



**Creating a healthier,
more-profitable tax firm by
offloading the right clients**

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Executive summary

You know very well that your clients' value isn't only linked to their account balance. A client who is easy to work with, uses the technology you've set up to make the data transfer easier, and refers others to your firm is easily worth their weight in gold.

Similarly, the nuances of what makes a client incompatible to your firm can be easy to overlook, resulting in a slow drain on resources and time. Learning to recognize clients whose value is decreasing is the first step to maintaining a strong client list and, likely, a happier, more profitable tax firm.

Offloading clients with grace can be the most challenging part. It's true that letting a client go might be the best thing for you and your clients, but it's natural to dread the conversation or feel anxious about their well-being.

Making the transition successful for all involved could mean paring down your professional relationship, braving a tough conversation, or referring your client to a different tax team. Simple tax return clients, for example, could be routed through a [referral program](#).

Your firm ultimately benefits from culling its client list, opening up your firm for growth. Just ask the nation's top-performing firms. According to a survey by the [Journal of Accountancy](#), 73% of them trim their clients and 90% of them plan to do it in the future. Why?

Disengaging with difficult or inefficient clients reduces stress on your staff and leads to a more manageable workload. This, in turn, leads to stronger growth, year over year.



Introduction

If you've ever moved residences, you've likely spent time taking stock of your current possessions. Naturally, you can't get rid of your newest, most exciting acquisitions (hello, you spent months ogling that velvet couch). You won't part with your most sacred belongings or the ones that have stood the test of time. But what about the chair that groans any time you sit in it, or the throw pillows you've been hauling around since college that don't match your current decor?

To these, you say, *"It's been great, but it's time to part ways."* And when they're gone, don't you feel like a weight has been lifted?

Culling your client list is much the same. There are many reasons to offload a client, and the resulting peace of mind is just one benefit of taking on this perceived arduous task. In this white paper, find out why it might make sense to say goodbye to select clients, and get tips for doing so in a way that not only benefits your practice, but may make a positive difference to them as well.

What makes a current client incompatible?

Your firm might offload or formally disengage select clients for a variety of strategic, ethical, and practical reasons. Here are some common motives:

1. Their business doesn't match the niche you serve best

Maybe it's an industry preference. Maybe it's a mismatch of services, such as tax planning versus tax prep. Perhaps you've decided to solely work with clients who ***"follow the process."*** Whatever your niche, it makes sense to strategically trim your current client list so that only those who best fit remain on it.

Consider Nick Boscia, CPA, EA, who decided to focus on his own specific niche of clients. Along with his brother Joseph, Nick is co-owner of **Boscia & Boscia PC** in Matawan, New Jersey, and they branded their firm to **The Balanced CPA**.

Recently, Nick trimmed his client list for a very specific reason: to grow, wanting *"clients who value structure, respect boundaries, pay upfront, and want to work digitally from anywhere."*

His firm achieved dramatic results, including less burnout, more aligned clients, and time and space to enjoy the work.

"Our firm didn't just get more profitable ... it got healthier," Nick Boscia, CPA, EA

2. Some clients are a drain on your workflow, time, and resources

You may have heard of the Pareto Principle, which, in the case of a firm, means that 80% of your time is spent on 20% of your clients. Whether that's the case in your practice, you've likely come across clients who take up a disproportionate amount of your time—and your team's emotional bandwidth.

Consider offloading clients who display the following tendencies:

- They chronically delay or refuse to provide organized records, significantly disrupting your team's workflows and raising stress.
- They make unreasonable demands, such as last-minute work requests or exhibit disrespectful behavior in the form of nonstop communications or a disregard for boundaries.
- They pay late, undermining your firm's cash flow needs and creating friction in the professional relationship.

3. You have ethical, legal, or professional concerns about working with them

Sometimes walking away isn't just a preference; it's a necessity. Never be afraid to offload clients who provide incomplete or misleading information, engage in non-compliant or illegal behavior, or who create conflicts of interest. Such clients don't just pose a financial and legal risk to your firm—they can tarnish your professional integrity.

4. Clients resist your billing preferences

No business stays the same forever. More and more, tax and accounting firms are revising their billing practices, taking on a subscription-based approach that works well for advisory services, as opposed to hourly billing. But not every client understands or respects that decision.

A client who refuses to move to your company's new or revised fee structure or subscription-style billing may be more trouble than they're worth. Such clients increase stress, disrupt your firm's financial planning, and open the door to inconsistencies month to month.

5. A client's revenue doesn't align with your firm's current goals

Most firms have a wide range of clients. Wealthy, high net-worth clients who are currently pulling from investment accounts; mid-range clients who are growth-focused and aiming toward retirement; and smaller clients who are either just getting started or have maintained a small account for many years. While there's nothing wrong with small-revenue clients, it's possible these might not fit into your firm's current goals or needs—and that's okay, too.



Advisory service growth is still on the rise, setting to outpace the tax profession's overall growth, according to a [**2024 benchmark survey**](#) by CPA.com. If you're looking to grow your practice with a focus on tax planning and advisory, this could be a good opportunity to reduce your list of non-advisory clients. Check out this [**advisory services white paper**](#) to learn more about growing your firm, increasing revenue, and strengthening client relationships—while avoiding burnout.

Offloading clients is healthy for practice growth

While there are a variety of reasons to cull your client pool, it's understandable to have reservations. Most likely, number one on that list of concerns is revenue. But while there is certainly some risk involved in offloading lower-value clients, it's likely less than you think.

In an interview with the [Journal of Accountancy](#), Brandon Lagarde, CPA, J.D., a partner at EisnerAmper, said, *"We identified clients where there was not a good match anymore or where we did not have the capacity. It was hard because we have had many of our clients for many years, but we cut 5% to 10% of our client base, and [fee revenue fell] by only 1%."*

"...we cut 5% to 10% of our client base, and [fee revenue fell] by only 1%"

With fewer low-value or misaligned clients, you'll **increase your firm's capacity**, allowing you to take on other kinds of work and freeing up staff for higher-value engagements. You'll send a message to your team that their time and energy are valued, a signal of goodwill that might help your practice stay competitive while qualified tax professionals are in short supply.

If you feel like now isn't the best time to offload clients, think about at least outsourcing certain tasks instead—particularly those that are time- or labor-intensive. This, too, can help grow your practice and increase capacity.

Consider this finding from the 2025 Intuit QuickBooks [Accountant Technology Survey](#) of 700 US accounting professionals: 80% of accountants report their firm outsourced services in the past year, with 83% agreeing it gives their firm a competitive edge.

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How to offload clients and maintain a positive relationship

Once you've decided it's time to part ways, the next step is to put the ball in motion.

Approaching tough conversations

The most necessary conversations are rarely easy, but you can make them better for yourself and your client. When it's time to have "the talk," executive coach and former editor of one of Intuit's blogs, **Alysha Love**, suggests taking a note from "**Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High**."

"My favorite tool is the 'Start with Heart' questions," she said. "These help ground you in your intention for the conversation, its outcome, and how you communicate with your client."

Write out your answers to these three questions to start the conversation with heart:



Your answers might look something like this:

1. **What do I want for myself?** To have a client base that's fulfilling and profitable for my business. This means I need to break up with some of my clients.
2. **What do I want for my clients?** I want the clients I'm culling from my practice to get the services they need from a tax professional or firm that's an ideal fit for them.
3. **What do I want for the relationship?** I'd like these clients to have positive things to say about having worked with me and my firm. I'd also like for them to be willing to return to my firm if their needs align with my services in the future.

Knowing your answers to these questions will help you shape your communications: how you have the conversation, what details you include, and the tone you use to convey the change.



Ending the existing relationship.

Naturally, a disengagement letter won't fit every situation. Some client relationships deserve a face-to-face meeting or, at the very least, a phone call. By all means, don't email or text! For those who should receive a phone call, simplify your mental load by creating a script or template ahead of time.

While it's important to be clear, caring, and direct, you'll want to avoid assigning blame because this could later damage your firm's reputation. Instead, focus on outlining the coming transition and referring your client to a trusted business that will be a good match for their needs.

"Include an invitation to return when their needs are a fit," said Love.

What if the client doesn't answer the phone or you keep getting their voicemail? It might be time to send an email. Create your own email template or work from ours on the next page.

"Remember that this isn't the end of the relationship; it's simply evolving," said Love. "Your firm won't be the place they get their tax services for now, but that could change in the future. Maintaining relationships is an important part of long-term networking. That solopreneur might knock on your door again when they've grown into a 100-person business in a few years!"

Subject: Notice of Engagement Termination - **[Your Firm Name]**

Dear **[Client Name]**,

Thank you for allowing us at **[Your Firm Name]** to serve as your tax professional. It has been our absolute privilege to work with you.

Unfortunately, we will no longer be able to provide tax services to you effective **[Termination Date]**. This decision wasn't made lightly, and it stems from [a change in our firm's capacity / realignment of our services / a pivot to provide more advisory services].

We will complete the following pending items by **[Completion Date]**:

[List specific deliverables or ongoing tasks]

As of this notice, a balance of **[Amount]** remains due, with payment expected by **[Payment Deadline]**. Please refer to your latest invoice or contact us if you need a detailed statement.

We're happy to assist in transferring your records or preparing a handover to your new tax advisor. If applicable, please note that we will withdraw any Power of Attorney authority we hold with the **IRS and/or [State Tax Agency]** effective upon termination.

We have good working relationships with the following firms, which we believe might be better suited to your current needs:

With your consent, we can connect you with Intuit Tax Pro for ongoing tax return preparation and filing.

[List other specific local or remote firms you trust and briefly explain how they can serve your client's other needs]

We genuinely appreciate the trust you've placed in our firm. It's been a pleasure working with you, and we sincerely wish you all the best in your future endeavors. **[If you find yourself needing advisory services in the future, please reach back out to our firm.]** If there's anything else we can help you with, don't hesitate to let us know.

Warm regards,
[Your name]

Giving them a path forward

Matching your client with another firm that specializes in their unique needs serves multiple purposes.

First and foremost, your client wins: They get the help they need from a resource who understands their goals. Second, you preserve that professional relationship by helping them out. Who knows? Your client may be a better fit for your firm in the future. And third, it's a networking win. When you match a client to another firm, they may repay you with their own referrals.

No, you don't have to like networking ... but it's good for business

It's understandable that when it comes to networking, you'd rather be doing anything else. Only 11% of accounting professionals in a 2025 survey by [Resume Now](#) said they had no hesitations about networking. On the other hand, 89% had a variety of hangups, including a fear of rejection, anxiety over bothering others, and not knowing what to say, just to name a few.

But the thing is, networking is a productive use of your time. It opens the door to high-quality leads, shared resources and expertise, and reciprocal referral partnerships. It invites new conversations and knowledge that can help you improve your practice. And, it may lead to subsequent opportunities that can grow your firm and boost its reputation.

That said, it's okay to be nervous. Check out these [networking tips](#). In the end, it doesn't matter whether your preferred form of networking is in-person or virtual. The key is to work through any discomfort so you can build relationships.



Intuit's Client Referral Program: A win-win for everyone

By now, you know that there are times when you need to find a new home for some clients who are no longer a good fit for your practice. Regardless of the circumstances, you'll want to ensure the referral process is a positive experience for everyone involved.

And this includes you. A good referral program is a win-win for everyone, especially when you can maintain the relationship with the now-former client and even monetize the referral process.

By strategically referring clients to other tax professionals or firms, an accountant can create a network of trust and a system that benefits all parties.

One path forward is **Intuit's Client Referral** Program, where the goal is to help you and your practice **spin off low-value work** while keeping your professional relationship intact.

This is a great option for any tax professional, especially those who don't want to shift simple tax return work to peers focused on high-value or advisory services. With Intuit's Client Referral Program, you'll be able to match your offloading clients with tax professionals who have, on average, over 12 years of experience. What's more, you can rest easy knowing they're in good hands. Intuit's tax pros are rated higher than the industry average in client satisfaction. You'll also get paid for **each client you refer**—up to \$100,000 each year at your tax firm—which makes the decision a win-win.

Get more information on Intuit's Client Referral Program

Conclusion

There will always be clients who strain or drain resources, disrupt workflows, or test professional boundaries.

Making a conscious decision to offload these clients creates space for your firm to focus energy on those who align with your values, goals, and expertise. Meanwhile, these clients go elsewhere where they can find a better-fit based on their needs, but these decisions do not mean it is the end of the relationship.

This strategic pruning not only supports a more sustainable work environment with less burnout, fewer crises, and higher morale, but also opens the door to serving more profitable, growth-oriented clients.