THE NEXT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN ACCOUNTING

Developing Advisors in the Age of AI

The accounting profession is entering a new era.

For decades, firms differentiated themselves through technical expertise, industry knowledge, and the ability to deliver high-quality audit, tax, and advisory services. Those capabilities remain essential, but they are no longer enough.

As artificial intelligence automates routine tasks and increases access to technical knowledge, the value of purely technical expertise is changing. Leading firms are recognizing that future success will depend not only on what professionals know, but also on how effectively they communicate, influence, build relationships, exercise judgment, and create trust. Recent investments by firms such as EY in recognizing and rewarding adaptability, leadership, judgment, and client impact underscore the growing importance of these capabilities. A Wall Street Journal article highlighting EY's evolving approach to talent development further reinforces this trend. The firms that thrive in this environment will be those that intentionally develop professionals who can translate expertise into business value.

THE CHALLENGE

Most accounting professionals spend years developing technical competence. Far less time is spent helping them develop the skills required to:

- Communicate with executives and business leaders
- Influence decisions without formal authority
- Lead difficult conversations
- Build trusted client relationships
- Navigate complex stakeholder environments
- Identify opportunities beyond the immediate engagement
- Deliver strategic guidance, not just technical answers

As a result, many firms find themselves with highly capable experts who struggle to make the transition into advisory and leadership roles. The challenge is not a shortage of technical talent. The challenge is developing the next generation of advisors.

A NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

We believe success in the future belongs to professionals who effectively make the journey from Expert to Trusted Advisor. While technical expertise remains the foundation of professional credibility, long-term success increasingly depends on the ability to communicate effectively, influence decisions, build meaningful relationships, and create strategic value.

The professionals who make this transition become more than subject matter experts. They become trusted partners who help clients and stakeholders achieve their most important goals.

WHAT FIRMS NEED NOW

As firms continue investing in technology and AI, their greatest competitive advantage will not come from technology alone. It will come from developing professionals who can transform expertise into insight, insight into impact, and impact into trust. As professional knowledge becomes more accessible and routine work becomes increasingly automated, the ability to guide decisions, strengthen relationships, and create meaningful business value becomes even more important. The more technology improves efficiency, the more valuable uniquely human capabilities become. This isn't about "soft skills." It's about building the capabilities that transform expertise into business value and professionals into trusted advisors.

THE SOLUTION

Firms cannot afford to leave the development of advisor capabilities to chance. Just as technical expertise is built through deliberate training and experience, advisor capabilities must be intentionally developed. The firms that invest in these capabilities will be better positioned to strengthen client relationships, prepare future leaders, expand advisory services, and differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market.

The Resource Management Institute's professional development pathway provides a structured approach to building these capabilities. Through two progressive programs, professionals learn how to evolve from technical experts into trusted advisors who create meaningful impact for their clients, colleagues, and organizations.

Expert to Advisor focuses on developing the communication, influence, business acumen, and relationship skills needed to translate expertise into value.

Advisor to Trusted Advisor builds on that foundation by helping professionals deepen trust, strengthen strategic influence, and become indispensable partners in decision-making.

Together, these programs provide a structured pathway for developing the next generation of advisors and trusted advisors.

As technology continues to transform how work gets done, the firms that distinguish themselves will be those that develop professionals capable of turning expertise into insight, insight into impact, and impact into trust. But that journey does not happen by accident. It requires intentional development and a sustained commitment to building the capabilities that create lasting value. The future belongs to firms that invest as intentionally in developing advisors and trusted advisors as they do in developing professional expertise.

ABOUT THE RMI

The Resource Management Institute (RMI) is dedicated to advancing the discipline of resource and workforce management. We provide actionable thought leadership, proven best practices, and global standards that shape how organizations manage their most valuable asset—their people. Through our globally recognized credentials, we certify expertise in resource management, helping professionals demonstrate their capabilities and grow their careers. We also equip organizations with the practical tools and resources needed to manage human capital with greater efficiency, consistency, and purpose.

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