Smashing profit barriers

Fresh strategies to maximize efficiency and drive growth for your firm.

Introduction

Accounting firms are under pressure to evolve faster than ever—but not every leader is equipped with the time or tools to keep up.

That pressure shows up in tighter timelines, shrinking talent pools, and clients who expect more than compliance and want real advisory partnerships. Running your firm your way means not only overcoming profitability barriers, but also building agile, efficient operations that give you more control and more time for what matters most.

This guide is for forward-thinking managers, partners, and owners ready to drive results and stay ahead of industry change.

Inside, you'll find ideas to help you bypass common hurdles, boost efficiency, and increase profitability, including how to:

- Unlock capacity to maximize bandwidth.
- Apply smart pricing strategies to boost revenue and stay competitive.
- Jumpstart client advisory services to grow trust and value.

Unlock capacity

The accounting profession has faced a shrinking workforce for years—but firm leaders still have powerful ways to overcome hiring, retention, and workload management challenges.

1 Leverage technology and new skill sets

Automation and AI tools are reshaping the way firms operate, significantly reducing workflow friction, flagging anomalies, and handling manual processes like W-9 data collection.

With fewer manual steps, staff can focus on upskilling, technology training, and completing higher-value work like advisory services. The payoff? A more engaged team that's equipped for the future, plus a stronger recruiting edge built on a modern, tech-forward reputation.

Expanding your team's skill sets is just as crucial. For example, consider hiring professionals who specialize in vetting and optimizing technology to bolster efficiencies across operations.

2 Expand your search

Remote work has empowered firms to expand the talent pool from local to national—and even global—through outsourcing.

Outsourcing has evolved dramatically. Many vendors now offer comprehensive staff training and coaching to ensure a strong skills and cultural fit, along with ongoing relationships that support successful placements.

3 Explore new staffing/ hiring models

While firms will continue to hire in-house talent, alternative hiring structures can help address capacity gaps.

Engage with contractors

Contractors are ideal for project-based work, offering flexibility and specialized experience. Firms can even extend contract-to-full-time offers to those who prove to be a strong fit.

Implement a "flextirement" plan

Reconnecting with retired or semi-retired accounting professionals can help you fill part-time roles while bringing valuable, real-world expertise in-house.

Nearly doubling capacity with technology

Creative Planning Business Services is a leading professional services firm offering business planning and consulting, tax, assurance and accounting, technology, wealth management, and turnaround management services.

To better serve their highly regulated nonprofit clients—many of whom were saddled with archaic, manually-driven accounting practices—the firm turned to technology, streamlining workflows across their operations. With BILL Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Spend & Expense, they automated financial processes, reducing manual data entry by 50% and increasing client capacity without adding headcount.

"Before BILL, when we were working manually, the max a junior accountant could handle was about five clients comfortably. Now, they can each manage between seven and nine clients."

Jennifer Klos
Supervisor Staff Accountant,
Creative Planning Business Services

Read the case study →

Apply smart pricing strategies

The future of pricing rewards outcomes—not hours.

There are only so many hours in the day, limiting what your firm can deliver and the revenue it can earn. Plus, hourly billing creates unpredictable fees that can impact clients' cash flow and delay payments.

Value pricing shifts the focus from the time your services take to the value they offer and usually resembles a subscription model.

The role of technology in supporting value pricing

So how do you put value pricing into practice? Technology plays a critical role. It can:

Clear bottlenecks by automating manual tasks—like data entry, approvals, and receipt management—and moving workflows forward with precision. AI can even anticipate the information you need, auto-filling expense codes and vendor information for quick review and approval.

Boost accuracy by syncing with existing software in your tech stack, including Oracle NetSuite, Sage Intacct, Xero, Microsoft, and QuickBooks.

Deliver on-demand insights with reporting on cash flow, spend, and outstanding bills, complete with receipts and audit trails.

Free up time for clients with automation that lets staff focus on the client, not the busywork.

"Pricing is all about signaling the economic value you're delivering to your clients. It's one of the most strategic parts of leading a successful service-based business."

Jason Blumer

CPA, CEO & Founder, Thriveal

Value pricing vs hybrid pricing

How should you price your services? You've got options. Here's a quick breakdown of value and hybrid pricing models.

Value pricing models

Value pricing often offers a regular, recurring price for repeatable services—but prices vary by client.

Pros
Takes a more strategic, client-centered approach to pricing
No revenue ceiling because service is not tied to time
Measures outcome over hours
Ideal for scaling the firm and attracting and retaining business
Standardizes processes and tech stack
Supports a more advisory-focused service model

Cons
Requires a deeper discovery process to understand clients' needs
May require internal education and a cultural shift to optimize results
Demands a time commitment up front for discovery, communication, training, and testing

"With BILL Spend & Expense, our staff of 17 can easily serve 1,100 clients. We can serve more clients in less time—focusing on other high-value client services beyond expense management. Serving more clients has enabled us to experience a spike in income."

Steve Chaney
Managing Partner,
Chaney & Associates

Read the case study →

Hybrid pricing model

You could also blend hourly, fixed-fee, and value pricing. Here are three examples of pricing options that firms have used successfully.

Package option 1	Package option 2	Package option 3
One-time implementation fee	One-time implementation fee	No charge for particular services
Hourly consulting fee for assistance as needed	Flat regular payments	Firms use technology to reduce the costs of CAS delivery
Ideal for: Those who want to gain experience with services but aren't ready to dedicate a full-time employee	**Ideal for:** Offering new services as part of a premium tier within client advisory (CAS) services	**Ideal for:** A firm growing its CAS service and/or wanting to streamline service delivery to clients

More resources

Pricing is complex, especially with CAS. It requires understanding your market, competitors, and the industries you serve, along with a clear grasp of your firm's mission and vision.

This actionable worksheet from CPA.com and BILL walks you through the factors to consider when setting your pricing strategy.

Grow trust and expand value with modern CAS:

CAS paves the way for recurring revenues, repeatable services, and highly-valued, advisory-based services that keep clients coming back.

Like most big undertakings, getting started is the hardest part. Here are a few key tips to jumpstart your CAS journey.

Build a business plan

Include two layers: a top-level business strategy and a CAS-specific plan.

Define industry specialization

Defining your service verticals can help you create and refine efficient delivery processes.

Up-level skill sets

Don't assume that your current staff can take on CAS as "just another service." Provide focused training so they feel confident in supporting advisory clients.

Map out a technology strategy

The most efficient CAS strategy depends on a strong technology foundation and vice versa. Each drives the other. CAS introduces unique requirements, so it shouldn't be treated as a typical tech initiative.

Recognize the strategic benefits of CAS

CAS drives scalability, profitable recurring revenue, and stronger client relationships. It also sets the stage for workflow and technology standardization.

Explore the BILL financial operations platform

BILL automates tasks such as spend and expense management, accounts payable, and accounts receivable—freeing you and your clients to review current, accurate financial data and make informed, proactive decisions.

"Firms that adopt a standardized technology stack with seamless integrations are winning in the CAS space as it brings important data from disparate systems together. When practitioners can easily make sense of data to glean insights, that provides them with confidence to be trusted advisors to clients."

Kim Blascoe

Senior Director of CAS
Professional Services, CPA.com

Your next move

Being proactive is key to navigating change and seizing new opportunities. Refer to this guide as a starting point for future planning—and stay ahead of the curve with automated AP, AR, spend, and expense management.

Resources:

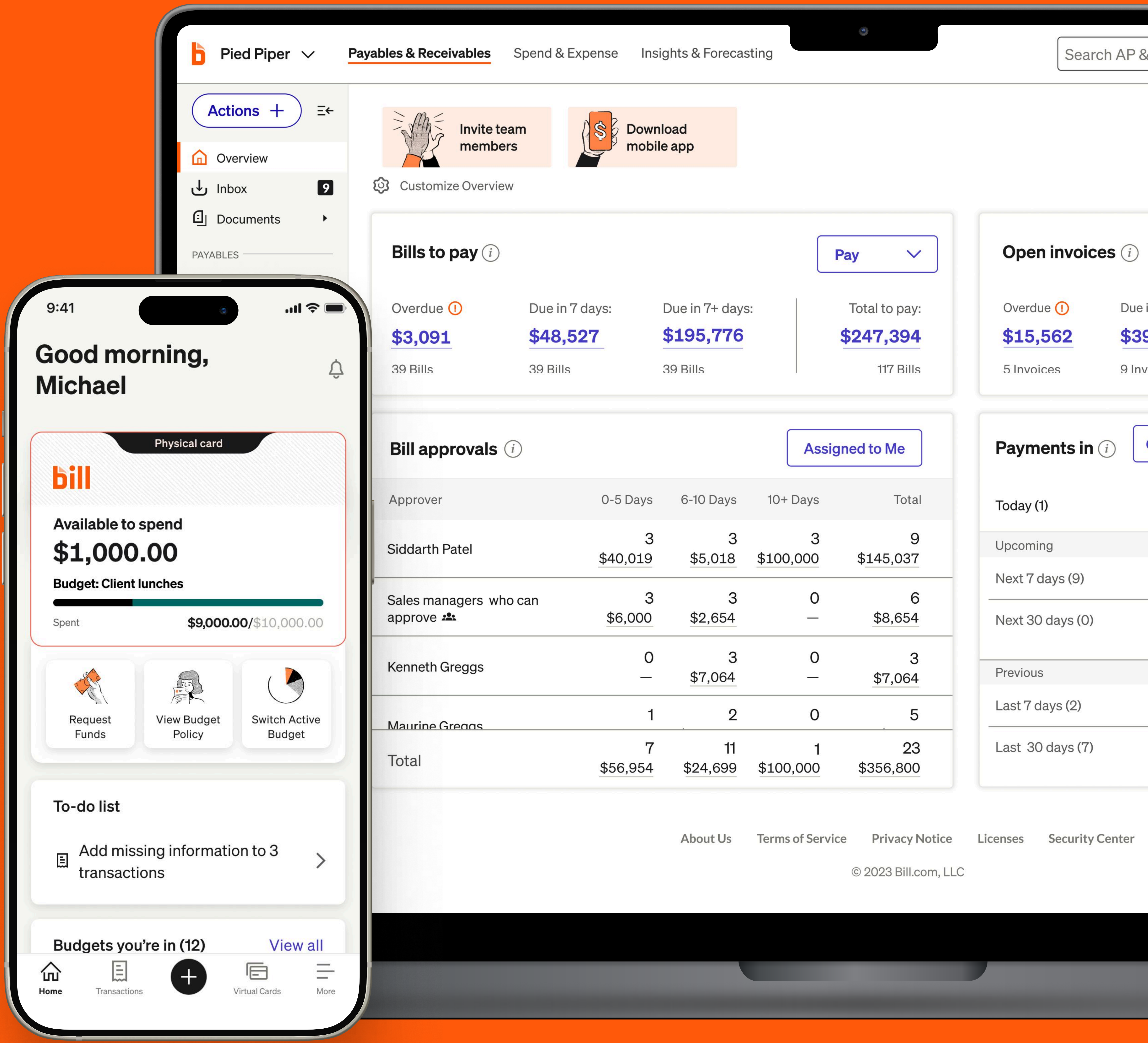
- → How AI from BILL helps you bypass busy work
- → How 4 firms increased their bottom lines with BILL
- → Pricing for growth: An actionable worksheet for CAS firms
- → Creating new CAS opportunities with automated 1099s

Learn how BILL can help you smash your profit barriers

Take a demo of BILL Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Spend & Expense.

Request Demo

If you're a BILL customer and want to learn more, send us an email and we'll connect you with your account manager.



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Results from using the BILL platform may vary according to each company's goals, size and other conditions specific to them.