

The Virtual Marketing Director

A Creative New Approach To Business Development

You didn't go through all those years of school and all those hours of certification exams so that you could become a marketing expert. But today's ultra-competitive climate makes marketing essential — even for the kind of necessary work you do. In fact, in a time of scarce resources, you really have to work hard to differentiate your firm from similar firms. Let's face it: even in good times it is all too easy for your work to be seen as a commodity. Tough times exert still more pressure on you — and make it harder for prospects to tell you apart from the firm down the street.

How do you avoid this trap and build your practice without getting distracted from what your clients count on you for?

5 Key Challenges to Strategic Growth

Every CPA firm faces five significant challenges in avoiding the commodity trap and attracting — and keeping — the clients it wants:

1. Persuade prospects to perceive you as a value creator, not just a “bean counter.”
2. Get heard through the din of “tough economic times.”
3. Deliver extraordinary value to current clients — and get recognized for it.
4. Build alternative sources of income that require less of your direct time and attention.
5. Maintain a creative — and constant— approach to new business development.

5 Pitfalls in New Business Development

Time and again we have seen highly qualified CPAs who are eager to help their current clients and hungry for new business attempt and fail at developing that new business. They most frequently get tripped up on:

1. Lacking a clear vision of their firm's identity — and why it is different from similar firms.
2. Not knowing how to have the sales conversation at all or having it in CPA-friendly — rather than client-friendly — terms.
3. Getting too caught up in the “urgent” work at hand to devote adequate time and attention to the important work of business development.
4. Failing to systematize and coordinate all business development efforts.
5. Working with the personnel and resources they think they can afford — rather than those they really need.

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Critical Reasons for Ongoing Business Development

- 1. Most professional firms get 80% of their revenue from just 20% of their clients;** this means that the other 80% comes with a heavy opportunity cost.
A sustained business development effort helps you build your ideal client base and offload the clients who are not ideal for your practice.
- 2. The average client/CPA relationship lasts about five years** (regardless of whether the client is a business or individual.)
You need a steady stream of prospects to keep your practice full as clients transition out.
- 3. Clients don't really understand the value you are providing unless you show them** — and you have to tell them in terms that make sense to them.
Even keeping your current client base happy and engaged requires a systematic communications and marketing effort.
- 4. In uncertain times it is easy to become invisible.** Clients and prospects are struggling mightily with many issues — and questioning every decision they have made and relationship they have established. Firms that drop off the radar screen put their businesses at risk.
Ongoing business development keeps you at the forefront of people's minds so you can survive comfortably during tough times and be ready to thrive when things get better.
- 5. Qualified professional and paraprofessional staff are always tough to find.** More tend to be available in tough times, so you have an opportunity to ramp up and upgrade your staff — if you can keep it busy.
A high volume of the right kind of work will enable you to comfortably keep your staff and maximize return from them.
- 6. Referrals come less frequently during tough times.** Most professional firms build their businesses on a referral basis. But members of your network are probably too busy solving their own problems to think of you.
Finding strategic ways to stay in front of — and be helpful to — your professional network will make you stand out — and get referrals — when the competition seems to have battened down the hatches.

Build your practice, without getting distracted from what clients count on you for

A Simple — and Familiar — Solution, Right-Sized for You

You know the value your expertise has brought to your clients. Time and time again your work has helped them save money, preserve assets and gain peace of mind. Working with you can be a real bargain. Especially for your best clients, it's like having a seasoned CFO on tap, with all the benefits, but without all the overhead and expenses.

What if you could have access to expert communications and marketing and business development services under a similar model?

Now you can. For less than the cost of an in-house marketing coordinator, you can have a senior professional — with experience in working with professional firms just like yours — at your fingertips. We'll work with you on a regular weekly or monthly basis, depending on your needs and budget. And if you have a question or an immediate concern, just pick up the phone or fire off an email; we'll be right with you.

Create and Sustain the Profitable Practice You Want

Your Evoke Virtual Marketing Director will help build your practice by:

- Defining what makes you different from other CPA firms.
- Enhancing your image so clients and prospects perceive you as much more than a “bean counter” or commodity.
- Developing materials — both print and web-based — to help you carry your new message.
- Creating cost-effective approaches to marketing, advertising and client communications that are right for your firm.
- Leveraging your firm's expertise to build closer relationships with clients and impress prospects.
- Segmenting your firm's client base so that you understand who your most profitable clients are — and how to find more like them.
- Systematizing marketing activities, strategies and plans so it's easy to know what to do when.
- Preparing each partner and professional to be a rainmaker by customizing marketing activities and approaches to individual preferences and personality.
- Assisting you in developing profitable additional revenue streams in financial services and insurance.
- Showing you how to have more effective “selling” conversations.

Get Interesting ...

Get Evoke!

The Choice is Yours

You can stay on your current path and do well enough. As long as you're willing to work really long hours — especially during tax season — you can take whatever business walks in the door and keep yourself busy with \$500 tax returns for the foreseeable future. But is that really why you became a CPA — and do you really want to work so hard for so little?

The alternative is to work with an Evoke Virtual Marketing Director who will help you envision the practice you really want, create the systems to get there and take the actions to make it a reality. You'll make more money with less effort — and you'll find out some extraordinary things about your business that will help you thrive in good times and bad.

Call us today at 212.967.7611 or email info@evokestrategies.com for a free consultation on how we can help you transform your business.



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Making a CPA firm interesting is tough. Keeping it interesting is tougher.

As a professional, you excel at what you do. In fact, you have a great deal more expertise than your clients — and prospects — may realize. But some things are outside your area of expertise — like putting together a powerful message that sets you apart from other CPA firms. Or creating a system to keep your marketing efforts consistent and on target. When you need a seasoned professional who appreciates the value you bring to the table — and the challenges you face in promoting your firm — call Evoke.

For more information, visit www.evokestrategies.com, email info@evokestrategies.com or call **212.967.7611**