

ACQUANTECH

Is this the shape of full service
accountancy firms come 2030?



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Introduction

By 2030, the accountancy landscape will shift due to technological advancements, evolving client needs, and complex regulations. SMEs will require integrated services involving AI, data analytics, cybersecurity, and personalised advisory. To stay competitive, accountancy firms must provide tech-driven, strategic services within tight budgets.

Over the past 18 months, AGN held workshops with members and Next Genners using a proprietary card game (Future Firms) to envision and design a “fantasy” full-service firm for the year 2030. Workshop teams were equipped with a \$2m fixed salary budget and 15 future-facing characters with varying capabilities, costs, and revenue projections to choose from.

This paper presents the most popular combination of roles chosen in the workshops. In each case, the paper explains the strategic value of the role, its revenue potential, and why it was chosen. Later in the paper, we also examine which roles weren’t chosen and why.

The Future Firm card game is an AGN proprietary workshop tool, but we are very happy to make the materials available for members to use locally in workshops, and planning exercises to spark their own internal discussion about the future shape of their firm. We are also happy to facilitate such a workshop and discussion if required.

This paper discusses the design and services of a future accountancy firm operating within a **\$2,000,000 salary budget.**



Take Action

- ✔ This is intended as a light hearted but thought-provoking article. Take a moment to consider future client service demands, and how technology may change the nature and variety of roles within a full-service accountancy firm.
- ✔ Reflect upon the choices that NextGenners and peer groups of members have proposed which represent a certain type of future. Are they right? What roles would you choose?

Potential Client Needs in 2030+

SMEs will encounter challenges such as global compliance, real-time financial insights, enhanced cybersecurity, and data-driven strategies. They will seek firms that offer automated compliance, risk management, advanced auditing, and strategic advisory using AI and data analytics.



AI-Driven Insights: Accountants will utilise AI for real-time dashboards and predictive analytics, providing insights into cash flow, market trends, and growth opportunities.



Cybersecurity and Data Protection: Accountants will need to offer cybersecurity advice, ensuring data protection and compliance with regulations.



Sustainability and ESG Reporting: Firms will assist clients in developing ESG strategies and compliance with carbon reporting regulations.



Digital Transformation: Accountants will guide SMEs in automating processes like invoicing and payroll, integrating AI and robotic process automation.



Risk Management: Using AI, accountants will simulate financial scenarios to help SMEs prepare for market disruptions.



Strategic Advisory: Accountants will provide strategic guidance for growth, mergers, and expansions using data-driven insights.

In 2030, SMEs will expect accountants to be proactive, tech-savvy advisors, providing AI analytics, cybersecurity, blockchain consulting, and sustainability support.

Strategic Role Inclusions (Within \$2 Million Salary Budget)

The following roles are included based on their potential to meet client needs and generate revenue while staying within the salary budget. These positions are aimed at Snr Manager/Director level, requiring trained teams to support their offerings.

Roles forecasted for the “Accountech” firm in 2030 include:



Sasha Zuckerberg

Audit Data Analyst

- Designs, specifies and installs client financial controls and accounting system software.
- Develop clients financial data analytics strategy ensuring they can produce highly accurate and timely reports that inform strategy and operations.
- Expert at using data mining techniques to reveal previously invisible financial trends.
- Assist with the implementation of clients data analytics program.
- Identify how to best apply data analytics in each phase of a clients internal audit process.
- Provide training and knowledge transfer for your team and your clients.
- Deep knowledge of domestic and international pharmaceuticals, logistics and retail businesses.

Est Revenue pa= \$750k
Est Cost pa = \$250k

1. Audit Data Analyst: Sasha Zuckerberg

- **Cost:** \$250k
- **Revenue:** \$750k
- **Rationale:** As AI and data analytics become central to auditing, the Audit Data Analyst will play a crucial role using data mining techniques to enhance audit accuracy, reveal trends, and drive better business decisions. This role aligns with the future need for data-driven insights, which are critical to SMEs.
- **Strategic Fit:** Provides essential data analytics capabilities for clients, transforming audits from static reports to dynamic, real-time analyses.
- **Impact:** This role delivers substantial revenue through enhanced audit services and modernised the audit process using AI-driven insights.

2. Tax Planning & Compliance Consultant: Irene Detail

- **Cost:** \$350k
- **Revenue:** \$1.1m
- **Rationale:** Tax regulations will become more complex and globalised, making this role critical for offering clients strategic tax planning, international compliance, and tax structure optimisation. SMEs will increasingly need to navigate complex tax landscapes to minimise liabilities.
- **Strategic Fit:** Key to addressing both local and international tax planning needs while helping clients optimise tax liabilities.
- **Impact:** With high revenue potential, this role directly helps



Irene Detail

Tax Planning
& Compliance
Consultant

- Tax planning to project future business tax liabilities as well as the solutions that will help clients avoid potential future tax pitfalls.
- Development of a tax strategy that considers investment and business incentives, tax credits, export incentives, income planning, green energy and hiring incentives.
- Determining the most tax effective structure for a clients business that takes advantage of tax opportunities and reliefs, optimum capital or revenue tax treatment.
- Reducing tax on business disposals while maximising relief on acquisitions.
- International tax planning and compliance for a multi jurisdictional business structure. Careful use of transfer pricing to mitigate tax liability.

Est Revenue pa= \$1.1m
Est Cost pa = \$350k

3. Cybersecurity Adviser: Bob Safe

- **Cost:** \$150k
- **Revenue:** \$500k
- **Rationale:** With the rise of cyber threats, cybersecurity services are essential for protecting client data and maintaining trust. This role focuses on providing cybersecurity policy development, incident response, and compliance, all of which are vital to SMEs as they digitise their financial operations.
- **Strategic Fit:** Directly addresses the growing cybersecurity risks faced by SMEs, ensuring long-term client retention and compliance.
- **Impact:** This role provides a steady revenue stream by helping clients avoid costly breaches and regulatory penalties, making it a core offering in the firm's portfolio.



Bob Safe

Cybersecurity Adviser

- Specialist in IT and cybersecurity advisory services.
- Can provide clients with security policy, procedures & program development.
- Security incident response and disaster recovery plans and strategies.
- Business continuity and business impact analysis reporting.
- Security and Privacy Compliance and regulatory compliance assessments.
- System Selection and Implementation and associated project management.
- Conducts current and future state analysis, software selection, system implementation and user training.

Est Revenue pa= \$500k

Est Cost pa = \$150k



Swampy Greenberg

ESG Consultant

- Helps entrepreneurial companies establish effective ESG and sustainability strategies.
- Works with clients to understand and report their materiality and prepare ESG or sustainability reports for shareholders, staff and investors.
- Mitigate Climate Risk/TCFD and prepare a GHG inventory and plan to decarbonise.
- Clients are also supported with their reporting requirements, with the numerous disclosure frameworks now mandatory across most regions of the world.
- Expert in raising sustainable finance, ESG or EHS Due Diligence, ESG linked discounts, securing green loans or bonds.

Est Revenue pa= \$600k

Est Cost pa = \$250k

4. ESG Consultant: Swampy Greenberg

- **Cost:** \$250k
- **Revenue:** \$600k
- **Rationale:** Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) concerns are growing. SMEs are inevitably affected by the requirements of their roles in the supply chains to larger organisations that are required to report ESG data. In addition, capital financing providers are requiring all companies adhere to ESG standards and thus ESG consulting is a significant audit, reporting, and consulting opportunity.
- **Impact:** ESG consulting is forecast to be a massive revenue earner for accountants as reporting carbon consumption, governance adherence, environmental compliance and approaches to sustainability, requires the same skills sets that accountants already possess.

5. AI-Powered Financial Auditor: Olivia Ledger

- **Cost:** \$350k
- **Revenue:** \$800k
- **Rationale:** AI-powered audits will revolutionise the audit process, providing faster, more accurate insights. Olivia Ledger integrates AI to automate data collection and deliver real-time audit insights, significantly improving audit efficiency and accuracy for SMEs.
- **Strategic Fit:** Essential for providing cutting-edge, AI-driven audit services that set the firm apart in a highly competitive market.
- **Impact:** By streamlining audits and enhancing accuracy, this role allows the firm to handle more clients while improving service quality, driving substantial revenue.



Olivia Ledger

AI-Powered Financial Auditor

- Conducts highly efficient audits using AI to automate data collection and analysis, reducing the time required for audit completion while increasing accuracy.
- Automated data collection and analysis and AI-driven audit workflow optimisation.
- Real-time financial reporting and insights.
- Collaborates with IT and data science teams to continuously improve the accuracy and reliability of AI audit tools.
- Conducts regular training sessions for the audit team to ensure they are proficient in using AI tools.
- Provides clients with AI-powered audit dashboards that offer real-time insights and visualisation.
- Advises clients on implementing AI within their own audit functions to enhance internal control systems.

Est Revenue pa= \$800k

Est Cost pa = \$350k



Nathan Riskshield

AI-Driven Risk & Assurance Manager

- Utilises AI to assess and manage business risks, providing clients with real-time risk analysis and mitigation strategies. Real-time risk monitoring and alerts.
- Develops AI algorithms that can predict risks based on real-time data, enabling proactive risk management.
- Works with client leadership to integrate AI risk tools into their broader enterprise risk management frameworks.
- Provides clients with AI-driven risk dashboards that offer comprehensive views of potential risks and their mitigations.
- Conducts AI-driven scenario planning exercises to help clients prepare for potential future risks.
- Training for client teams to enhance understanding of AI-driven risk management tools and techniques.

Est Revenue pa= \$800k+

Est Cost pa = \$400k

6. AI-Driven Risk & Assurance Manager: Nathan Riskshield

- **Cost:** \$400k
- **Revenue:** \$800k+
- **Rationale:** Risk management is a growing concern for SMEs, and this role uses AI to predict and mitigate business risks in real-time. Nathan Riskshield integrates AI tools into risk management frameworks, helping clients proactively address potential threats.
- **Strategic Fit:** Offers high-value, proactive risk management services that are critical for SMEs navigating volatile markets.
- **Impact:** This role generates high revenue by helping clients mitigate risks and avoid costly disruptions, making it a valuable component of the firm's service offerings.

Total Salary Costs and Revenue Potential (Inclusions):

Total Cost: \$1.85 million

Total Revenue Potential: \$4.55 million



Strategic Role Exclusions (Outside \$2 Million Salary Budget)

Given the limited salary budget, the following roles are excluded based on their niche focus, lower revenue potential, or redundancy with other included roles.



Barry Bitcoin

Blockchain NFT & eCommerce Specialist

- A Certified Cryptocurrency Expert™ (CCE) with expertise in the functioning of distributed ledger technology.
- Has the ability to develop and integrate applications across a range of crypto currency networks.
- Provides clients advice in safely structuring cryptocurrency transactions and the commercial use of NFT's, TGEs to SAFTs, DApps to airdrops, minting to mining, ERC-721 to ERC-1155.
- Smart (blockchain) contract drafting and deployment, and Smart contract verification to ensure contract integrity.
- Establishment of consumer and B2B crypto currency payment mechanisms.

Est Revenue pa= \$600k

Est Cost pa= \$275k

1. Blockchain NFT & eCommerce Specialist: Barry Bitcoin

- **Cost:** \$275k
- **Revenue:** \$600k
- **Rationale:** While blockchain and NFT services are growing, they remain niche areas not yet widely required by most SMEs. This role is more relevant to tech-savvy clients operating in specific industries, making it less critical for the broader SME client base.
- **Impact:** Excluding this role allows the firm to focus on more universally applicable services that meet the needs of a larger client base.



Sovereign Goldrich

Wealth Management and Family Office Consultant

- Manages the financial and investment affairs of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI's) - with a focus on 'entrepreneur wealth'.
- Combines personal wealth management with domestic and international tax planning.
- Skilled in succession planning and financial transition management.
- Long term strategic investment planning and asset portfolio management.
- Risk management and controls including policy review/approval and testing results (for example, cyber penetration tests).
- Insurance coverage and other mitigation.
- Prepares regular financial planning reports and forecasts.

Est Revenue pa= \$800k+

Est Cost pa = \$300k

2. Wealth Management and Family Office Consultant: Sovereign Goldrich

- **Cost:** \$300k
- **Revenue:** \$800k
- **Rationale:** Wealth management is highly specialised and, while valuable, may not align with the core services required by most SMEs. This service is typically sought by high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) rather than the average SME client.
- **Impact:** By excluding this role, the firm focuses on core advisory and compliance services that better match its primary client base of SMEs.

3. Operations and Supply Chain Specialist: Sheila Justintime

- **Cost:** \$260k
- **Revenue:** \$500k
- **Rationale:** Supply chain and operations management, while important, are more relevant to specific industries such as manufacturing and logistics. SMEs seeking these services may prefer to consult dedicated operational or supply chain firms.
- **Impact:** Excluding this role allows the firm to concentrate its resources on financial, compliance, and strategic services that deliver broader value to SMEs.



Sheila Justintime

Operations and Supply Chain Specialist

- Supply chain efficiency reviews and reporting.
- Identification of opportunities for automation and application of emerging technologies to suit the medium sized company.
- Full IT project planning, management and implementation.
- Outsourced monitoring and reporting of financial and departmental budgets.
- Reviewing working practices to ascertain where technology, AI and robotics could play a role.
- Reviewing and approving all equipment and hardware needs.
- Logistics planning and optimisation.
- Consultant for international supplier development, tackling trade, visa, tariffs and other challenges.

Est Revenue pa= \$500k+

Est Cost pa = 260k



Gary Pestle

Business Strategy Consultant

- Expert at guiding clients through a strategic planning process that reveals key trends, market forces and unexamined opportunities for growth.
- Help clients senior executives shake up the status quo and overcome barriers that stand in the way of renewal and growth.
- Expert in cultural transformation and change management.
- Skilled in research, data analysis and scenario planning aimed at optimising client investments and product portfolio planning.
- Expert in international business planning across a range of sectors in the medium sized business space.

Est Revenue pa= \$700k

Est Cost pa = \$300k

4. Business Strategy Consultant: Gary Pestle

- **Cost:** \$300k
- **Revenue:** \$700k
- **Rationale:** SMEs will increasingly need strategic advice to navigate complex markets and achieve growth. But it will become a requirement of many existing client facing roles to transition to a consulting offer – and the scope for a specialist will thus be limited.
- **Strategic Fit:** There may come a time where strategy consulting is a significant aspect to services offered that it warrants its own department – but this is likely to be a little further into the future.
- **Impact:** This does mean that our fantasy firm must be committed to training and equipping all its client facing team with an advisory mindset and a range of consulting skills in order to cover this role.

5. Human Capital Consultant: Miyer Belbin

- **Cost:** \$250k
- **Revenue:** \$500k-\$700k
- **Rationale:** Human capital consulting is important for large organisations but may not be a primary service needed by SMEs, which often manage recruitment internally or outsource it to specialised HR firms.
- **Impact:** Excluding this role allows the firm to allocate its budget toward services that have a more direct impact on client financial performance.



Miyer Belbin

Human Capital Consultant

- Advising on senior search, selection and assessment in the entrepreneurial space.
- Expert in targeted recruitment of key individuals, teams or departments.
- Massive network of talent and talent influencers. Big noise on social media in the recruitment sphere.
- Advises clients on board and team personality dynamics and integration.
- Qualified and highly reputable management coach and counsellor.
- Sharp focus on creating imaginative and attractive incentive packages to recruit the best and brightest into clients.

Est Revenue pa= \$500k-\$700k

Est Cost pa = \$250k



Max Compliance

Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management Officer

- Ensures the firm and its clients stay ahead of regulatory changes, utilising AI to predict and mitigate compliance risks, particularly in heavily regulated industries.
- AI-enhanced regulatory monitoring and predictive risk management and mitigation.
- Develops AI-driven compliance frameworks that adapt to new and emerging regulations.
- Leads cross-functional teams to integrate AI tools into compliance processes across the firm. Conducts risk assessments using AI to identify potential areas of non-compliance.
- Continuous compliance monitoring services using AI, ensures real-time alerts and reporting.
- Firm's liaison with regulatory bodies, ensuring that AI tools used in compliance are in line with legal standards.

Est Revenue pa= \$500k-\$700k

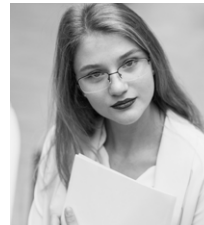
Est Cost pa = \$250k

6. Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management Officer: Max Compliance

- **Cost:** \$250k
- **Revenue:** \$500k-\$700k
- **Rationale:** While compliance is important, the inclusion of the AI-Driven Risk & Assurance Manager (Nathan Riskshield) already addresses risk management and compliance through AI tools. This reduces the need for a dedicated compliance officer.
- **Impact:** By excluding this role, the firm avoids redundancy, ensuring budget efficiency while still offering compliance and risk management services through Nathan Riskshield.

7. AI-Driven Tax Compliance Consultant: Emma Taxwise

- **Cost:** \$300k
- **Revenue:** \$800k+
- **Rationale:** While AI-driven tax compliance is valuable, the firm's Tax Planning & Compliance Consultant (Irene Detail) can cover both tax planning and compliance, making this role redundant.
- **Impact:** Excluding this role avoids redundancy, allowing the firm to focus on more diversified services within the same salary budget.



Emma Taxwise

AI-Driven Tax Compliance Consultant

- Specialise in using AI to automate tax compliance processes, ensuring timely and accurate tax filings while also providing strategic tax planning services.
- Automated tax compliance and filing and AI-driven tax strategy development.
- Utilises AI to analyse large datasets identifying tax-saving opportunities.
- Develops AI models to forecast future tax liabilities, helping clients to better plan finances. Customised AI-driven tax tools for clients with complex, multi-jurisdictional tax obligations.
- Trains clients' internal tax teams on using AI tools to enhance their compliance and planning processes.
- Continuously updates AI tax tools to adapt to changes in tax laws and regulations globally.

Est Revenue pa= \$800k+

Est Cost pa = \$300k

Revenue Maximisation Strategy

To maximise revenue, the firm will leverage a value-based pricing model, charging for the strategic value delivered through services such as AI-driven audits, proactive risk management, and comprehensive tax planning. Bundled service offerings will combine risk management with auditing or cybersecurity with tax planning, creating attractive packages for SMEs seeking holistic solutions. The use of AI and automation will allow the firm to increase efficiency, handle more clients, and generate sustained revenue growth.

Conclusion and helpful tools...

As with our fantasy firm "Accountech" - the future-facing full-service accountancy firm of 2030+ must be tech-driven and client-focused, offering services that meet the evolving needs of SMEs. By strategically selecting roles based on their ability to deliver significant value and revenue, the firm can operate within its \$2 million salary budget while generating \$4.55 million in revenue. Excluding niche or redundant roles allows the firm to concentrate on core services like AI-powered auditing, strategic tax planning, and cybersecurity, ensuring long-term growth and client satisfaction in the changing landscape of 2030.

- **AGN Advisory Migration Methodology** - For purposes of brevity, the above GBV skims across some quite heavyweight strategic issues that need to be considered in granularity. The AGN Advisory Migration Methodology and Diagnostic tool is an ideal starting point to help figure out how to tackle the transition from compliance to advisory that can be afforded by the productivity gains available through adoption of prevailing technologies.
- **The AGN Digital Maturity Diagnostic** provides a way of obtaining a high-level review of where your firm is on that digital and technology journey. Are you at Base Camp Zero, or are you a Digital Trailblazer? The free online diagnostic will produce a customised report based on your inputs, and if a further more detailed review is required this can also be facilitated by one of AGN's technology consulting members.
- If you're on the journey to advisory already, you can find some of the classic consulting tools and methodologies in the **AGN Advisory Resource Centre**. The ARC houses a number of the most popular consulting models but also provides handy client worksheets and workshopping instructions with each one.



Contact:

For further information on this topic or anything relating to the AGN International association of accounting and advisory firms, or to become an AGN member, please email your closest AGN Regional Director (see below) or go direct to www.agn.org.

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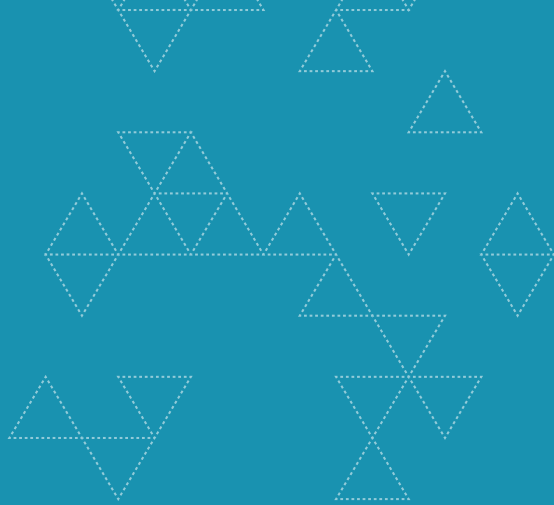
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