



CPA.com™

CATAPULTING CLIENT ADVISORY SERVICES (CAS)

# How to grow CAS with existing clients



# Introduction

You know your clients better than just about anyone. You understand their challenges, their strengths, and their growth opportunities. Your clients also know and trust your firm—so right out of the gate, you're set up for client advisory services (CAS) success. With client relationships established, it's now about starting the conversation around the value of CAS to grow and scale your practice.



CPA.com, the business and technology subsidiary of the AICPA, defines CAS as client advisory services, a practice area that helps clients outsource business needs with services spanning a spectrum of accounting, financial, and advisory-related offerings.

Your current client base represents ideal opportunities for growing your CAS business. With detailed client data at hand, you can easily identify which clients are primed and ready for value-added advisory services and then begin educating them on the value.

Education is key. According to the [CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark survey](#), **69% of firms offering CAS report that a lack of understanding among clients who confuse CAS with lower-level bookkeeping can be a barrier to sales.**

As it's highly likely you already have goals in place for overall CAS growth, why not start with existing clients to help achieve those goals? Everything you need to know to move forward is right here.





# 5 ways to create CAS growth with existing clients





# 1

## Create your CAS practice roadmap







It's difficult, if not impossible, to get to your desired destination without a solid roadmap. Creating a CAS practice roadmap offers both you and your staff a current and clear view of what you're selling and how those services align with your clients' needs.

The first step is to think through what your CAS practice roadmap looks like. If you're new to CAS, what services will you offer? If you're already in the CAS game, what new offerings can you add to the list?

According to the CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark survey<sup>1</sup>, CAS firms reported the following offerings as the most in demand:

- 1099 creating and filing - **91%**
- Financial statement preparation - **89%**
- CFO/Controller advisory services - **88%**
- Accounts payable - **86%**
- Sales tax returns - **85%**
- Consulting (financial planning and modeling) - **83%**
- Forecasting/budgeting - **83%**

## Spend management and CAS

As you plan your CAS roadmap, also consider that spend management is a rapidly growing service in the accounting profession and an emerging competitive CAS advantage. A recent survey found that nearly 3 out of 4 SMBs are interested in a proactive approach to controlling spend.

Spend management is the ability to view, control, and manage a business's cash flow in real time and in one centralized location. It uses corporate cards, expense management data, and automation to inform this view.

In the CAS context, spend management advisory takes that view and uses it to provide actionable insights to key financial decision-makers, driving business advice for clients as well as optimizing their operations.



# 2

## Communicate and educate





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Communicating effectively and providing appropriate education around CAS is required for both existing clients and staff. Fostering a deep understanding of CAS enables you to scale the business with fewer friction points.

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## Internal communications

Communicating and educating is fundamental for internal stakeholders. Firm leaders should extend communications and education opportunities across practices. The deeper the firm's understanding of CAS and its value, the easier it will be to upsell and support services with precision.

This requires collaboration. To get full buy-in, be sure to communicate relevant, engaging data. For example, according to the CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark Survey,<sup>1</sup> the median growth rate of CAS is 16% over the last year. That's double-digit growth, representing exceptional revenue potential.

From there, work to build firm-wide familiarity with the CAS practice and the services you offer, while also upskilling your team. This can be accomplished by implementing a few sound initiatives:

- Facilitate regular lunch-and-learns to educate staff firmwide on the value of CAS. These sessions offer concise, snackable lessons in a smaller group setting. Lessons can provide insight into the firm's ideal CAS client and roadmap.
- Offer consistent in-firm employee training. This includes training sessions on the value of CAS and what it takes to support clients effectively—covering topics on workflow best practices and required technology. It also includes training staff on how to sell CAS using real-life client success examples that highlight ROI. Arm your staff with quality sales-enablement tools like checklists, talking points, and FAQs, to help them effectively communicate the value of CAS as well as answer commonly asked questions.

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## Client communications

Your firm already has an established relationship with clients, which makes starting the CAS conversation easy. To communicate and educate effectively, consider:

- Taking advantage of regular touchpoints. Think of every opportunity available to discuss CAS with clients—such as scheduled tax meetings, monthly financial statement reviews, or other standard options both onsite and online.
- Implementing a sound client marketing strategy. This includes featuring CAS information in newsletters, sending client emails, posting on social media, and showcasing CAS client success stories both internally and externally. This supports a sound communications strategy and helps to progressively educate clients on CAS and what it can do for their business.
- Listening to your clients. Your clients are the best source for identifying areas of improvement. Establish a system and processes to collect client feedback efficiently. It also requires that clients are aware of how much you value and are open to their input. All of this serves to enrich the client experience—and when clients are happy, they're more likely to purchase more services. The best way to get client feedback is often to simply ask for it during conversations or send them an online survey.

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## Offer external training

Offer staff training opportunities outside of your firm as well. Take advantage of top industry resources such as [CPA.com CAS workshops](#), [technology certifications](#), and [technology partnerships](#).



# 3

## Perform a client inventory







According to all respondents of the CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark survey,<sup>1</sup> seeking new business among existing clients is where top-performing practices are having the greatest success.

You have so much client knowledge at your fingertips. Use it to identify your top CAS prospects among your clients.

Conducting an inventory will reveal which clients are in need of value-added services. For example, a traditional bookkeeping client might benefit from cash flow forecasting, spend management, or accounts payable services. Use data to curate a list of ideal client upsell opportunities to help boost CAS growth.

#### Top sources for CAS leads<sup>1</sup>

- Existing tax clients - **67%**
- Converting traditional bookkeeping or accounting clients to CAS - **45%**
- Existing clients who were previously provided a service other than bookkeeping, accounting, tax, or audit - **38%**
- Existing audit clients - **13%**

Digging into your client data provides insight into existing CAS opportunities. It also allows you to tailor pitches to clients based on their business goals and challenges—helping them to see the value of CAS.



# 4

## Boost skills and capacity with your CAS tech stack



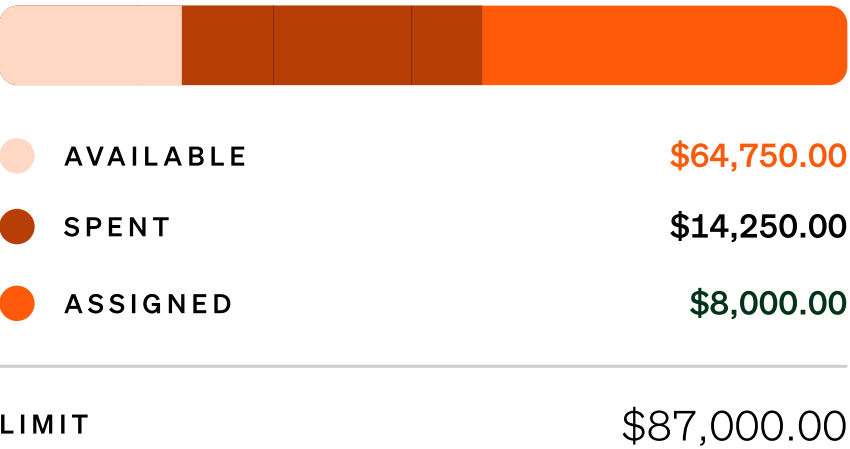


Automation is the key to scalable business growth. Why? Automating workflows across a firm significantly reduces manual processes—leading to increased responsiveness, accuracy, capacity, and efficiency.

Because CAS is a fast-growing service in the accounting profession, automation becomes even more of a priority. In fact, BILL’s [accounting firm automation opportunity report](#) shows that 85% of accounting professionals offering CAS say that automation improves the quality of data.



**Budget breakdown**



**How does a standardized and automated tech stack help sell CAS to clients?**

- 1 Your CAS team can focus on using one set of technology solutions to provide the service. They can quickly raise their familiarity with the platform, becoming confident in using the solutions and what they do for clients.
- 2 It also means they can set standards on how to onboard clients from different practices within your firm—creating a more frictionless process for clients and getting them results faster. A positive onboarding experience creates more enthusiasm from both other practices and clients, leading to more word-of-mouth support and helpful testimonials.
- 3 Your CAS team will have more time to focus on higher-value contributions with standardized technology and automation. Part of those contributions can be helping to educate other practices on the importance of CAS.
- 4 Clients will also save time and simplify processes. They may be struggling with (for example) the time it takes to manage AP. Showing them the firm’s AP technology and how it automates and mobilizes processes in real time can be a valuable selling point for busy businesses.
- 5 The proof is in the CAS results, as clients benefit from valuable advisory services and share the experience with other teams within the firm. And the benefits will extend to other practices as well. For example, gathering documentation for tax season is easier for accountants when they have one system for AP, expense, and spend management.



# 5

## Measure results





In any practice, there's always room for improvement. With this in mind, take time to evaluate your CAS strategy. Continually ask questions like: Are we meeting our goals? What's working well? What isn't? What service areas require improvement? What new opportunities have surfaced? Should we refresh our client inventory data?

High-performing firms track several metrics,<sup>1</sup> including:

- Net recurring revenue
- Net client fee per professional
- Lifetime client value
- Transaction volume
- Number of services that help guide specialization and improve client retention

By measuring results and carefully considering data, you'll have opportunities to re-evaluate your strategy and incorporate new tactics to deepen CAS opportunities with clients.

## Grow, scale, conquer

With CAS enjoying a double-digit growth rate, it's clear that it's the way of the future—and at the center of modern, scalable firms. Whether you've dipped your toe in the CAS pool or not, it's easier to grow client advisory services when you start with your existing clientele. After all, who knows better than you what your clients need to prosper?

Start with this guide to elevate your CAS practice. From creating a CAS practice roadmap and performing a client inventory to building a standardized tech stack and implementing a sound communications and education strategy, you'll have the tools you need to help achieve your own double-digit, scalable growth.





# Resources

Here are more resources to help your firm on its CAS journey.



## CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark survey

[Read →](#)



## The Next CAS Opportunity for Accounting Firms

[Read →](#)



## The Future of Client Advisory Services

[Read →](#)



## 5 Steps to CAS Success

[Read →](#)



## How to Uplevel your Advisory Services and the Client Experience

[Read →](#)



## The Definitive Guide to Spend Management CAS

[Read →](#)



## How to Grow CAS with Existing Clients

[Read →](#)





BILL is an integrated financial operations platform that gives you and your clients more visibility and control over their financial operations across AP, AR, spend, and expense management. BILL enables you to automate and streamline workflow for all your clients in one place, sync seamlessly with major accounting software, and achieve greater accuracy with AI-powered reporting and insights, so you can be the trusted advisor your clients need.

## bill ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

BILL Accounts Payable automates the accounts payable process to help accountants and clients simplify invoice entry, streamline the approvals process, and provide more flexible ways to pay. It enables more control and visibility over clients' financial operations, while automatically syncing payables, receivables, and spending transaction data with leading accounting software.

## bill ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

BILL Accounts Receivable helps your firm automate clients' receivables, so they can easily create and send invoices, track payments, and get paid faster.

## bill SPEND & EXPENSE

BILL Spend & Expense is the all-in-one expense management solution that combines free software with corporate cards.<sup>2</sup> Its real-time spend management helps accounting firms ensure fast and accurate month-end closing and streamline reconciliation. It also enables clients to control spend before it happens, increase visibility when spend does happen, and eliminate expense reports.



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<sup>1</sup> CPA.com and AICPA PCPS CAS Benchmark survey

<sup>2</sup> The BILL Divvy Card may be issued by one of Divvy Pay, LLC's [bank partners](#). The BILL Divvy Card is not a deposit product. For your specific lender, see your Card Agreement. 26937-4319

