

# WHY ARE ACCOUNTANTS POWERFUL, YET POWERLESS?

**The root cause is both shocking and disturbing!**

**A ~~Whitepaper~~ BLACK and WHITE Paper  
by the Founders of AccountantsWorld  
and the “Power Accountant” Movement**

Dear Accounting Professional:

This report reveals the troubling realities facing the accounting profession.

We call it a “black and white” paper for one simple reason: it presents—in black and white—a shocking reality of the profession, and it shows how the reality weakens the profession and hurts your own practice every single day.

We felt it was our duty to write this report. As the founders of the 120,000-member AccountantsWorld community and the “Power Accountant” movement, we are dedicated to the professional advancement of accountants. We find it troublesome that...

**Accountants are so powerful that mega-corporations court *us*.  
And yet. . . we can’t seem to overcome the serious problems  
undermining the profession and our practices.**

A crucial question is—how can we address and finally solve those problems?

This hot topic is posed to create intense constructive and beneficial debate. We want you to participate and express your views. None of us is as smart as all of us. None of us is as powerful alone as we are together. Remember: this affects your livelihood.

Thank you.

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## About the Authors



*The husband and wife team of Dr. Chandra Bhansali and Sharada Bhansali, co-founders of AccountantsWorld, are 25-year veterans of the accounting profession. They are best known for being leading innovators in the profession. Dr. Bhansali has been named one of the “100 Most Influential People in Accounting” by Accounting Today ten years running. In 2012, Sharada Bhansali was named one of the “25 Most Powerful Women in Accounting” by CPA Practice Advisor.*

*After they sold their thriving tax software business to Thomson Reuters in 2003, to the surprise of their family, friends and thousands of accountants they did not retire. Instead they started working even harder! What was the passion that made them do something so unusual?*

*This black and white paper provides the answer to this and the more crucial question posed above.*

# **WE ACCOUNTANTS ARE POWERFUL, YET POWERLESS.**

## **Make no mistake: Accountants are powerful.**

That's why mega-corporations as well as smaller companies serving small businesses—Intuit, Sage, Xero, Paychex, ADP, HP, Dell, and Microsoft—all woo accountants. These companies constantly ask you to give them access to your clients. They want to sell more of their products by leveraging your trusted client relationships. *And you have not disappointed them.*

For example, Intuit founder Scott Cook readily acknowledges that accountants have been the most significant contributor to his company's growth. Both ADP's small business payroll service division and Paychex generate over one third of their revenues via client referrals from accountants.

In a nutshell, accountants like you continue helping major corporations like them make billions of dollars by allowing them to tap into your valuable trusted client relationships.

Indeed, accountants do have tremendous power.

## **And yet accountants are powerless.**

The other day I visited a CPA friend in his office. When I asked him how his practice was doing, he told me: "Chandra, you may not believe it, but the reality is that I don't run my accounting practice."

Shocked, I asked: "Then who does?"

He pointed to a copy of the most widely used G/L program and said: "This program and my clients do! Clients are influenced by seductive marketing and they go and buy this software. Most don't know a thing about accounting so they make bookkeeping messes. Meanwhile, I'm on the sidelines waiting for their messes to come to me. And I have to spend a good amount of time to fix the mess before I can even start my professional work. This is not why I became an accountant. I simply can't do what I really want—to offer my clients the help they need in managing their cash flow and business finances."

I could clearly sense the frustration, pain, and helplessness on his face. And worse, this is the same story for most accountants today. Clients make it harder for us to do client accounting. And we accept it.

*Accountants are powerless.*

It may sound like a contradiction that we can be *both* powerful and powerless. But that's the reality of the accounting profession today.

Accounting is a proud profession with a rich heritage, and client accounting is our bread-and-butter service, our passion, and our expertise. Yet the soul of accountancy has been compromised. We should have full control over the way we perform client accounting. But we don't! A powerful external force—the accounting software that clients use and that was basically designed to diminish accountants' relevance—undermines our professional status and forces us to perform client accounting by "workarounds." This poses huge problems for us.

We can't imagine any accountant being happy with this situation. Yet until now, accountants have been powerless to do anything about it. That's the sad irony of the profession today.

And that's not all...

### **Lost revenue and lost control.**

The harsh reality of the accounting profession is that competing forces and mega-corporations have aggressively invaded our core services—tax, accounting, and payroll—all of which were once fully controlled by accountants, and have advanced deeply into our territory.

Slowly and steadily the storefront tax franchises took away a big chunk of the tax preparation business from qualified accountants, enrolled agents, and CPA's. Accountants have lost a big bite of tax preparation business worth \$2-3 billion to them and do-it-yourself tax software.

Payroll service bureaus have stripped away most of the payroll services business from accountants.

And then in the 1980's accountants were assaulted with the notorious "Fire your Accountant" campaign. (If you don't know what that was, ask your peers who have been in public practice for over 20 years. They will remember it vividly.) Accountants lost again. Today, accountants don't control client accounting; off-the-shelf accounting software does. Software whose rules you now play by, in a service which you ought to fully control. And this software is proudly marketed as "client-centric."

*This is the reality and denying it will not change it.*

Think about the control we have lost in these core small business services—tax, accounting, and payroll—and how much it has cost us: literally billions of dollars in lost fees.

### **And we've lost something else that's very precious for us.**

Referring our clients to a software company or a service bureau and letting them make billions of dollars from our trusted client relationships seemed like an innocuous act to most accountants. "So what if they're making big bucks from our client relationships? We have nothing to lose." That assumption was a big mistake. And the irony is that most accountants are unaware of this fact.

We constantly advise our clients to **guard their assets fiercely**. *And yet we freely and generously give away control of our own most precious business asset—our client relationships—to others. We forget that by compromising our client relationships, we're compromising our practice and our profession.*

### **YOU have created your own competitor!**

The business of these companies to whom you refer your clients is to sell their products and services—to your clients. *Your* clients are *their* bread-and-butter. You have become nothing more than a marketing conduit for them. The day you no longer refer your clients to them is the day you become nobody to them.

*These corporations will do anything and everything to hold on to your clients. And that's a real problem for accountants.* In situations when their interest conflicts with yours, they will do what any businesses would—guard their interests at your cost. We've all seen it happen time and time again.

To dominate the accounting software marketplace, Intuit launched its notorious “Fire Your Accountant” campaign. It hurt accountants, but did they care? No.

And today, to lead the payroll services market, they are competing aggressively against thousands of accountants who offer payroll services. This is also hurting accountants. Does Intuit care? No way!

Will ADP or Paychex stop marketing to your clients when you start offering payroll services?

### **Not a chance!**

They will fight tooth and nail to retain control of your clients. And they will sell additional products and services to your clients to strengthen their grip and weaken your control over your clients.

Sure, what Intuit and other mega-corporations are doing is great for *their* shareholders. They must do what’s good for their shareholders. The problem for accountants is that this strategy is highly damaging—and insulting—to the accounting profession. In return for the tremendous contributions accountants have made to these corporations’ growth and astronomical market cap, *they are causing accountants to suffer financial losses as well as loss of relevancy.*

### **The bottom line:**

*Accountants must act to reverse the damage done to their practices.*

You understand this. You hate cleaning up your clients’ bookkeeping messes. You want to get back in the driver’s seat and have full control of client accounting. You understand how important it is that you regain control of your client relationships and strengthen them.

The problem is: you don’t know how to make it happen. But fortunately, there is a way.

### **Accountants have the power to take charge.**

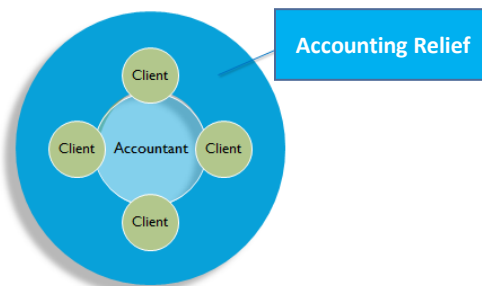
*Now you can regain control of client accounting, strengthen your trusted client relationships, raise your relevance, and feel the pride.*

You must be wondering how? It’s simple.

Intuit turned accounting upside-down about two decades ago with their disruptive “client-centric” model by taking advantage of the then-revolutionary PC technology.

AccountantsWorld is putting accounting back on its feet with our energizing “**Accountant-Centric**” model, using the unprecedented power of today’s revolutionary *cloud technology*.

*The Accountant-Centric model puts you back at the center of accounting, turns YOU into a Power Accountant, raises YOUR prominence, and gives YOU the power to fight back!*



*The Accountant-Centric model lets you work collaboratively with your clients while you remain in full command. You act as coach, project leader, and advisor. This simple Accountant-Centric model has completely transformed accounting. YOU work more closely with your clients than ever before.*

**The Cloud gives us the power  
we never had before.**

The Cloud has forever changed the landscape of client services by putting more power in accountants' hands. Let's look at an example of how the Internet puts you in full control of the accounting process.

*Imagine having a unified, web-based accounting system that includes everything you need for your professional practice—write-up, trial balance, and financial reporting, AND it also includes everything your clients need—a comprehensive accounting system with A/R, A/P, bank reconciliation, job costing, inventory, and more. **It's no surprise that we call this system Accounting Relief.***

Imagine also that you can customize the client system for each client based on their individual needs and abilities. If some of your clients don't know a thing about accounting, you customize their system so that all they see is one screen for writing checks and another for entering cash receipts. If you have clients with good bookkeepers on staff, you may give them access to A/R, A/P, bank reconciliation, and more. You can literally create hundreds of different versions for hundreds of different clients, and yet you work with one core system for your professional work.

Clients perform their part. Then using the very same database, you perform your part. Everything flows like clockwork, the way any good project should. You are the coach. You are the project leader. And now you are:

**Back in the driver's seat!**

Contrast this to the current model of accounting, which is *client-centric*. In client-centric accounting, the accounting software companies give your clients center stage. Those client-centric solutions create a barrier between you and your clients. But Accounting Relief is *Accountant-Centric*—it puts YOU center stage and becomes the binding force for you and your clients.

Imagine the miracles this *Accountant-Centric* solution can bring to your practice:

- Client errors diminish drastically, because you now control what clients can do based on their needs and accounting skills. You eliminate problems before they happen. You protect clients from themselves.
- By customizing the system for each client, you make accounting so much easier for your clients that they'll **thank** you for it.
- You'll eliminate the cumbersome exercise of getting data from your clients' accounting systems. That's because there are no file transfers in the web-based Accountant-Centric Accounting Relief.
- You and your clients can work from anywhere, at any time—your office, home, or any location you have an Internet connection. What a convenience!
- You and your clients never have to worry about the loss of critical accounting data due to virus attacks or hard disk crashes.

- Your staff can perform bookkeeping right from your office, eliminating all the cost and hassle of travelling to client locations.
- By eliminating all the inefficiencies in client accounting, you make accounting highly efficient and a LOT more profitable.
- *Last but not least, since everything is in real time, you can help clients manage their cash flow and business finances more effectively. That's what your clients want. That's why they hired you in the first place. That's the real value-added advantage that makes you a true business advisor to your clients.*

### **Accountant-Centric is also client-friendly**

Accounting Relief offers your clients significant benefits as well. For the first time, clients can get the professional advice from you they have been seeking for managing their cash flow and business finances.

Important too: Accounting Relief is “inclusive,” not exclusive. While most clients will benefit from working collaboratively with you using the Accounting Relief system you provide them, there will always be some clients whose needs may be better served with other accounting systems. Those clients can continue using those systems and you can easily import their data into Accounting Relief to perform your work.

### **We've Invested Millions so You Can Take Back Control of Your Practice**

We've been serving the accounting profession for the last 28 years. Years ago, we were a very successful tax software business.

Working closely with thousands of accountants, we learned how accountants were being used by the mega corporations, but we could not do anything about it.

Then in the beginning of the last decade we made a big discovery—the Internet has the power to transform the accounting profession.

We jumped on this unprecedented opportunity to give accountants the break they desperately needed.

*We sold our highly profitable tax software business and invested the proceeds to create the **cloud-based Accountant-Centric** model we've been talking about.*

Our highly talented and committed team stepped up to the plate. We developed the first website builder to let accountants create their own websites in a matter of minutes. Then we launched the first client portal and document management system.

The first major break was when we found a way to give accountants the same processing power that helped payroll service bureaus dominate the payroll services. For the first time, using our Accountant-Centric **Payroll Relief**, accountants could compete equally with the service bureaus and make payroll processing a highly profitable, no-hassle service.

And the most thrilling moment of all was when we realized that by using this unprecedented power of the Internet, we could reverse all the damage that Intuit's client-centric model had inflicted on the accounting profession, and help the profession regain its glory days.

That's how the first-ever Accountant-Centric accounting system was born. It is the **Accounting Relief** solution that we just discussed.

And now we have a complete suite of 8 cloud-based Accountant-Centric solutions that include everything you need for your practice, minus a tax program—and you know why. (Nevertheless, we interface with all major tax programs.) *All 8 solutions are available as our fully integrated **Power Practice System**.*

**Accounting Relief®.** The Accountant-Centric system explained above.

**Payroll Relief®.** The first cloud-based payroll system created exclusively for accountants. It makes payroll processing faster, easier, and more profitable than you ever thought possible.

**Website Relief.** Your fully customizable website. Website Relief is an effective marketing channel, a firm portal, and the foundation for building your online practice.

**CyberCabinet.** A document management system that lets you organize and store your documents online for easy access from anywhere at any time. You can also give your clients 24 x7 access to their tax returns, financials, reports, payroll forms, and other documents.

**After-the-Fact Payroll.** An exceptionally comprehensive and robust system that supports payroll compliance for federal and all states.

**Gold Directory Listing.** Promote your firm on every major search engine to help you get new clients. Next to client referrals, it's the best way to get new clients.

**Practice Relief.** This time-and-billing and practice management system makes tracking time, getting paid on time, and efficiently managing your practice a breeze.

**PFP Relief.** Helps you give your clients a clear picture of their financial situation and take the right steps to manage their personal finances.

### **How Much Does the Power Practice System Cost?**

*Very little. At about \$5 per day for unlimited use of all 8 solutions within your entire firm for all your clients for the first year, the Power Practice System is simply an unprecedented value.\**

Our simple commitment: we'll never let price get in the way of your genuine passion to become a Power Accountant.

We make your investment in the Power Practice System absolutely risk-free, with an unheard of Money-Back Guarantee. Ask your Practice Development Consultant about it.

\*Some restrictions apply, so please check with your Practice Development Consultant.

### **The Power Practice Suite Makes You a Power Accountant!**

With the Power Practice System, you have everything in your arsenal to fight the competing forces and mega-corporations and regain control of two of your core services—accounting and payroll. The Power Practice System turns you into a Power Accountant.

- The Accountant-Centric paradigm puts you back at the center of client accounting, so you can eliminate the problems you currently face and perform your accounting engagements precisely the way you want... not the way dictated by a program designed to diminish your role.
- This transformation makes client accounting more efficient, rewarding, and profitable.
- Like thousands of your peers, you can offer highly profitable payroll services without any compliance headaches and add a perpetual, perennial new revenue stream to your practice.
- By working collaboratively with your clients you create a stronger bond with them. This increases client retention, helps you generate more business, and makes it harder for the mega-corporations and competing forces to lure your clients away.
- You can now offer your clients the value-added services they want and need—like becoming their virtual CFO—and make a positive impact on their businesses.
- Last but not least, as a collective impact of all the above, you raise your relevance to your clients, make your practice more rewarding, and feel the pride of being a Power Accountant.

And there's still more . . . .

### **Grow Your Practice By 30%, 40% or Even 50%!**

That's the reality according to the article, "From Write-Up to Right Profitable" in the April 2013 issue of *Journal of Accountancy*. It talks about how the Internet has made Client Accounting Services (CAS) highly profitable and shows how CPA firms have turned CAS into highly profitable, high-fee engagements. Firms are charging \$1,000 to \$8,000 per month for CAS.

The good news is many of your clients, who are spending tens of thousands of dollars on accounting departments that are grossly underutilized or inept, would love to outsource their accounting to you.

*Using the tremendous power of the solutions included in the Power Practice System, your firm can perform the same work for those clients 2-3 times faster and far more efficiently.* That means you can save your clients a significant amount of money while adding high-value, high-margin services to your portfolio. These services may include general accounting, bill payment, budgeting and forecasting, reporting and analytics, tax administration, and payroll.

And for many of your clients, you may become their virtual CFO. Your clients get the service they desperately need but previously could not afford, and you make your time more valuable—something that you always wished for but could not accomplish.

### **Our 100% Commitment is Just to Accountants.**

*For over 25 years our unwavering commitment has been to accountants and only accountants.*

As you must have figured out by now, our goal is to make accountants more successful. This means we succeed only when you succeed, and that's why it is imperative that we put your interests ahead of ours. It's that simple. No one else can make this kind of commitment.

To fulfill that commitment, we offer a lot more than just an accounting system; we offer a complete suite of integrated Accountant-Centric solutions, resources, and training. That's how we help you revamp *every*

*aspect* of your practice—marketing, managing, and growing your practice; enhancing client services; and strengthening your client relationships—so you become more successful.

**And unlike others, we never sell any product or service directly to your clients or compete with you.**

That means you retain 100% control of your client relationships while we work with you to help you strengthen those relationships.

*Our mission is to make accounting practices more rewarding and raise the prominence and relevance of the noble profession of accounting—just the way you want to see your practice and the profession.*

### **Others Have 0% Commitment to Accountants**

Sure, there are many cloud-based accounting solutions—QuickBooks Online, Xero, NetSuite, Intacct, etc. They are all good programs, *but it is important to know that every one of them is client-centric, just like QuickBooks desktop, and NOT Accountant-Centric, like Accounting Relief.* They certainly eliminate some of the challenges you face with QuickBooks, but they are all based on the same premise as QuickBooks: “Small businesses, do your accounting yourself.”

These client-centric solutions—which are sold with the hype that by using them small businesses can manage their business finances themselves with minimal help from accountants—diminish accountants’ relevance by their basic nature.

Dig into the websites of the solution providers that are wooing you. Research what they stand for. You won’t find any reference to making your accounting practice more rewarding or making the profession more relevant. Their only focus is how you can become their effective marketing channel.

That’s in total contrast to the unwavering commitment we make to you—to make your practice more rewarding and the profession more relevant!

*Think about it. You’re choosing a business partner whose services will be so crucial to your practice. How much value should a judicious accountant like yourself place on the single-minded commitment we’re making to you?*

### **We Put Our Full Support Behind You!**

We aren’t like the others. We will do everything possible to help you succeed in becoming a Power Accountant.

- You’ll receive **free** customized training from our specialists to help you make the most of our solutions. *They will help you migrate accounting data from the systems your clients currently use.*
- You’ll get **unlimited free** support from our support team, most of whom are CPA’s or accountants.
- You’ll have access to the Power Accountant community, where other Power Accountants discuss critical issues facing the profession, provide peer support, and discuss best practices. The collaborative power of like-minded, passionate accountants gives accountants like you the strength to prevail.

The most powerful Accountant-Centric solutions and unprecedented support will guarantee your success. With all the support you’ll get, becoming a Power Practice Accountant is easy, absolutely risk-free, and the most important thing you could ever do for your practice.

**But There's One Caveat.  
You Must Act Now!**

**Here's why.**

Look around. You've seen Intuit's heavy marketing blitz pushing small businesses to QuickBooks Online like there is no tomorrow. They claim to already have over one million users on QuickBooks Online. If you don't act now, then by the time you wake up, most of your clients will have already migrated to QuickBooks Online, and you'll lose your only chance to regain control of client accounting and make your accounting practice more rewarding. At the rate Intuit is accelerating the pace of its efforts to migrate its QuickBooks desktop users to QuickBooks Online, there is only a small window of opportunity for you and it's closing fast.

You know there's no denying the fact that sooner or later you'll be in the Cloud, which means you have only two choices:

1. Move to the Cloud proactively and in a timely manner, so you become a Power Accountant and reap the most rewards of the migration; or
2. Be pushed into the Cloud, just like those accountants who dragged their feet and were pushed to Windows from DOS. If you wait until there is no other option, your migration to the cloud will be more painful and less rewarding for you. And chances are your clients and a piece of software will continue to run your accounting practice, as they do now.

We can't imagine any passionate accountant like you choosing that second option!

**Because time is of the essence, you must act now.**

We know you must have many unanswered questions and our Practice Development Consultants will answer them all during the overview of the Power Practice System with you.

But there is an important question that we'd like to answer now.

**“How do I bring my  
clients on board?”**

Since QuickBooks has been a barrier between accountants and their clients for so long, many accountants don't know how to break that barrier. *The good news is you don't have to break the barrier; Intuit will do it for you. Just be smart and use Intuit's weight against them.*

Intuit is using aggressive tactics to move QuickBooks desktop users to QuickBooks Online, and your clients know they will not be able to stay in their comfort zone much longer. They will have to learn a new system, whether it is QuickBooks Online or something else.

See, Intuit is doing most of your work by creating the urgency for your clients to move to the Cloud. All you have to do is show your clients why it makes sense for them to move to Accounting Relief with you and reap all those benefits rather than migrating to QuickBooks Online and getting very little benefit.

It simply boils down to letting your clients know that by working closely with them, you can now offer them better service and advice on managing their business finances and cash flow. . We provide you all the help you need—videos, client brochures, letters, e-mails, and contents on your website—all designed to articulate and communicate this point simply and effectively. The key to success is being proactive.

So don't worry about client collaboration in the first phase. Start using Accounting Relief for the professional work performed by your firm, including after-the-fact write-up, bookkeeping, trial balance, and preparation of financial statements.

Then in the second phase, use the strategy we just outlined to prep your clients for collaboration. The reality is bringing clients along is easy and enjoyable. Today, your peers are working closely together with tens of thousands of clients on Accounting Relief. This system has revamped their practices and helped them better serve their clients. And there is no reason why you can't accomplish the same.

You know your clients will have to move to a new accounting system eventually. Give them a reason to move to a system that will let them work closely with their trusted advisor - YOU.

### **Don't Miss Your Once-in-a-Decade Opportunity!**

The Accountant-Centric model allows you to regain full control over your practice and your client relationships. You'll easily overcome the challenges you currently face in your practice and create new opportunities. By strengthening your trusted client relationships, you'll be in a commanding position to benefit yourself and your clients. And you'll prevent the mega-corporations from misusing your client relationships for their own benefit, diminishing your importance, and hurting your practice.

Becoming a Power Accountant will raise your bottom line and make your practice more rewarding and relevant. You'll feel the pride like never before.

An opportunity like this one is unlikely to knock on your door again for at least another decade or two, until the next revolutionary technology emerges.

Remember it does not require any extra effort to make your practice bigger and better. You know your migration to the cloud is inevitable. *It's all about making the right choices at the right time.*

### **The Final Question**

You're a judicious accountant and you're genuinely passionate about your practice, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this Black and White paper. Your passion demands that you break the status-quo and seek new ways to revamp your practice. After reading the facts presented in this Black-and-White paper, what would a forward-thinking accountant like yourself do? Do nothing? Or learn more about the Accountant-Centric solutions and the Power Accountant movement.

**To Learn About our Accountant-Centric Solutions  
and how to become a Power Accountant:**

Visit [www.AccountantsWorld.com](http://www.AccountantsWorld.com)

***or call 888.999.1366 to speak with one of our Practice Development Consultants.***