



# Global Outreach Summit

Opportunities for Mid-Sized CA Firms in Accounting Outsourcing & Advisory Services

**Organised by:** Committee For Development of International Trade, Services & WTO

**Hosted by:** Pune Branch of WIRC of ICAI

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# Current Challenges Faced by Mid-Sized CA Firms



## Talent Shortage

Acute difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified articles and experienced staff, impacting service delivery capacity



## Regulatory Complexity

Rapidly evolving government regulations, tax policies, and compliance requirements demanding constant upskilling



## Audit Pressure

Tax audit limit enhancements and statutory audit relaxations compressing traditional revenue streams



## Infrastructure Costs

Significant capital expenditure required for establishing full-scale GCC operations with modern technology



## Market Competition

Online platforms offering GST, incorporation, audit, and ITR services at aggressive low-cost pricing models

# Why This Opportunity Has Emerged Now

01

## **Cost Efficiency Focus**

Global clients actively seeking 50-70% cost savings through strategic outsourcing to India-based professional firms

03

## **Partner Demand Surge**

International accounting firms and businesses actively seeking reliable, qualified Indian outsourcing partners

05

## **India's Competitive Edge**

Unmatched combination of cost-effectiveness, English proficiency, technical qualifications, and time zone advantages

02

## **Remote Model Acceptance**

Outsourced and remote working models now mainstream post-pandemic, removing geographical barriers to service delivery

04

## **Mid-Sized Firm Sweet Spot**

Optimal balance of competitive cost structure, technical expertise, and operational agility for global clients





# Core Services & Areas of Operations

## Foundational Services

- Book keeping in Quick Books, Sage, Xero, Zoho Books
- Bank and credit card reconciliation services
- Accounts Receivable / Accounts Payables (AR/AP) management
- Payroll processing and compliance
- Tax preparation support for international jurisdictions
- VAT / GST compliance and advisory
- Audit readiness support for CPAs during peak season

## High-Value Advisory

Strategic offerings that command premium positioning:

- Management reporting and analytics
- Cash flow forecasting and scenario planning
- Budgeting and variance analysis
- **Virtual CFO services** providing strategic financial leadership to growing businesses

# UAE Market: Specific Services from Our Experience

1

## UAE-Approved Accounting

Comprehensive book keeping and financial accounting using government-approved software platforms compliant with local regulations

2

## VAT Services

End-to-end VAT registrations, de-registrations, quarterly return filings, and compliance management for UAE businesses

3

## Corporate Tax

Corporate Tax registrations, de-registrations, and annual return filing services aligned with new UAE tax framework

4

## Financial Statements

Preparation of financial statements and comprehensive audit support services for external auditors and stakeholders

5

## Business Setup

Complete business setup services including company formation, licensing, and regulatory compliance advisory

# USA Market: Specific Services from Our Experience

- **Core Accounting**

Full-service book keeping and accounting using QuickBooks Online (QBO) and Zoho Books platforms

- **Form 1099 Services**

Preparation and e-filing of 1099 forms (equivalent to Indian TDS returns) for contractors and professionals

- **Individual Tax Returns**

Form 1040 preparation for simple salary cases and Non-Resident (NR) status filings

- **Partnership Returns**

Form 1065 partnership tax return preparation and K-1 distribution management

- **FBAR Compliance**

Foreign Bank Account Reporting (FBAR) filing for Indian nationals maintaining overseas financial assets

☐ Peak Season Timeline **January - March**: High-volume tax return preparation season **January**: Concentrated 1099 form filing period

Strategic resource planning essential during these critical months





# Technology & Tools: Cost-Effective Solutions

## UAE Accounting & Compliances

### Tally Prime

Comprehensive accounting with UAE localization features

### QuickBooks Online

Cloud-based platform with multi-currency support

### Zoho Books

Integrated accounting suite with collaboration tools

### FTA Portal

Official compliance portal for VAT and Corporate Tax

## USA Tax & Returns

### TaxAct & H&R Block

Professional tax preparation for Form 1040 returns

### TurboTax & SprinTax

Specialized software for 1040-NR non-resident returns

### 1099 Platforms

1099Pro, Tax1099 & e-File-360 for contractor reporting

## Key Strategic Advantage

All recommended tools feature robust import/export capabilities, enabling seamless switching between software platforms without risk of data loss or business disruption





# Service Portfolio Matrix

## Tier 1 to Tier 4 Service Delivery Model

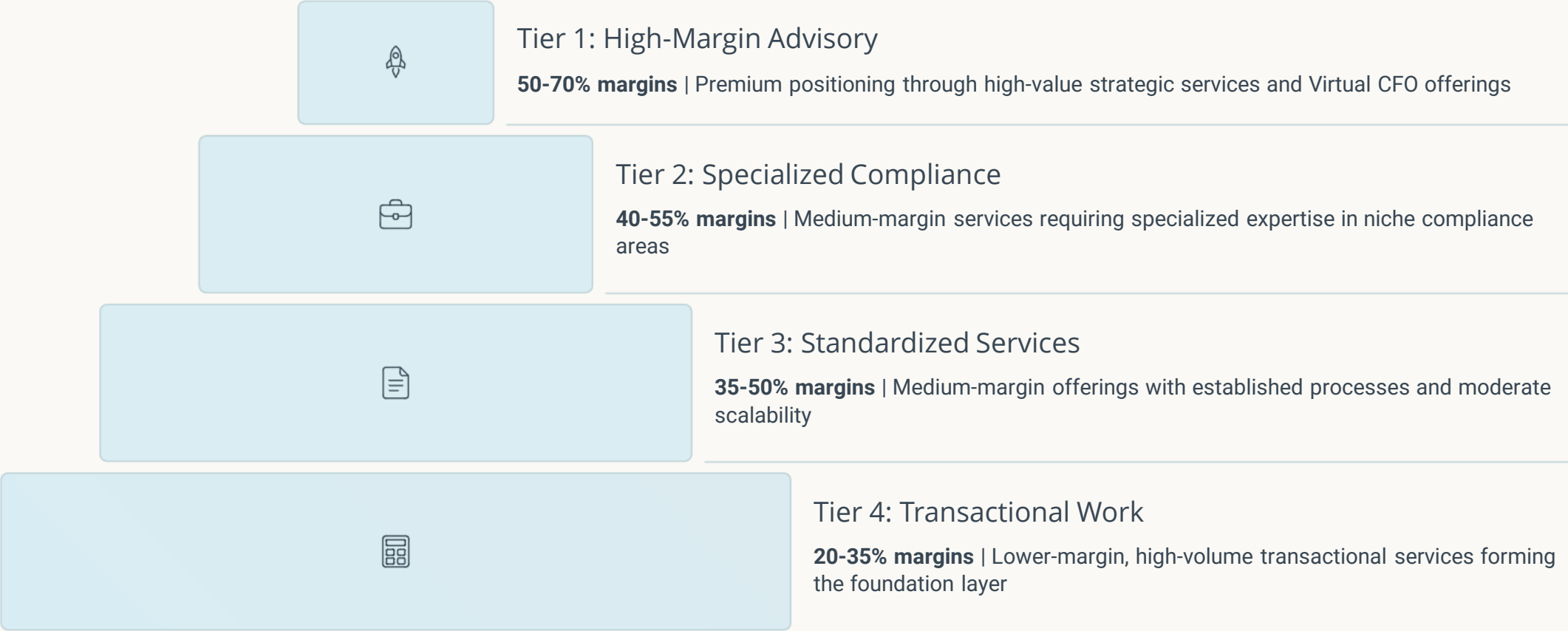
### Margin & Effort Strategy for Mid-Sized Accounting Firms

A structured approach to optimizing profitability by strategically positioning services across four distinct tiers based on value delivery, margin potential, and resource requirements



# Four-Tier Service Delivery Framework

Strategic positioning of services based on profitability, scalability, and competitive differentiation



# Tier 1: High-Margin Advisory Services

## Premium Positioning: 50-70% Margin Potential

### Key Service Offerings



#### Virtual CFO Services

Strategic financial leadership and business advisory on retainer basis



#### Monthly Board Packs

Executive-level financial reporting and strategic insights



#### Cash Flow Projections

Forward-looking financial modeling and scenario planning



#### M&A Due Diligence


Transaction support and financial analysis preparation

- ❏ Real-World Example **Client:** UK-based e-commerce startup expanding to USA market **Team Structure:** 1 senior CA + 2 junior associates
- Deliverables:** Market entry strategy, financial projections, regulatory roadmap, ongoing CFO support

### Why High Margin?

The premium positioning is justified through a strategic combination of factors:

- **Senior CA involvement:** Partner-level expertise and oversight
- **Templated approach:** Leveraging proven frameworks for efficiency
- **Annual retainer model:** Recurring revenue with predictable cash flows
- **Strategic value delivery:** High-impact decision support for clients



## Tier 2: Specialized Compliance Services

Specialized compliance forms the backbone of sustainable global practice—combining technical expertise with scalable delivery models. Tier 2 services deliver strong margins (40-55%) through repeatable seasonal workflows handled by trained accountants with senior oversight.

### Core Service Portfolio

- US 1040/1065 tax returns
- UAE Corporate Tax compliance
- VAT/GST filing & advisory
- Audit support for CPA firms
- Cross-border tax documentation

### Scalability Model

Trained accountants handle 50-60% of workload independently, with senior CA review ensuring quality. Seasonal peaks are managed through structured workflows and templates.

**Real Example:** 20 US 1040 returns processed during March peak season with 45% margin.

# Tier 2 in Action: US Tax Season

## Peak Workload

20 US 1040 returns in March

50-100 Form 1099s by January deadline

Multiple state returns for complex clients

## Team Structure

Trained accountants: 50-60% of work

Senior CA review: Quality assurance & complex cases

Seasonal scaling flexibility

## Revenue Model

Per-return pricing or seasonal engagement

40-55% gross margin

Predictable seasonal revenue patterns



**Strategic Advantage:** Seasonal predictability enables efficient resource planning and capacity utilization across multiple clients simultaneously.



# Tier 3: Standardized Monthly Services

## Recurring Revenue Foundation

Tier 3 services provide the stable cash flow foundation for practice growth. Standardized templates and cloud platforms enable efficient delivery for SME clients with 20-100 employees.

### Service Components

- Monthly bookkeeping & reconciliation
- Management reporting packages
- P&L and Balance Sheet preparation
- Payroll processing & HR compliance
- KPI dashboards & variance analysis

**Target Margin:** 35-50% with recurring monthly revenue model



QuickBooks Online

Primary platform for US-based SME clients



Xero

Preferred for UK/Australia markets



Zoho Books

Cost-effective for Indian SMEs



# Tier 4: High-Volume Transactional Work

"Price-competitive with BPOs. Strategic decision required—avoid unless building scale justifies infrastructure investment."

## Service Scope


- Data entry & document processing
- Bank & credit card reconciliation
- Basic accounts payable processing
- Invoice processing workflows

## Margin Reality

**Expected margin:** 20-35%

Requires significant volume to justify dedicated infrastructure and systems investment.

**Competitive landscape:** Direct competition with specialized BPO providers operating at scale.

 **Strategic Recommendation:** Consider Tier 4 services only when building volume-based business model with 50+ concurrent clients to achieve competitive pricing while maintaining margins.





# Margin vs. Effort Positioning Framework

Understanding the margin-to-effort relationship across service tiers enables strategic portfolio decisions that maximize profitability while managing resource allocation effectively.

<div>1</div> <div>Tier 1: Premium Advisory</div> <div>Margin: 50-70%</div> <div>Effort Profile: High upfront investment in client understanding, strategy development, and relationship building</div> <div>Timeline: 30-60 days implementation</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Tier 2: Specialized Compliance</div> <div>Margin: 40-55%</div> <div>Effort Profile: Seasonal peaks require capacity planning; repeatable workflows enable efficiency</div> <div>Timeline: 10-20 days onboarding</div>
<div>3</div> <div>Tier 3: Standardized Services</div> <div>Margin: 35-50%</div> <div>Effort Profile: Recurring monthly delivery with standardized templates and cloud platforms</div> <div>Timeline: 5-10 days setup</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Tier 4: High-Volume Transactional</div> <div>Margin: 20-35%</div> <div>Effort Profile: High volume required to justify infrastructure; price-sensitive market</div> <div>Timeline: 3-5 days per client</div>

# Resource Allocation Strategy by Tier

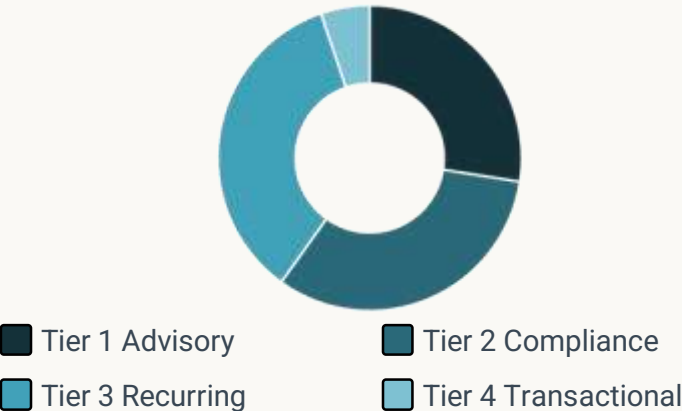
Optimal resource deployment matches seniority levels to service complexity, ensuring quality delivery while maximizing team utilization and profitability across the service portfolio.

Tier	Seniority Mix	Delivery Model	Target Client Profile
Tier 1	80% senior 20% junior	Retainer-based advisory	High-growth startups, expansion-stage companies
Tier 2	40% senior 60% junior	Project + seasonal engagement	US/UAE tax compliance clients
Tier 3	20% senior 80% junior	Monthly recurring contracts	SMEs with 20-100 employees
Tier 4	10% senior 90% junior	High-volume batch processing	Volume-based (strategic caution advised)

**Key Insight:** Senior CA time is your most valuable asset. Allocate it strategically to high-margin advisory work (Tier 1) while building junior capacity through structured Tier 2 and 3 services.

# Optimal Portfolio Mix for Sustainable Growth

## Recommended Revenue Distribution




## Strategic Rationale

- Tier 1 drives premium positioning**  
25-30% revenue share establishes market credibility and generates highest margins (50-70%)
- Tier 2 captures seasonal peaks**  
30-35% provides predictable revenue spikes during tax seasons with solid 40-55% margins
- Tier 3 ensures cash flow stability**  
30-40% creates recurring monthly revenue foundation supporting operational costs
- Tier 4 minimized strategically**  
0-10% limits low-margin work unless scale justifies infrastructure investment

# Implementation Roadmap: 9-Month Journey

Strategic sequencing builds foundation before pursuing premium services—ensuring sustainable growth with manageable risk at each phase.



 **Critical Success Factor:** Resist the temptation to launch all tiers simultaneously. Sequential implementation ensures quality delivery and team capability development at each stage.

# Strategic Recommendations: Action Plan



## Lead with Tier 3 foundation

Build recurring revenue base and develop junior team capabilities through standardized monthly services before pursuing higher-margin work.



## Expand into Tier 2 specializations

Target US 1040/1065 returns and UAE corporate tax & VAT—capturing seasonal revenue with 40-55% margins and manageable resource allocation.



## Position Tier 1 for growth clients

Package virtual CFO services for expansion-stage companies—delivering 50-70% margins while establishing premium market positioning.



## Leverage success stories upward

Use Tier 1 advisory wins to attract Tier 2 compliance clients; use Tier 2/3 delivery excellence to build credibility for Tier 1 opportunities.



## Avoid Tier 4 unless at scale

High-volume transactional work delivers only 20-35% margins. Skip unless building dedicated volume-based business model with 50+ clients.

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**Next Steps:** Assess your current service mix, identify gaps in the optimal portfolio, and initiate Phase 1 foundation-building activities within the next 30 days. Focus on quick wins in Tier 3 standardization while planning Tier 2 capability development.

# How to Build Your Outsourcing Practice

*Building a global outsourcing practice requires a structured, phased approach. This isn't about theory—it's about executable frameworks that transform a CA firm from local compliance work to high-margin, cross-border service delivery. The following phases provide a proven roadmap: from proving concept to scaling operations systematically.*





# Phase 1: Proof of Concept

Months 1-3: Validate Market Fit Before Scaling

01

## Week 1-2: Strategic Niche Selection

Choose ONE focused niche to dominate before expanding. Options include US tax preparation, UAE VAT compliance, or monthly book keeping for e-commerce businesses. Avoid the trap of being a generalist—specialisation builds credibility and speeds up delivery excellence.

02

## Week 3-8: Targeted Client Acquisition

Execute focused outreach to 10-15 qualified prospects. Secure your first trial client with a clearly defined 30-day pilot engagement. The pilot should include a written Service Level Agreement (SLA) covering turnaround times, accuracy benchmarks, and communication protocols. This trial phase is your proof point.

03

## Week 9-12: Flawless Execution & Documentation

Deliver impeccable work quality with bi-weekly client syncs to ensure alignment. Simultaneously, create a detailed written playbook documenting every process, template, checklist, and quality control step. This becomes the foundation for scaling operations later.



**Success Metric:** The pilot is successful when your client proactively asks, "Can we make this permanent?" This signals genuine value delivery, not just task completion.

# Phase 1: How to Land Your First Client

## US CPA Firms

Leverage existing relationships by emailing CPAs in your network. Position your offering as "handle your peak-season overflow" or "extend your capacity without hiring." Many US firms face talent shortages and welcome trusted offshore partners during tax season (Jan-Apr) or year-end close periods.

## Direct SME Targeting

Use LinkedIn to reach e-commerce sellers, startup CFOs, Amazon FBA business owners, and SaaS founders. These businesses often need sophisticated accounting but lack the budget for full-time senior talent. Offer bookkeeping, financial reporting, or fractional CFO services as an entry point.

## ICAI APO Portal

Register your firm on the ICAI Accounting Process Outsourcing (APO) portal. List your service offerings clearly and optimise your profile for search visibility. While inbound inquiries may be slower initially, the platform adds institutional credibility to your practice.

## Overseas Networks

Target UK, Australia, and GCC-based firm owners, particularly those with Indian origins who understand the India delivery model. Attend virtual networking events, join LinkedIn groups for expatriate professionals, and leverage diaspora connections to build trust and secure introductions.

**First Client Criteria:** Look for clients willing to pilot (30 days), with simple scope to prove execution, and commitment to weekly sync calls for feedback and alignment.

# Phase 2: Building Pod Structure

Months 4-9: From Solo Delivery to Team-Based Operations



## 1 Senior CA

Manages client relationships, conducts quality control (QC), provides client updates, and serves as escalation point. Initially allocates 20% time, scaling as practice grows.



## 2-3 Junior CAs

Handle execution of core deliverables. One junior evolves into "pod lead" responsible for QC ownership, workflow coordination, and mentoring other team members.



## 1 Operations Person

Manages client tracking, invoicing, scheduling, communication logs, and administrative workflows. Critical for maintaining delivery discipline and client experience.



## Critical Deliverables

- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) playbooks
- Cloud-based technology stack
- NDA and contract templates
- Quality assurance framework
- Client communication protocols

# Phase 2: Tech Stack & Data Security

Months 4-6: Infrastructure That Scales

## Cloud Stack



### Xero / QuickBooks

Primary accounting platforms for client data management, reconciliation, and financial reporting. Ensure multi-client access control and proper segregation.



### Google Workspace

Email, shared drives, and collaboration tools. Use separate folders per client with role-based permissions to maintain data security and auditability.



### Zoho CRM

Client tracking, pipeline management, and engagement history. Track all interactions, SLA compliance, and renewal timelines in one centralised system.



### Asana / Monday.com

Workflow management, task assignment, and progress tracking. Create templates for recurring deliverables and automate deadline reminders.

## Data Security Protocols

### NDA Templates

Execute comprehensive Non-Disclosure Agreements before accessing any client data. Customise for jurisdiction-specific requirements (US, UK, UAE, etc.).

### Secure File Transfer

Use SmartVault, ShareFile, or similar encrypted platforms. Never email sensitive data without password protection. Implement version control and access logs.

### Per-Client Access Control

Grant team members access only to clients they're actively servicing. Use role-based permissions (view-only, edit, admin) and conduct quarterly access audits.

### Data Deletion Policy

Encrypt all client data at rest and in transit. Implement a mandatory 90-day post-audit data deletion policy. Document deletion certificates for client records.

# Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The Foundation of Client Trust & Legal Protection

## Turnaround Times

Monthly financial close delivered by the 5th of each month. Tax return drafts provided by the 15th of the relevant month. Clear deadlines create accountability and allow clients to plan their downstream workflows.

## Accuracy Standards

Zero uncleared reconciling items in monthly closes. General Ledger error rate maintained below 0.1%. Quality is non-negotiable—it's the foundation of long-term client retention and referrals.

## Communication Protocols


One scheduled weekly sync call (30 mins minimum). 24-hour response time for escalations or urgent queries. Proactive updates when delays are anticipated, never reactive excuses.

## Confidentiality & Data Handling

All client data encrypted during storage and transmission. Mandatory data deletion 90 days post-audit completion. Written certification of deletion provided to clients upon request.

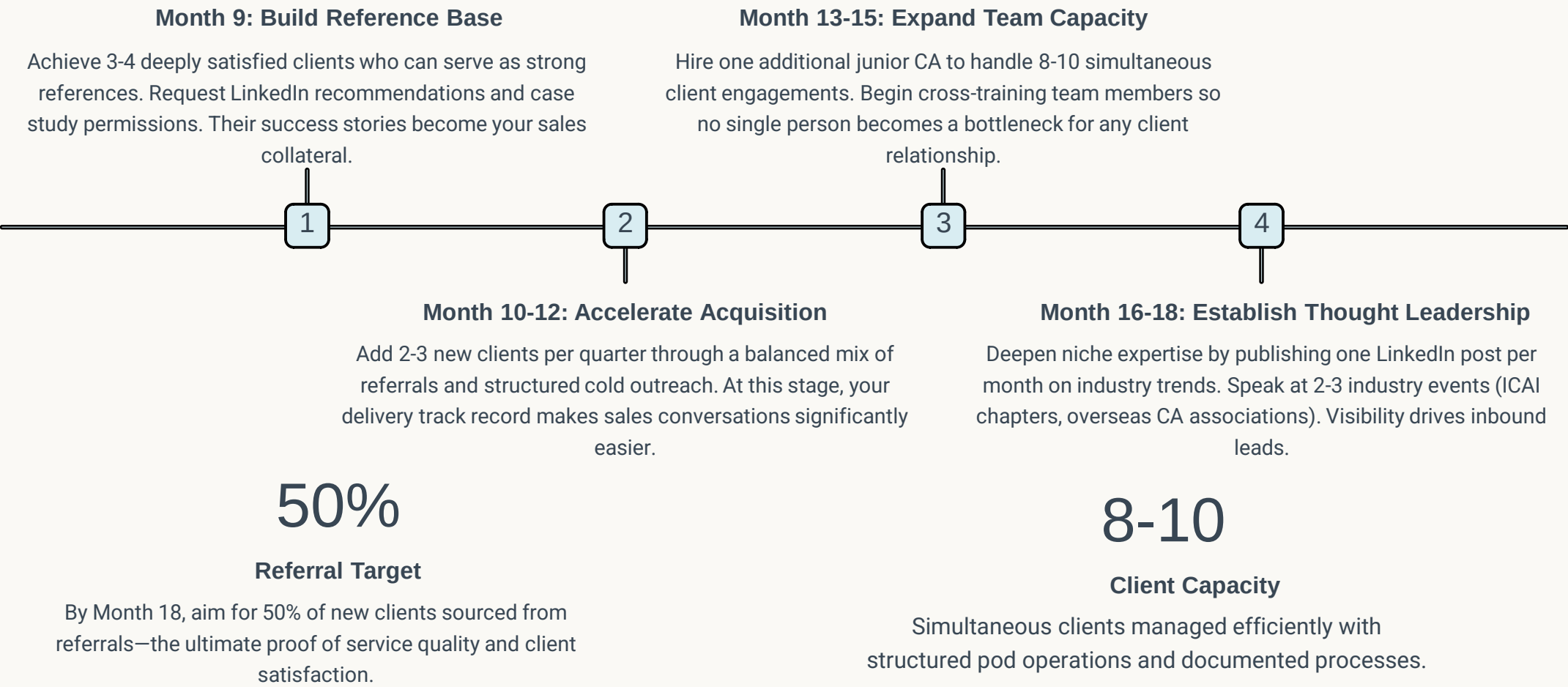
## Pricing Structure

Fixed monthly retainer fee OR per-entity pricing model clearly defined upfront. Include scope boundaries, add-on rates for out-of-scope work, and payment terms (Net 15 or Net 30). No surprises.

 **Why SLAs Are Critical:** They set clear expectations, protect your firm legally in case of disputes, build client trust through transparency, and create internal accountability for your delivery team.

# Phase 3: Scaling to More Clients

Months 10-18: From Proof to Profitable Practice





# 5 Common Mistakes to Avoid

Learn From Others' Failures—Don't Repeat Them

1

## Trying to Serve Everyone

Generalists struggle to differentiate and build expertise. Pick ONE niche (US tax, UAE VAT, virtual CFO, bookkeeping), master it completely, then expand strategically into adjacent services once you've established market leadership.

2

## Selling Before Building SOPs

Don't make promises you can't deliver consistently. Write detailed playbooks BEFORE you sell services. Template everything—checklists, quality reviews, communication protocols. Processes enable scaling; chaos doesn't.

3

## Part-Time Mindset

Outsourcing practices need full-time ownership and dedicated resources. Assign clear P&L responsibility. Track revenue, margins, and growth metrics separately. Treat it like a standalone business unit, not a side project.

4

## Confusing Audit Clients with Outsourcing Clients

Your existing audit clients are NOT your outsourcing ideal customer profile (ICP). Audit clients need compliance; outsourcing clients need ongoing, process-driven delivery. Different pain points, different buyer personas, different sales motion.

5

## Lack of Jurisdictional Knowledge

Don't wing it. Enroll in ICAI certificate courses for your target markets: UAE VAT, UAE Corporate Tax, US Market Accounting. Invest in formal education. Clients expect deep expertise, not surface-level understanding.

# Your 30-Day Action Plan

Transform your CA firm starting this Monday with a structured, week-by-week roadmap designed for immediate execution and measurable progress.

01

## Days 1-2: Internal Audit

Conduct a thorough assessment of your firm's readiness. Evaluate existing international exposure, identify overseas contacts in your network, and pinpoint operational bottlenecks that may hinder global service delivery.

02

## Days 3-4: Niche Selection

Choose ONE focused service vertical—US cross-border tax advisory, UAE VAT & Corporate Tax compliance, or Virtual CFO services for global startups. Specificity drives credibility in international markets.

03

## Days 5-7: SOP Development

Document a comprehensive 2-page Standard Operating Procedure for your chosen service line. Include workflow steps, quality checkpoints, deliverable templates, and turnaround timelines to ensure consistency.

04

## Week 2: Market Outreach

Launch targeted prospecting to 10-15 qualified leads through LinkedIn InMail, email campaigns, and warm referrals. Focus on US CPAs, UK accountants, or UAE-based business consultants seeking reliable offshore partners.

05

## Months 2-3: Scale Infrastructure

Establish your operational foundation—implement your tech stack (cloud accounting + project management), hire your first 2 junior team members, and create Service Level Agreement templates for client onboarding.

*This phased approach balances strategic planning with tactical execution, ensuring you build momentum while maintaining quality standards.*

# Essential Platforms & Resources

Equip your firm with the right tools, certifications, and market access channels to compete effectively in the global accounting services landscape.

## Client Acquisition Channels

- **Upwork & Freelancer:** Access to 5,000+ accounting projects monthly with global clients seeking Indian CA expertise
- **ICAI APO Portal:** Official platform for cross-border engagements, providing credibility and structured opportunities
- **LinkedIn Sales Navigator:** Target decision-makers in US/UK/UAE accounting firms for partnership discussions
- **Direct CPA Outreach:** Build referral networks with US CPAs handling NRI clients or India-connected businesses

## UAE Market Entry

- Online platforms for seamless client onboarding and real-time compliance collaboration with UAE businesses
- **FTA Portal Integration:** Single-window access for VAT filing, Corporate Tax compliance, Customs declarations, and Tax Registration Certificates

## Professional Development

- **ICAI Certificate Courses:** UAE VAT & Corporate Tax, US Taxation Fundamentals, UK Accounting Standards (IFRS/FRS)
- **Specialized Training:** Cross-border structuring, transfer pricing basics, virtual CFO frameworks for startups

## Technology Stack

- **Accounting Software:** Xero, QuickBooks Online, Zoho Books for multi-currency, cloud-based bookkeeping
- **Collaboration Tools:** Google Workspace for shared drives, Asana for project tracking, Slack for client communication
- **Document Management:** DocuSign for e-signatures, secure client portals for confidential file exchange

Invest in these resources strategically—start with essentials, scale as client engagements grow. Technology and credentials differentiate your firm in competitive global markets.

# Why Global Services Work: The Economics

## Higher Profit Margins

**40-60%+ on advisory work** (transfer pricing, tax structuring, virtual CFO services)

**35-55% on compliance** (bookkeeping, VAT filing, payroll processing)

Compare this to traditional audit margins of just 15-25%—a fundamental shift in practice economics that improves both profitability and cash flow predictability.

## Recurring Revenue Model

Monthly retainer agreements for bookkeeping (\$500-2,000), ongoing tax support (\$800-3,000), and virtual CFO services (\$1,500-5,000) create **predictable cash flow** independent of seasonal audit cycles.

Retention rates exceed 85% when service quality is maintained, building annuity-style revenue streams that compound year-over-year.

## Market Growth scenario

The global accounting outsourcing market is expanding at **8.2% CAGR**, projected to reach \$58 billion by 2028.

Indian CA firms occupy a unique competitive position—combining technical rigor (CA qualification recognized globally), cost advantage (30-50% lower than US/UK rates), and English proficiency with cultural adaptability.

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## Strategic Positioning

The arbitrage isn't just cost—it's delivering *Big 4 quality at boutique pricing* while maintaining relationship-driven service models that global clients increasingly demand.



# Your Next Move

## Start Small. Think Global.

From there, everything compounds. Your second client comes faster than the first. Your SOPs get refined. Your team grows more confident. Your referrals multiply.

The path forward isn't complex—it's disciplined. Choose ONE niche where you can genuinely add value. Build ONE comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure that ensures consistent delivery. Land ONE pilot client to prove your model.

### ▢ The Market Reality

US CPAs, UK accountants, and UAE business consultants are **actively searching** for reliable, cost-effective Indian CA firms right now. They need partners who understand compliance nuances, communicate proactively, and deliver on commitments.

*The technical capability already exists in mid-sized Indian CA firms. What's missing is **positioning, process, and persistence**—the operational frameworks to deliver global services at scale while maintaining quality standards.*

#### Choose Your Niche

Pick the service vertical where you have existing expertise or strong market demand

#### Build Your SOP

Document workflows, quality checks, and delivery standards for consistent execution

#### Land Pilot Client

Secure one engagement to test your model, refine processes, and generate testimonials

*The firms that will dominate the next decade aren't necessarily the largest today—  
they're the ones willing to adapt, execute, and serve markets beyond their geography.*

The market is waiting. Your move starts Monday.

# Thank You!

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