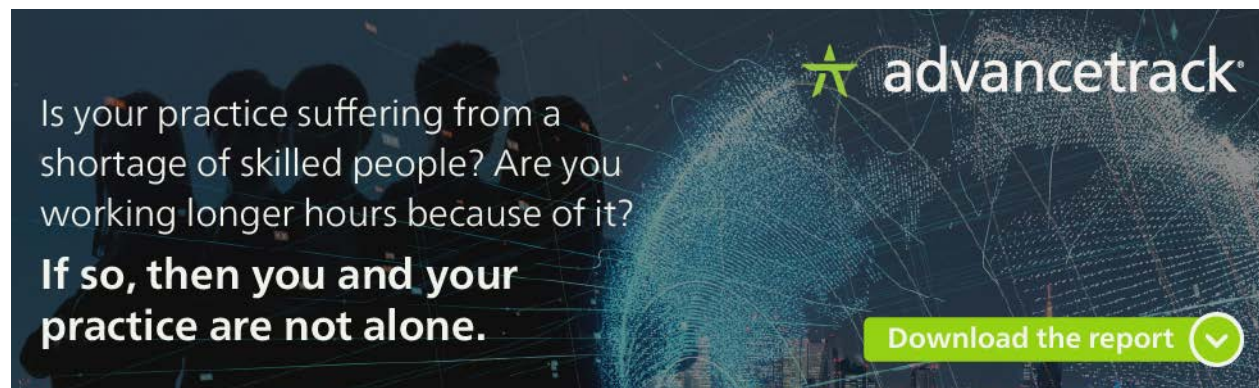
WHY EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION MATTERS WITH OUTSOURCING PARTNERS

Collaboration transforms outsourcing from a cost-saving tactic into a growth enabler. When done well, it creates a working relationship where both sides are invested in outcomes, not just outputs.

Effective collaboration leads to:

- higher quality and consistency of work;
- faster turnaround times and fewer bottlenecks;
- reduced rework and error rates;
- greater transparency and control; and
- stronger team morale across borders.

Collaborative accounting ensures that experience remains seamless for clients, which is an essential part of retention and can provide a platform for future upsells.



Is your practice suffering from a shortage of skilled people? Are you working longer hours because of it?

If so, then you and your practice are not alone.

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[Download the report](#)





Podsourcing® is an effective way to collaborate with a dedicated team of skilled accounting professionals to ensure high-quality results every time. Find out more about [Podsourcing® here](#).

TIPS TO ACHIEVE A MORE COLLABORATIVE ACCOUNTING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR OUTSOURCING PARTNER

Clear scope, expectations and division of responsibility

One of the most important foundations of successful collaborative accounting is clarity. Every effective outsourcing relationship begins with well-documented scope and expectations.

This includes information such as:

- exactly which tasks are being outsourced and which remain in-house;
- who is responsible for preparation, review and final sign-off;
- turnaround times and deadlines;
- escalation pathways for issues or queries; and
- quality benchmarks and review processes.

Clear documentation removes ambiguity and empowers outsourcing teams to work confidently and efficiently. It also protects

internal teams from spending unnecessary time correcting misunderstandings.

Regular check-ins and structured updates

Collaboration does not just happen by itself; it requires deliberate communication.

Regular check-ins with your outsourcing partner create alignment and trust. These can take many forms, such as:

- weekly or fortnightly operational calls;
- monthly performance and quality reviews; and
- quarterly planning or capacity discussions.

Structured updates ensure that both sides are aware of upcoming workload changes, impending deadlines and any emerging challenges. They also create space for continuous improvement rather than reactive problem-solving, which may come too late to avoid issues.

Proactive communication, not reactive clarification

In collaborative accounting, communication should be proactive rather than reactive. Instead of waiting for problems to arise, both teams should feel empowered to raise questions, flag risks and suggest improvements early.



This includes:

- encouraging outsourcing teams to ask clarifying questions upfront;
- sharing client-specific nuances or preferences;
- communicating changes in processes or software promptly; and
- providing timely feedback on completed work.

Proactive communication reduces friction, improves accuracy and strengthens the partnership over time.

Leveraging cloud accounting tools

Technology is a critical element of collaborative accounting. Cloud-based accounting platforms, document management systems and workflow tools allow teams to work together in real time, regardless of location.

The effective use of cloud tools enables:

- shared access to live financial data;
- transparent task tracking and status updates;
- centralised documentation and process guides; and
- secure communication within systems.

When both in-house and outsourced teams operate within the same digital ecosystem,

collaboration becomes significantly easier and more natural.

Clear processes and repeatable workflows

Consistency is essential for collaboration at scale. Documented processes and repeatable workflows ensure that work is completed the same way every time, regardless of who is doing it.

Strong collaborative accounting partnerships include:

- step-by-step process documentation;
- standardised templates and checklists;
- clear review and approval workflows; and
- defined exception handling procedures.

This reduces dependency on individual knowledge and allows outsourcing teams to integrate quickly and confidently, so they can hit the ground running after the onboarding phase.

“When both in-house and outsourced teams operate within the same digital ecosystem, collaboration becomes significantly easier and more natural”



Knowledge sharing and onboarding

Collaborative accounting recognises that outsourcing partners need context, not just instructions. Proper onboarding and ongoing knowledge sharing are critical to success.

This includes:

- training on firm-specific standards and methodologies;
- exposure to common client scenarios;
- access to internal knowledge bases and FAQs; and
- updates on any process changes.

When outsourcing teams understand the 'why'

behind the work, not just the 'what', getting up to speed in terms of quality and consistency is much quicker to achieve.

Building trust and long-term partnerships

At its core, collaborative accounting is about relationships. Trust is built through transparency, consistency and mutual respect between the accounting firm and outsourcing partners.

Firms that approach outsourcing partners as long-term collaborators rather than short-term solutions can benefit from:

- greater accountability and ownership;

- lower staff turnover on outsourced teams;
- continuous improvement and innovation; and
- stronger cultural alignment.

Over time, this partnership can become a competitive advantage.

Collaborative accounting and the future of the profession

The future of accounting is not really about choosing between in-house teams and outsourcing. It is about integrating both in a way that delivers better outcomes for clients, staff and your firm as a whole.

Collaborative accounting enables firms to:

- scale without compromising quality;
- focus internal talent on advisory services and growth; and
- build resilient, future-ready operating models.

As the industry continues to evolve, collaboration may well be a defining factor that separates firms that struggle from those that lead the way. ■



If you'd like to find out more about outsourcing some of your services and collaborating with a trusted partner, [book a call](#) with our team.

Introducing our new
podsourcing[®] service
- our tried and tested
team-based approach.



 **advancetrack**[®]

[Click here for more](#)



Case study: a transformational effect

A multi-office firm used a combination of outsourcing, offshoring and Pod sourcing® to drive a step-change in how they service their clients.

DESCRIBE YOUR PRACTICE TO US

We're a multi-office firm based in the North-West of England, serving clients nationwide – mainly OMBs. In particular, we support companies through funding and growth lifecycles, investment through to exit.

Staff-wise we have 14 on the UK side and 11 based in India with Advancetrack – the latter of whom are very much part of the team. We post multi-million pounds of revenue annually.

WHAT WAS THE ISSUE YOU WERE INITIALLY LOOKING TO SOLVE?

If we go back a couple of years, then we were constantly struggling to keep up with deadlines – we just didn't have the capacity to do the work.

I would describe our model and structure as fairly traditional; we had layers of team members and would have trainees



undertaking the processing and production work.

The problem arose because the work was becoming increasingly complex – it was high-end compliance. Changing that model was therefore the aim, but switching out less experienced staff for more experienced was going to be difficult and expensive.

The aim was to work with Advancetrack to build a team that could undertake the work quickly and at great value.

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT ADVANCETRACK?

I've felt like I've known about Advancetrack forever! We were in the same orbit at events. What attracted me to Advancetrack's offering



“The team... are spending more time directly with clients – and providing more support”

was it combined a people focus with an excellent tech foundation; this felt different to me compared with others in the market.

We worked together on a few outsourcing projects to ‘firefight’ – where I needed some capacity in my firm quickly for a short period of time. It built up my knowledge even further of its team and how they work.

HOW DID THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP PROGRESS?

An offshore team was created by Advancetrack in India for us. However, this comes under the Podsourcing® offering, which I describe as ‘offshoring with benefits’. Typical offshore offerings are effectively a ‘one-in’ recruitment – if that person leaves then a whole new recruitment process begins. With Podsourcing, a team is built that works for us; but if people move on or don’t quite fit then Advancetrack can bring in someone else seamlessly. The team structure also creates a management hierarchy, which is so important.

Having this team made a massive difference to our ability to produce from day one. However, it’s been a couple of years working through because of the amount of change we’ve had as a firm. Some people left as part of the process, and so it then becomes a case of integrating a new team – with those based with us in England also having to adapt. It’s a time that was emotional as well as head-scratching for all. But as I said, there were immediate benefits.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

Nothing stands still. We’re now bringing trainees into the firm but developing them in a different way. They still learn the basics but are not chugging through swathes of difficult work. They will work with client managers, shadowing them, to understand how they develop relationships and provide support when required.

The team, including our members in India, are spending more time directly with clients – and providing more support. We have a real framework and it’s clear what our people can achieve with them. We’ve now had 18 months with the current structure. So, the next step is a year-long plan to take everything up a level – a round of improvements to systems and processes. ■



The advertisement features a dark blue background with glowing blue coins. One prominent coin has the word 'AUDIT' on it. The Advancetrack logo is at the top left. A white box at the top right contains the text 'advancetrack®'. A large white box in the center contains the text 'Audit Support Services'. Below this, a green box contains the text 'Firms looking to manage their audit resource this coming season, get in touch for quality staff on an Outsourced or Offshored basis'. A dark blue button with white text says 'Click here for more'. At the bottom, there are logos for ICAEW Chartered Accountants, a 'bot' logo, a 'xero' logo, and a 'CERTIFIED ADVISOR' logo. The website 'www.advancetrack.com' is listed at the bottom.

advancetrack®

Audit Support Services

Firms looking to manage their audit resource this coming season, get in touch for quality staff on an Outsourced or Offshored basis

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The best of 2025... for 2026

Advancetrack has curated the most insightful and informative articles we've produced in 2025 – full of learnings you can take forward into 2026.



IF GAUGING HOW BUSY your organisation has been by the number of blogs and articles written then, well, it has been a very busy 2025 for Advancetrack.

This steady stream of information provided details on where we are as a business, thoughts on the world and where accountants fit in, and even guides as to how outsourcing and offshoring work – and how you might use those services.

And so, we've picked a 'baker's dozen' of the most insightful and useful articles that will help you start 2026 with some food for thought... and learn a bit more about us.

NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF ACCOUNTANCY

Where accountancy has traditionally been modelled as stable and consistent, it is part of





with Australian and New Zealand accounting practitioners.

gbX London and Accountex: After one of the busiest weeks for the accountancy profession, Advancetrack’s Vipul Sheth took stock.

Going global: Advancetrack is taking new territories into consideration, offering: world-class outsourcing; offshoring; and podsourcing® services.

CASE STUDIES

We worked hard behind the scenes to grab precious time from our clients, so you can understand the decision-making process and reasoning behind these firms choosing us as a partner.

a working world experiencing an increasing rate of change. This means practice leaders must think long and hard about what they offer, to whom, and how it will be delivered.

Success and succession: Can the accountancy profession find a way to build a sustainable future among great disruption? Vipul Sheth looks for an answer.

Does a shortage of talent mean we need more accountants?: The latest *Accounting Talent Index* highlights the tension between

AI and its impact upon the profession’s talent shortage. But Kevin Reed suggests that recruiting more accountants isn’t necessarily the answer.

ADVANCETRACK OUT AND ABOUT
We don’t like sitting still. 2025 was a packed events season for the team – including our own shows.

From gbX Brisbane to Xerocon:
Advancetrack MD Vipul Sheth takes us through two weeks of travel and great conversations

Podsourcing® pioneers: A practice that has partnered with Advancetrack over the long-term, looks to evolve its direction of travel – using Advancetrack’s latest service offering.

SME practice boosts accounting capabilities:

A specialist services provider couldn’t keep up with client demands for accountancy – it turned to Advancetrack to boost its offering.

OUR PEOPLE

Advancetrack is moving forward; we have invested in new people to help us be better (with more to come in 2026). However, we’re



also blessed with a substantial number of loyal and committed team members too. The articles below highlight the best of both.

In profile – Ashlea McElhone: *We caught up with Ashlea McElhone, who joined us to supercharge our engagement with the accounting community.*

In profile – Brian Nugent: *Customer support manager Brian Nugent discussed the appreciation he and the wider delivery team receive from Advancetrack’s accountancy clients.*

GUIDES

Getting to grips with the operations of an accounting practice are far from easy. But resourcing can be managed – more than that, there are opportunities to drive efficiencies and scale. Advancetrack walks you through how and where such solutions fit, with our detailed and plain-speaking guides.



Outsourced accounting for accountants – choosing the right partner: *The key to successful outsourcing lies in selecting the right outsourcing partner. For firms acting on behalf of their clients, this choice isn’t just operational – it’s reputational.*

Protecting quality and compliance when you outsource: *We explore how you can safeguard accounting work quality and compliance throughout the entire outsourcing process.*

What to consider before outsourcing accounting services: *There are clear signs and strategic considerations that can help you determine when the move will most benefit your business. This guide explores what to look for before making the decision.*

Accounting Talent Index 2025: *Download the definitive exclusive report on accountancy’s biggest challenge – and how firms are responding. ■*



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