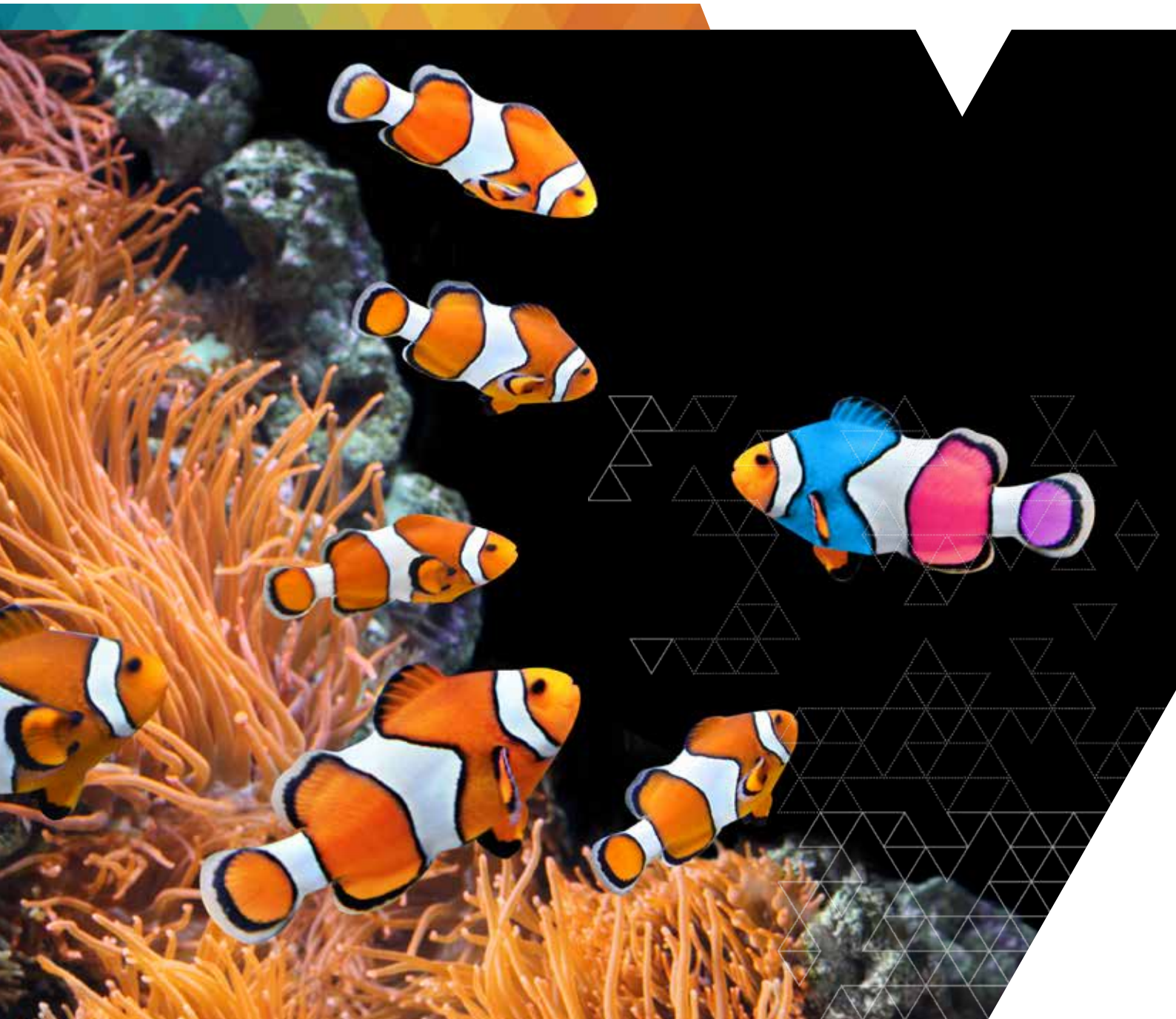


Unleashing the Power of ChatGPT



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Introduction

There is a widespread acknowledgement of the value that ChatGPT brings to customer service, enabling quick responses to common queries and streamlining communication with clients. But it also has to be recognised that the tool is imperfect. For example, in a recent study published by the National Library of Medicine (US), a range of specialist medical practitioners posed 284 medical questions to ChatGPT and achieved a 92% accuracy – which sounds good until you consider the potential human consequences of an 8% failure rate.

Professionals across various industries are leveraging ChatGPT to assist with their roles, content creation, and technical questions. Similarly, accountants are facing the implications of data security, quality control, copyright, and accuracy in their utilisation of the tool, e.g. it's fine to leverage ChatGPT, but only with checks and balances to verify factual accuracy.

However, the benefits of incorporating ChatGPT are evident, prompting team members to embrace its usage:

1. **Enhanced Efficiency:** By eliminating hours of research and drafting, ChatGPT significantly improves efficiency. Although it does make errors, it's also capable of very quickly compiling financial and other data, optimising spreadsheets, and rectifying programming bugs.
2. **Streamlined Communication:** ChatGPT facilitates clear and effective communication among accountants, clients, and stakeholders by generating widely sourced and easily understandable financial and situational summaries.
3. **Financial Analysis:** Accountants can deploy ChatGPT to crunch complex financial data, identify trends, and generate reports that aid in making informed decisions. It offers the potential for rapid insights that keep professionals on the front foot and provide enhanced value to clients.

4. **Tax Planning:** While subject to limitations, it can assist accountants in navigating tax regulations and identifying potential tax-saving opportunities.
5. **Business Advisory:** ChatGPT is capable of generating initial drafts of strategic business plans. It accesses sector-specific knowledge and can create plans and recommendations when provided with a clear brief.
6. **Customer Support:** Accounting firms can potentially harness ChatGPT to power chatbots that offer real-time responses to client queries. These chatbots significantly enhance customer satisfaction by providing instant and accurate answers, thus reducing the workload of accountants.
7. **Creativity and Idea Generation:** You can ask the tool to do practically anything! Design a board game, create a team building exercise, write a poem, write a speech, check a computer program, check an Excel spreadsheet, write an Excel algorithm to perform a certain task, or suggest a list of birthday presents for a 12-year-old nephew.

Given these advantages, it is unsurprising that team members are leveraging ChatGPT in their work, even without management's explicit knowledge or approval. Rumours suggest that Microsoft plans to integrate ChatGPT into tools like PowerPoint and Word, further solidifying its presence. The reality is that it is here to stay, and firms are best advised to establish an approach and policy to effectively utilise its potential.

User Tips for Professionals: Optimising ChatGPT Usage

To maximise the benefits of ChatGPT and other AI systems, not to mention covering off the risks, professional service firms should consider the following tactics and approaches to leveraging the new tools:

- 1. Determine Use Cases:** Identify specific scenarios where ChatGPT can bring value, such as answering frequently asked questions, providing general tax advice, explaining accounting concepts, assisting with basic financial calculations, or guiding clients through standard procedures.
- 2. Set Clear Expectations:** Communicate to team members and clients that ChatGPT is an AI-powered system and not a substitute for professional advice. Establish boundaries and clarify that complex or confidential matters should be addressed directly with a human accountant.
- 3. Monitor and Improve:** Continuously monitor interactions and collect feedback from clients and team members. Identify areas where ChatGPT may not provide accurate responses and work towards improving those aspects.
- 4. Ensure Data Security and Privacy:** Adhere to best practices for data storage, encryption, and access control. Anonymise any data used in website tools to protect confidentiality.
- 5. Train team members on ChatGPT Usage:** Educate team members, especially accountants and customer service representatives, about the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT. Train them to handle situations where clients may require further assistance beyond what the AI model can provide and to critically evaluate ChatGPT responses.

Like any new initiative, consider formalising these key features in the team handbook or other policy documents. Appendix A provides a draft 'staff policy' which could be adapted to suit your own business.

Word of Warning

It is crucial to acknowledge that, despite ChatGPT's impressive capabilities, it is simply a "large language model", accessing publicly available information at very high speed and providing outputs in a form that humans find intuitively understandable and beguilingly "easy to believe". But there are numerous instances where it can make mistakes or provide inaccurate information.

Sometimes, it may "hallucinate," generating false and peculiar ideas without any apparent basis. This can result from drawing from unreliable sources or improperly combining different texts. The challenge lies in the fact that these incorrect responses can be as well-written and typo-free as the correct ones, necessitating thorough verification by knowledgeable professionals.

There could also be a risk as to whether ChatGPT can be regarded as plagiarism. In a strict sense, most say probably not, as it is not copying text in a non-modified way. However, probably attitudes have further to develop, and doubtless, so does copyright law. Meanwhile, a cautionary report from the University of Kansas suggests that algorithms can identify 100% of AI-authored scientific articles and 92% of AI-authored paragraphs within longer texts ([ChatGPT detector](#)). So best not to assume that its use will go unnoticed.

Looking to the future

It seems likely that ChatGPT might quickly reach its limits in technical and judgemental areas - but even so, professionals are using it to increase productivity - creating an initial draft, a framework document, and then allowing the experienced practitioner to apply their knowledge and judgement by finessing and adding correct and timely information, customised observation and personalised judgements.

Looking ahead, while ChatGPT can be a valuable tool, accountants should exercise caution and ensure the accuracy and adherence to professional standards of its responses. However, envision the possibilities if ChatGPT had direct access to client files or up-to-date information beyond a limited timeframe. Consider the emerging specialised accounting applications powered by ChatGPT as the engine.

We can expect further innovations and specific applications tailored to the accounting field as AI technologies advance. This will expand the role of ChatGPT in providing support to accountants in their work.

Appendix A: Staff Policies - Acceptable Use Policies for ChatGPT

Purpose: This policy establishes the guidelines and regulations governing the use of ChatGPT by employees of [company name]. Its purpose is to ensure the security of our company's information and data while fostering a professional and respectful environment for all users.

Authorised Use: Employees are authorised to use ChatGPT solely for work-related purposes, including research, data analysis, and communication with clients and colleagues.

Confidentiality & Security: Employees must maintain strict confidentiality when using ChatGPT, refraining from disclosing trade secrets, intellectual property, financial data, or any other sensitive information.

- Employees are responsible for safeguarding their login credentials and must not share them with others. Any suspected security breaches or suspicious activities must be promptly reported to the appropriate personnel.
- Staff members are required to uphold data security and integrity while utilising ChatGPT.
- Confidential client information should never be shared or stored within ChatGPT or any related systems.
- Staff members should exercise caution when inputting sensitive information into ChatGPT and must not enter personal or confidential data belonging to clients without proper authorisation.

Personal Use: During non-working hours, employees may use ChatGPT for personal purposes as long as it adheres to company policies, including the prohibition of harassment or discrimination.

Prohibited Activities: The use of ChatGPT for any illegal or unethical activities is strictly prohibited. This includes disseminating false information, engaging in cyberbullying or harassment, or attempting unauthorised access to systems or networks.

Acceptable Conduct: Employees must utilise ChatGPT in a professional and respectful manner, refraining from using profanity or engaging in discriminatory behaviour.

Monitoring and Logging:

- The company reserves the right to monitor and log ChatGPT interactions for quality assurance, security, and compliance purposes.
- Staff members should not expect privacy when using ChatGPT, and their interactions may be reviewed as necessary.

Compliance & Consequences of Policy Violations:

- Employees must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and company policies when using ChatGPT.
- ChatGPT should not be used to infringe upon intellectual property rights, promote discrimination, harassment, or engage in illegal activities.
- The severity of the violation and its associated consequences will be determined by the company, considering the nature and impact of the violation.
- Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Source: ChatGPT

Appendix B: Audit reporting process with a Shakespearian twist

We asked ChatGPT to describe a typical audit reporting process but in the style of Shakespeare...

Hark! Hear ye, noble audience, as we present an audit of most wondrous kind, Wherein the ledger's tale unfolds, a realm of finance, we hope to find. In merry kingdom of Commerce, where merchants ply their ancient trade, We delve into their records deep, and seek their gains, lest debts evade.

First, to the balance sheet we turn, a parchment fair, with figures grand, Assets and liabilities joust, like knights of old, on either hand. The coffers swell with gold and lands, a treasure trove, their wealth displayed, Yet debts, like shadows of the night, doth creep, where revenues have strayed.

Upon yon income statement, we lay our gaze, where revenues dance and soar, Like minstrels playing merry tunes, the gains and losses, evermore. Expenses loom like dragon's fire, consuming coins with greedy maw, A perilous journey through the realms of profit, fraught with awe.

But stay, what light through yonder window breaks? 'Tis the cash flow's gentle glow, Revealing how the coins doth flow, like streams that to the oceans go. Inflows and outflows, ebb and flow, in wavy cadence they appear, To fathom if the kingdom's purse be fat or lean, 'tis what we here adhere.

Next, we assay the ledgers, vast as forests, filled with entries bold, Each transaction tells a tale, of deals struck and promises sold. In this dark labyrinth of numbers, we seek for errors and for flaws, Lest truth and fairness be o'erthrown, by errors, ignorance, or some foul cause.

Taxes, like royal tithes, must be accounted, lest the crown be vexed, To navigate the maze of laws, where many wise men oft perplexed. Compliance, like a noble quest, to follow rules, with utmost care, In this, the realm of audits, nothing but truth, shall we declare.

Thus, we conclude this audit's tale, in Shakespearean prose and rhyme, In hope, fair merchants, thou may'st find, our efforts true, our work sublime. Though figures seemeth dry and dull, they tell a story, bold and clear, To safeguard wealth and trade, we toil, thy financial realm, to steer.

Source: ChatGPT

Contact

For further information about this topic or any other issues raised in the AGN Global Business Voice series, or if you would like to become a member of AGN please get in touch with your local AGN Regional Director (below) or go straight to www.agn.org.

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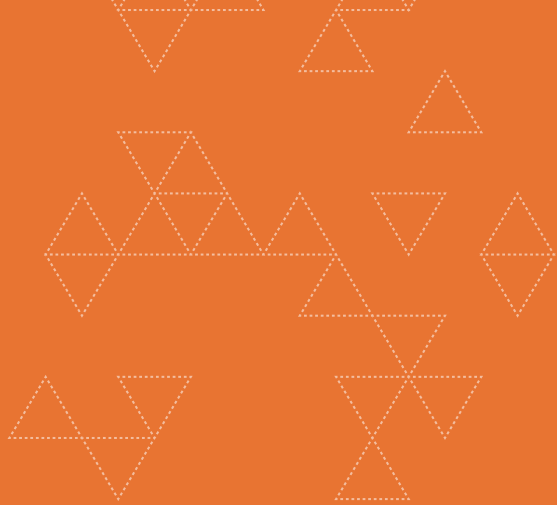
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