

# How accounting firms can market spend management services



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# Introduction

Spend and expense management presents a new opportunity to broaden your accounting firm's services, strengthen ties with clients, and build new revenue streams. It offers a modern, proactive approach to managing client spend by tying expenses to corporate cards and reporting on costs and budgets in real time.

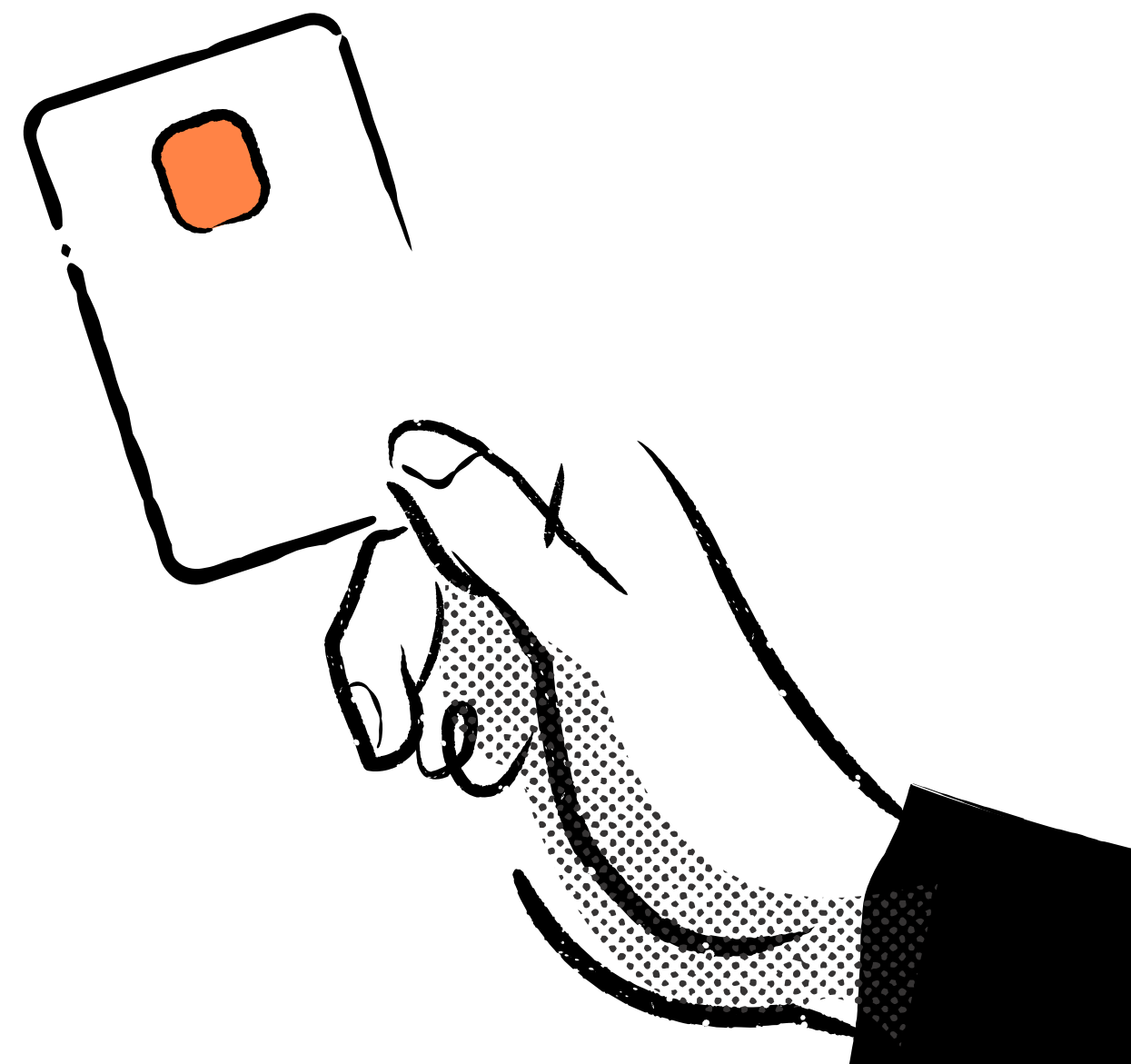
With spend and expense management, you can control client spend and provide insights from real-time expense data for forecasting, planning, and business-related decisions.

How can you market spend and expense management? This white paper offers practical tips for marketing this service, including creating your story, finding clients, and learning how other firms have marketed their own spend and expense management services.

## Spend management 101

Are you interested in learning more about spend management? Here are three resources to get you started.

- **Research on client demand:** [From Expense Tracking to Spend Management: The Next Client Advisory Services \(CAS\) Opportunity for Accounting Firms](#)
- **How spend management works:** [Adopting a proactive approach to client expenses with spend management](#)
- **Spend management in action:** [Chaney & Associates helps clients gain control over spend with BILL Spend & Expense](#)



“Tallying the results after the money is already spent does little to support a company’s goals. Here’s where a business needs a tool like spend management to capture what’s happening on a day-by-day basis instead of 30 days after.”

Dan Luthi, Partner, Ignite Spot Accounting



## STEP 01

# Build your spend and expense management services story

What is your firm's unique story for spend and expense management? And how do you make sure it lands for existing and potential clients? These questions, and more, are important to ask before launching your marketing efforts. They will help you build a successful foundation for marketing spend and expense management services, including understanding the general need for the service from a company's point of view, finding the right audience, and more.

## Identify pain points

The first step to winning over your audience is pinpointing spend and expense management roadblocks experienced by companies. Most likely, you're already speaking to clients about internal cash controls. The conversation around proactive spend and expense management aligns well with these principles, as it helps enforce expense guidelines, give real-time visibility into cash flow, and introduce new efficiencies.

[A survey from CPA.com and BILL](#) asked small and midsize businesses (SMBs) about their priorities and expense management challenges. More than half of the SMBs said they are reducing costs and 69% want new options to control costs. Their leading spend and expense management challenges included spending too much time, struggling with inaccuracies, and lacking real-time insight into spend.

With this in mind, you can now discuss common pain points with clients and help them understand how you can address those challenges with a modern technology solution.

## Top-five SMB spend & expense management challenges

57%

Spending too much time  
on expense management  
overall

50%

Accurately  
coding expenses

44%

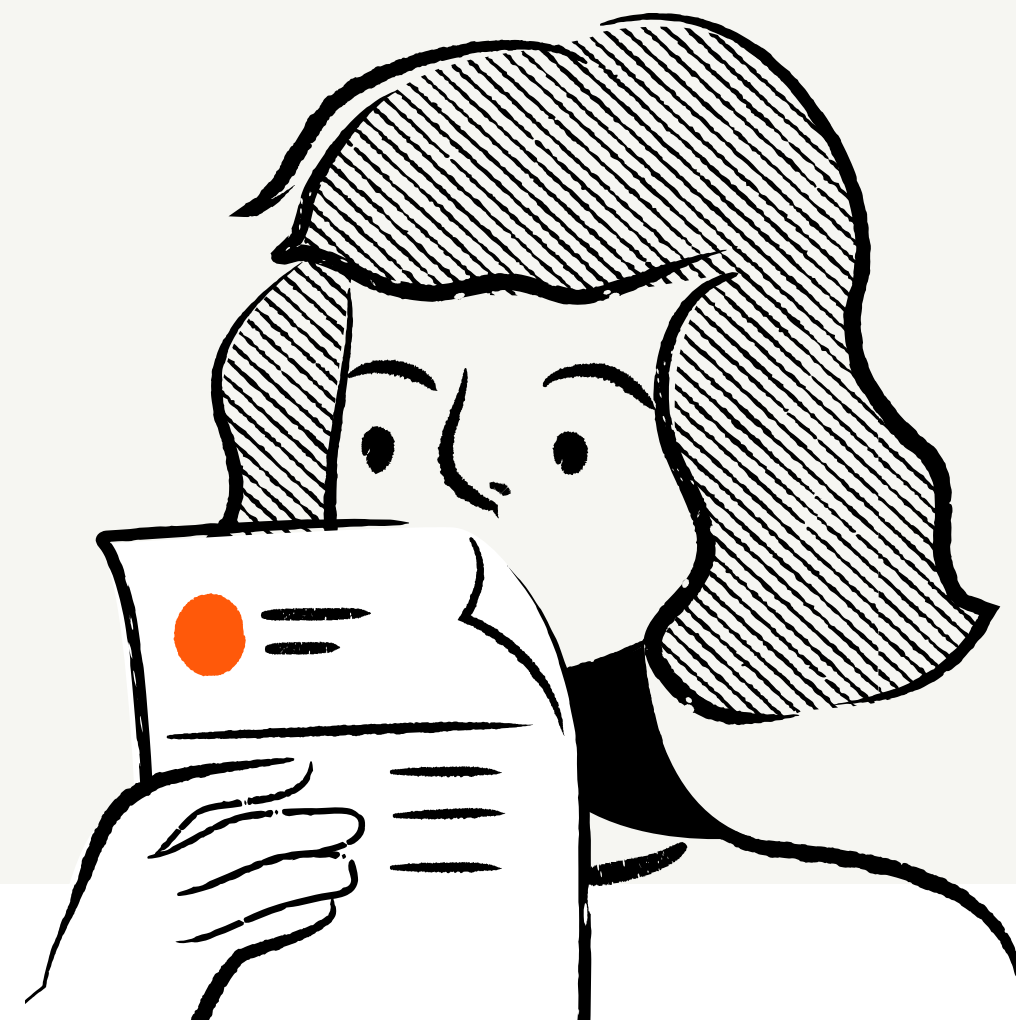
Getting real-time  
visibility into spend

40%

Inaccurate month-end  
close and/or difficulties  
closing the books in a  
timely manner

32%

Lack of reporting  
around non-payroll  
spend





## Find your target audience

The [same research](#) found that 72% of SMBs are interested in a proactive approach to expense management, including matching anticipated expenses to budgets before the money is spent—exactly what modern spend and expense management does.

And to build on that good news, your most opportunistic targets are your current clients. Chances are your firm has existing clients that will benefit from spend and expense management services. It's helpful to focus on them first when starting to market these services. Here's why.

1. **They can represent quick wins.** Whether they work with your client advisory services (CAS) team or other practices, they already know and trust your firm. In return, you understand their business priorities, and can evaluate their need for spend and expense management. Winning their business will allow you to increase client stickiness.
2. **They can help you build or refine your marketing message.** You gain experience marketing spend and expense management to clients. Clients, in return, can provide feedback on what is hitting home and what isn't.

For example, watch for those moments when your clients become engaged. These times will help you hone in on key spend and expense management points that appeal to them. In addition, you're building a pipeline that clients can support with their referrals.

How can you better define your target audience? Ideal candidates for spend and expense management will have one or more of these factors:

- Employees who need corporate cards for expenses
- Regular reimbursements like travel or events expenses
- Recurring costs such as software and other subscriptions
- Advertising spend
- Employees that regularly receive stipends
- Employees who get pay out bonuses or SPIFFs/SPIVs
- A desire for a real-time view into everyday company spend
- A need to build credit
- Multiple EINs/entities

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## With BILL your clients can:



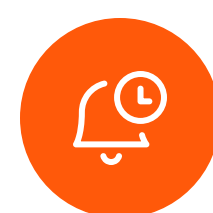
Automatically keep spend under budget



Earn company cash-back rewards<sup>1</sup> based on spend



Quickly issue, activate, or deactivate physical and virtual cards<sup>2</sup>



Manage spend with real-time categorization and customizable budget controls



Easily track spend from a single dashboard



Store everything automatically so they never have to worry about keeping paper receipts or invoices

## Find your message

Sharing the word about your services is critical—but success will rely on what you communicate and the thought you put into it. This all happens before one conversation happens or one email hits an inbox.

At this stage, it is about creating the vital messaging that drives interest and ultimately closes deals for spend and expense management services.

### Firm-specific messaging

Ask yourself these questions when building your firm messaging:

- What is your firm's mission? How does spend and expense management relate to it?
- How does spend and expense management align with other services you offer? What will your firm ultimately deliver to its clients?
- Are your industry specializations communicated, as well as how they relate to spend and expense management? What other areas of expertise does your firm have beyond that?
- When you have a competitive win, what factors closed the deal?

### Messaging to spend management targets

Firm messaging amplifies results, since it speaks to the companies' needs and how your firm specifically helps them.

***Read real examples from accounting professionals on how their spend and expense management experiences guided messaging and discussions:***



"BILL Spend & Expense helps align with our mission by creating peace of mind for our clients," says Amy Marshall, Director of Workflow Solutions for Breakwater Accounting + Advisory Corp.

"We work with people who thought they had control over 11 credit cards, but ultimately they felt out of control. But with BILL, they issue hundreds of cards and feel more in control than ever before ... It is not a hard sell, because it's free and low risk."



Summit CPA Group, a division of Anders CPAs + Advisors, found that using BILL Spend & Expense allowed them to be more effective in cash flow forecasting and management, even on a weekly basis. They are now able to work with clients to set forecasts and expectations and advise on the results and trends they see, helping inform their CAS offerings for clients.

"BILL Spend & Expense reduces overspending and saves time with auto-categorization. This means for an average client with 50 team members, they might save about \$600 per month using BILL," explains Jake Brim, CPA, Director of Technology for Summit.



When pitching BILL Spend & Expense to existing clients, Ignite Spot starts by talking about the change in controls [clients] will have and what functionality will empower their staff to be more involved in the spend management process.

"BILL Spend & Expense allows us to completely change the way we interact with clients to the point to where we are adding value to the conversation based on the enhanced information we have at our fingertips," comments Dan Luthi, Partner at Ignite Spot.

"Now we are always in front of spend management instead of behind it. That's what technology has done for us. My staff can lead clients in real time instead of constantly being 45 days behind."

Steve Chaney, Founder and Advisory Partner, Chaney & Associates





Squire focuses on training clients on the importance of a single point of data entry and empowering those who are taking the purchasing action. They then supply the needed information simply and seamlessly with low time commitment from employees.

Advisory Partner Megan Bronson explains that she personally loves to show clients how they can take things to the next level: “The biggest thing about BILL Spend & Expense was this shift from reacting to spending after it happened to having a proactive conversation and thinking about that spending before it happens.”



“BILL Spend & Expense has made expense management relevant, real time, accessible, and easy to use,” shares Steve Chaney, Founder and Advisory Partner of Chaney & Associates.

Instead of combing through outdated, static expense reports line-by-line, [clients] can view real-time spend from the palm of their hand, thanks to the BILL Spend & Expense app. A single admin control panel has replaced sprawling spreadsheets.

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## Prepare your team

Those who interact with clients should be familiar with the firm’s basic spend and expense management messaging and what the process is for incoming inquiries. One way to help your team realize the value of spend & expense management is to use it internally. That way, they experience the benefits first hand and often feel more comfortable speaking about it.



You learn by doing, so RLJ Financial Services uses BILL Spend & Expense internally. First, they set employees up with a BILL Divvy Corporate Card and give them an account. Then, they have employees request funds when they need to spend. Using the process internally makes it clear how Divvy works and why it’s valuable. Then it’s easier for their staff focused on client relationships to recommend Divvy to clients and answer questions clients might have about setting it up.



Summit CPA, a division of Anders CPAs + Advisors, finds that client managers that have other clients on BILL Spend & Expense are motivated to get more companies on the platform since they’ve seen the benefits not only for the client but for their own workflows.





## STEP 02

# Share your spend management story

Now that you know what your story is, it's time to tell it. The messaging you've created around your firm, your spend and expense management services, and what is in it for clients will help you launch your marketing efforts.

Start by considering what specific features and deliverables you want to communicate, such as:

- What messaging proved the most effective after internal and client review?
- What specific features and deliverables will get top billing in your marketing efforts?
- How much will it cost and how will you communicate that?
- How can clients sign up?

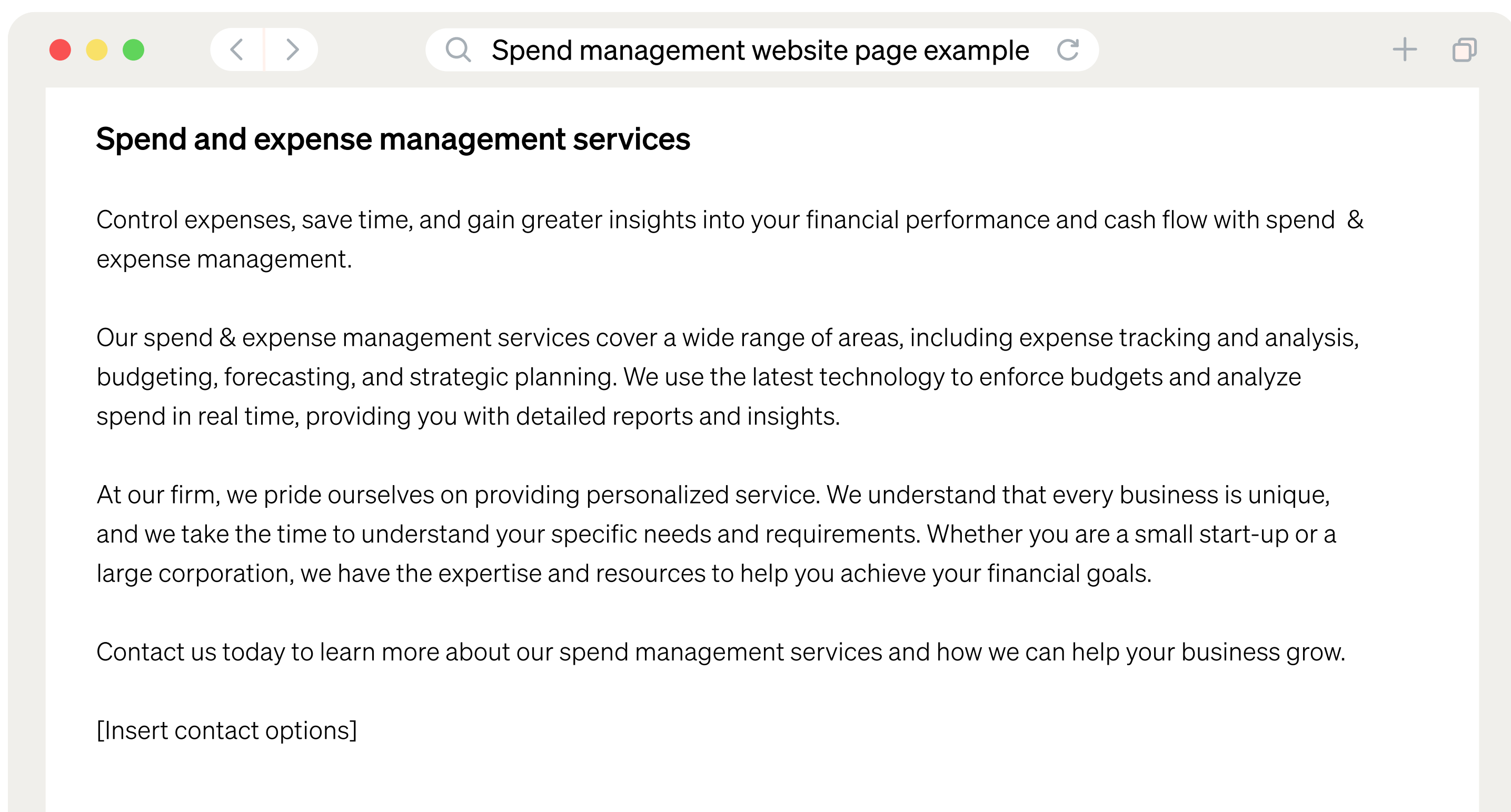
Effective spend and expense management marketing will rely on multiple fronts to reach your target audiences. And there are numerous marketing tactics to help you achieve your goals. For simplicity's sake, consider these two general categories. First, the quick wins, ones that most likely leverage your existing resources and in general do not require in-depth marketing knowledge. The second group will focus on more advanced options that may require assistance.



## QUICK WINS FOR MARKETING

### Website

Use your website to promote your spend and expense management services. Add a description of spend and expense management to your current services page or create a page for it on your website. The information should offer visitors ways to continue the conversation, whether by filling out a form, providing contact information, linking to related materials, or enabling chat features.



# Blog posts

Blog posts give you an online space to showcase your spend and expense management expertise and why it is valuable for your clients and prospects. For example, consider blog posts that educate businesses on how they can manage expenses before money is spent, how to set up and maintain budgets, and the benefits of knowing your real-time cash flow.

These blog posts and your services page can provide a landing page for other marketing efforts, including emails and social media to help educate readers understand the need for spend and expense management and your firm’s ability to help them.

# Email marketing

Email marketing delivers your messages to your audience’s inbox, making it an effective, inexpensive, and easy-to-measure process. Whether you are emailing clients from your work account, or using an online email platform, it puts your spend and expense management services right in front of them.

As with all marketing efforts, you want to make sure you are sending your message to the right audience. Also, be sure that any emails you send comply with federal and state regulations and contain working email addresses. (Most online email services will help with these points.)

## Spend management email example

[Client email address]

Helping you save more with spend and expense management services

Dear [Client Name],

Spend and expense management shouldn’t be a burden. We want to make it easier while also giving you a proactive approach to controlling expenses and spend. [FIRM NAME] now offers spend and expense management services, helping you gain greater understanding of your spend, enforce spending guidelines, and save you time.

By partnering with us, you can:

- Control or reduce your expenses and improve your bottom line
- Have better visibility of your expenses and cash flow
- Create cash back rewards for your company, not individual employees
- Have access to expert advice and support

If you're interested in learning more about our services, please don't hesitate to contact us. We would love to schedule a call or a meeting to discuss further.

Thank you,  
[Your Name], [Title]  
[Accounting Firm Name]  
[Contact information]

Send

## Reviews

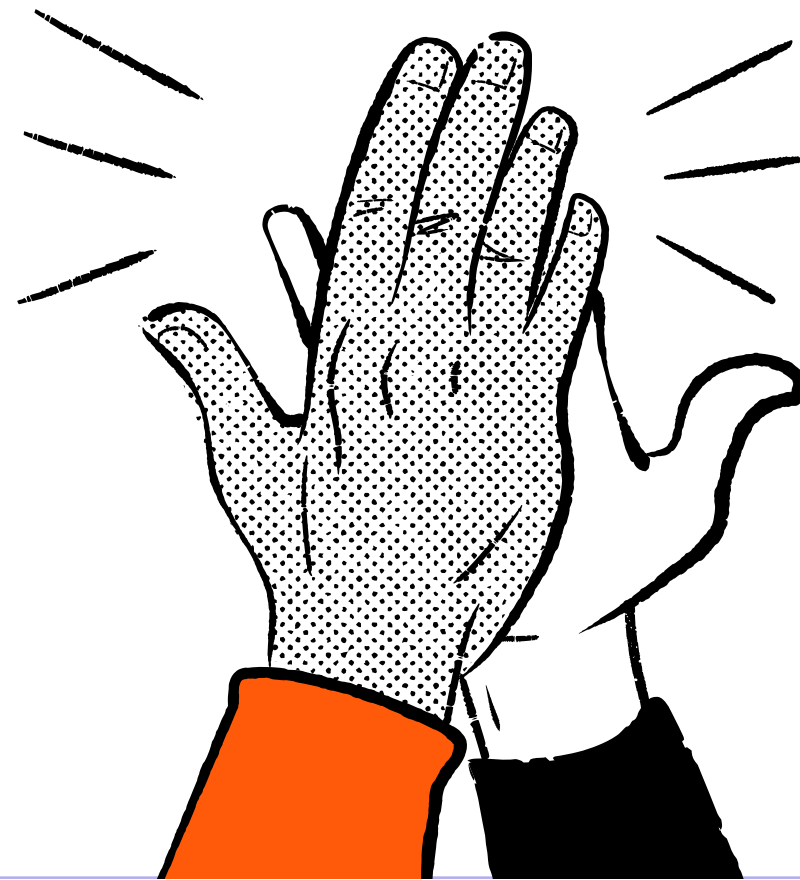
An easy way to build your online presence is to create a free [Google Business Profile](#). You can customize your listing to include photos, website address, location, services, and more. It also allows your clients to review your business.

## Partnerships

Explore potential partnerships that can land new clients. For example, consider partnering with your spend and expense management solution provider. It may have programs to help get the word out about your firm and its services, or may want to feature your firm's success in a case study or blog interview (which will provide even more options for marketing materials.)

## Events

Events offer a great platform for marketing. Focus on events that attract your target audience, whether it is a luncheon, a conference, or a networking opportunity. From there, you can explore attending the events, sponsoring them, or even speaking at them in order to share the news about your spend and expense management services.



### ADVANCED MARKETING OPTIONS

These marketing suggestions might take more resources and expertise to accomplish, but can be effective cornerstones of spend and expense management services marketing.

## Social media

The average American spends more than two hours a day on social media sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok. This makes social media a viable option for marketing efforts, whether you're sharing blog posts, advertising, or connecting with potential clients. Considering the number of social media options and the time and effort it can take to establish these channels and grow your audiences, this might be an area where you seek out additional support and expertise.

It is feasible to handle social media on your own. However, it might be a good idea to focus on only a few options instead of every social media channel. For example, consider starting with LinkedIn, which has a strong business user base and offers many opportunities for firms to target them.

## Search engine optimization (SEO)

Your online content should incorporate SEO best practices to help businesses find you via online searches. This entails researching relevant keywords and incorporating them into the content, as well as making sure your content and website structure meet SEO best practices. As this can be an area that calls for marketing and technical expertise, it is often something to consider when you have specialized resources on board or hired to handle this.

## Referral programs

To leverage client reviews more, ask clients to give testimonials for your website or encourage clients to refer colleagues to your firm. You can also consider a referral program for clients, offering discounts or other incentives those who bring in new business.



## STAY SHARP BY CONNECTING WITH PEERS

One of the best sources of inspiration are your accounting peers. By staying engaged with them and the industry's latest news and developments, you can benefit from the collective knowledge of the entire community to refine your firm and its services.

Easy ways to engage with your peers include going to conferences like [AICPA Engage](#) or [Digital CPA](#) or attending virtual sessions for the events, setting up discussions with colleagues, participating in technology providers' events or customer round tables, and registering for [CPA.com webinars](#) and [workshops](#).





# Next steps

To learn more about spend and expense management and how to capitalize on it as a service offering, here are additional resources.

- Read more research on spend and expense management for SMBs and accounting firms in this report from CPA.com and BILL: [From Expense Tracking to Spend Management: The Next Client Advisory Services \(CAS\) Opportunity for Accounting Firms](#)
- Explore the link between [spend and expense management, BILL, and CAS in this eBook](#).
- Join the [BILL Accountant Partner Program](#), delivered in partnership with CPA.com. The program is designed to provide support and value to partners at every step of the relationship.
- Access an [on-demand demo of BILL Spend & Expense](#), to see how its spend management software can help your firm build a new revenue stream.
- [Show your clients how BILL Spend & Expense works with this interactive walk-through](#). It takes your clients through BILL Spend & Expense solution to help them understand key functions and roles and how your firm will be involved in their spend and expense management.



[CPA.com](#) brings innovative solutions to the accounting profession, either in partnership with leading providers or directly through its own development. The company has established itself as a thought leader on emerging technologies and as the trusted business advisor to practitioners in the U.S., with a growing global focus. CPA.com is a subsidiary of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and part of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (AICPA & CIMA), the most influential body of accounting and financial professionals worldwide.

CPA.com serves as a catalyst in the development of virtual CFO/controller services by firms and is now shifting its focus to similar innovations in tax and audit practices, with an emphasis on automation, artificial intelligence and the adoption of blockchain technology.

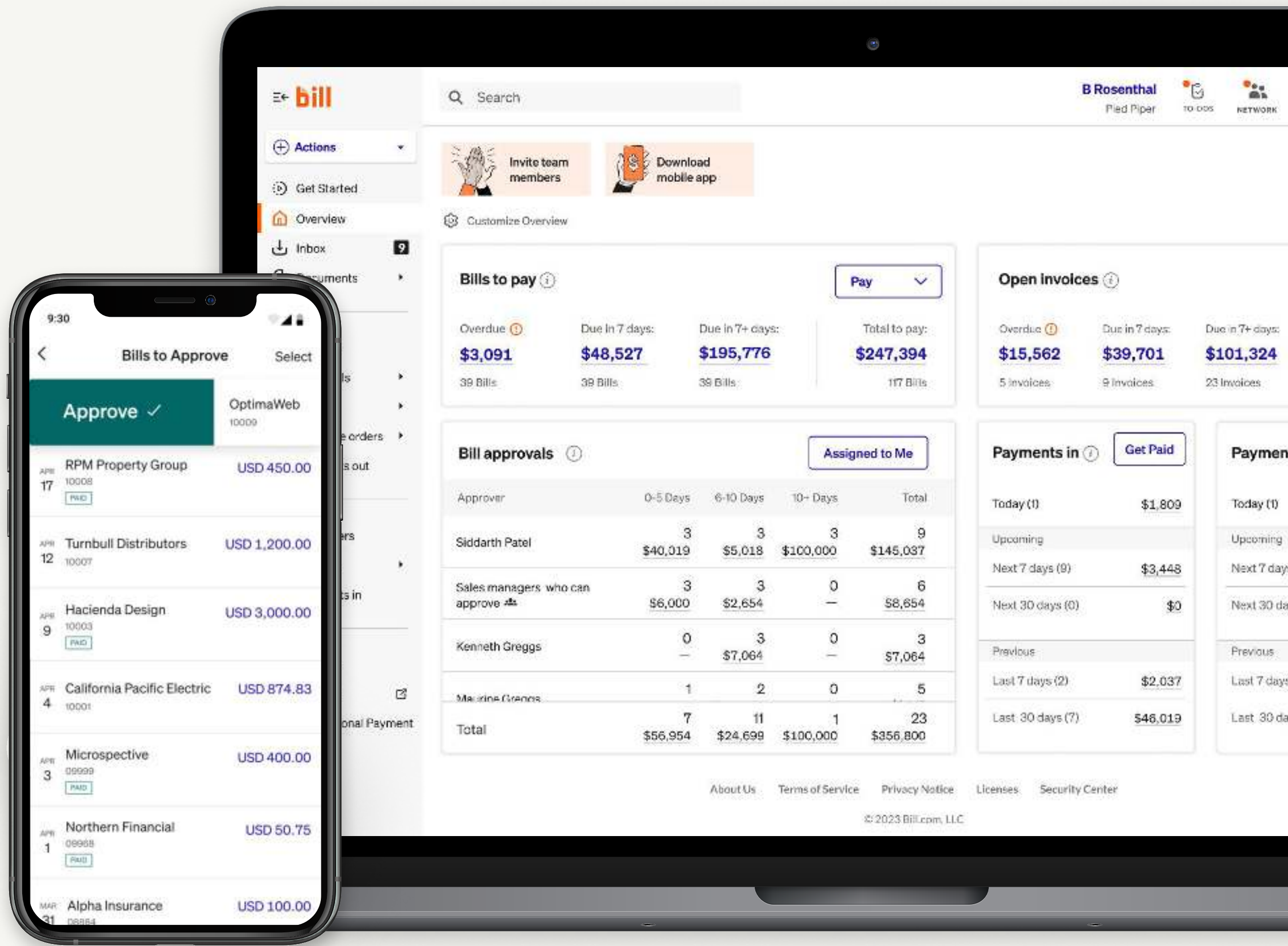


BILL Spend & Expense gives small and midsize businesses the credit they need and helps them save time and money by automating expense reports, budgets, and reimbursement processing—all in one place. Our free software and card combination provides real-time insight into employee spending, and better fraud protection with virtual cards. With BILL, you can:

- **Automate expense reports:** Expenses are ready to upload immediately saving you time—no need to reconcile credit card statements with your expense management system.
- **Improve employee spend management:** Take control of your business budgets and say goodbye to the “spend now, ask forgiveness later” mentality.
- **Manage payments and subscriptions:** Create a separate card for each subscription, set a limit on each card, and quickly freeze at any time. That’s fraud and overcharge protection in one amazing package.
- **Track out of pocket expenses and reimbursement requests:** With mobile receipt upload and push notifications for approvals, you can pay back employees in a snap.

# About BILL

BILL (NYSE: BILL) is a leader in financial automation software for small and midsize businesses (SMBs). As a champion of SMBs, we are dedicated to automating the future of finance so businesses can thrive. Hundreds of thousands of businesses trust BILL solutions to manage financial workflows, including payables, receivables, and spend and expense management. With BILL, businesses are connected to a network of millions of members, so they can pay or get paid faster. Through our automated solutions, we help SMBs simplify and control their finances, so they can confidently manage their businesses, and succeed on their terms. BILL is a trusted partner of leading U.S. financial institutions, accounting firms, and accounting software providers. BILL is headquartered in San Jose, California. For more information, visit [bill.com](https://bill.com).



1 See respective offers or terms.  
2 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. See respective offers for details.

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