Modern Practice Playbook

BUILDING FUTURE-READY PRACTICES, TODAY

SINGAPORE 2026



About this report

Cutting through the noise, Modern Practice Playbook is here to guide Singapore's accountants and bookkeepers on building agile, intentional firms.

Against a backdrop of rapid change, this playbook unpacks what it means to be a modern practice. Across four chapters – firm structure, redesigning workflows with AI, expanding service offerings, and pricing for outcomes over hours – it reveals what top-performing firms are doing differently, and the direction they're pointing the profession.

Commissioned by Xero, Modern Practice Playbook draws on survey responses from **422** independent senior accountants and bookkeepers throughout Singapore. Behind every stat is a story – and a lesson worth learning. To offer guidance beyond benchmarking, we spoke with practice leaders and Xero experts.

SURVEY SAMPLE

Responses have been primarily sourced from third-party panels (**394** respondents) in addition to the Xero customer database (**28** respondents). The data has been weighted to ensure equal representation of firm sizes.

BENCHMARKING

Learning from top-performing practices isn't just about chasing higher figures – it's about understanding the blueprint for success. Throughout, 'top performers' are defined as those employing accounting and bookkeeping firms (two or more full-time employees) with a net profit margin of 36% or above, representing approximately **33%** of employing practices in this survey. Where their results diverge meaningfully from the average (10+ percentage points), we use this lens to show what's possible.

Sole practitioners are excluded from this group, as their lower overheads structurally inflate net profit margins. 'Lower margin firms' are defined as employing firms with a net profit margin of 0-35%.

References to 'Singapore average' (also called 'all firms' or 'average firms') means the average of the full weighted sample of 422 practices surveyed – sole traders through to large firms.

Firm size: elements of the data are also cut by firm size across the full sample.

Grouping	Employee count
Solo	0-1 (i.e. themselves)
Small	2-10
Medium	11-50
Large	51+

Practice leader quotes: to bring the data to life, we've included anonymous quotes sourced and approved from survey participants.

Multi-response questions: where respondents could choose more than one answer, percentages will add up to over 100%.

AI time and money savings: figures are self-reported estimates, calculated using the mid-point of banded survey responses. Dollar figures are the reported weekly average annualised. See appendix for the full calculation.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this playbook, 'advisory' refers to services beyond core compliance, including: strategic planning, succession planning, forecasting and modelling, tax and business, tech and systems advisory, business opportunities, growth and capital support, hiring, and sustainability/environmental, social, and governance (ESG) advisory.

The information in this report is a guide and should not be taken as financial, legal or business advice. We recommend you check with an independent expert that what you're doing is right for you and your practice.

Contents

Foreword Koren Wines, Managing Director – APAC 4

Highlights: The anatomy of a modern practice 5

CHAPTER ONE

The modern practice model 7

Built for success: the structural choices that set top performers apart

Key learnings: what the data tells us about laying the right foundations 8

Case study: Creating a foundation for meaningful advice 11

CHAPTER TWO

The AI advantage 12

Where AI drives the biggest efficiency gains and what practices do with the time

Key learnings: what the numbers uncover about using AI with intention 13

Case study: The firm building its own AI tools, one pain point at a time 19

CHAPTER THREE

Service portfolio optimisation 20

Value-added services: where the profit lives and how to get started

Key learnings: what the data reveals about the advisory opportunity 21

CHAPTER FOUR

Evolving your pricing approach 24

How Singaporean practices price today and what it takes to charge with confidence

Key learnings: what the data reveals about pricing with confidence 25

Where to from here 28

Your checklist for building a modern practice, today

Appendix 29



FOREWORD

Benchmarking and beyond. Singapore's accounting industry is at an inflection point and you get to determine what happens next.



Koren Wines, Managing Director – APAC

In the last few years alone, the nature of the conversations Singapore's accountants are having with their clients has changed.

What might have started as a question about compliance or reporting now leads somewhere more interesting: a conversation about strategy, growth and what comes next. It's a sign of how the profession is evolving in a rapidly changing environment, and the opportunity this creates.

But it also raises some important questions. New regulations are reshaping what clients expect and need, and experienced, senior talent is hard to find. With technology transforming and speeding up how work gets done, the old ways of working are starting to show their limits. Practices across Singapore are wrestling with the same challenges: how do we structure our firm for what's ahead? What services should we be offering? And how do we charge for the value we deliver? What are top performing practices doing in these areas?

These are the questions this playbook sets out to answer, across four chapters: practice structure, AI use, service portfolio optimisation and pricing. Our data shows how practices are running today and what sets the top performers apart. But we've gone beyond benchmarking. Real-life case studies from leading firms and practical guidance from Xero experts bring the numbers to life. The aim is to give you the insights and examples to build a practice that's ready for whatever's ahead.

As AI accelerates the pace of change, clients are increasingly looking for more insightful guidance from their accountants. Singapore's Budget 2026 recognised this too, naming accountancy among the first professions to be supported in building AI skills. And practices are already adapting. 90% are using or experimenting with AI, and over half are embedding it into day-to-day workflows. That's creating more capacity for advisory, deeper client relationships, and the confidence to price accordingly.

Data tells you where the profession stands today. The people in these pages show you what's possible next. That's why we've called this a playbook, not a report. It's been developed to be applied, not just read.

You won't find speculation or hype in these pages; just data-backed findings, insights into what other firms are doing to drive success, and the human stories behind them. My hope is that you'll find ideas that inspire your thinking and motivate your growth, along with examples you can learn from and practical opportunities to take forward in your own practice.

Highlights: the anatomy of a modern practice

Singaporean practices aren't stopping at experimenting with AI and expanding into advisory. The top performers among them are redesigning elements of their entire operations – from workflows, to service offerings and pricing – to unlock the full value of both.

HERE'S WHAT SETS THEM APART:

- **Clearly defining who they serve** – and shaping their practice around that client profile.
- **Harnessing AI** to help produce stronger financial returns.
- **Using advisory work** to help drive more revenue growth.
- **Charging with confidence** – commanding a premium for the same service type and planning bolder price rises.

Beyond efficiency, it's about what these gains make possible – stronger client relationships, more meaningful advice and better outcomes for the businesses they serve.

THE PROFITABILITY GAP ISN'T EFFORT. IT'S ARCHITECTURE.

Top performers are 2.4x more profitable than lower margin practices.

But it doesn't come down to size or structure. Instead, it's the habits they share: being deliberate about who they serve, using AI to help produce stronger financial returns, capturing more value from advisory and pricing with conviction.

AI IS THE PRODUCTIVITY ENGINE SAVING TIME AND MONEY

Across all staff combined, AI saves Singapore's firms **10 hours** per week on average. That's essentially 1.25 days per week back.

When it comes to average monetary savings, top performers see a meaningfully higher return:

All firms: ~$165,000 per year VS **Top performers: ~$249,000 per year**

THE SAME XERO AI, BIGGER GAINS

Looking at practices that leverage Xero's AI capabilities specifically, across all staff combined, Xero users save an average of **8 hours** per week.

When it comes to average monetary savings, top performers again see a meaningfully higher return:

Xero firms average: ~$143,000 per year VS **Xero top performers average: ~$237,000 per year**

AI IS EVOLVING JOBS

58%
of Singaporean practices
are redirecting AI-freed time towards advisory work.

While just
11%
expect AI to reduce headcount in the next year.

These figures reveal that leveraging AI isn't necessarily shrinking teams – it's freeing them up for higher-value work.

IT PAYS TO BILL FOR OUTCOMES OVER HOURS

Practices surveyed bill an average of
79%
of client engagements on non-hourly terms.

Of those using value-based pricing,
58%
say it's made their practice more profitable.

The biggest opportunity is moving up the ladder towards value-based models.

ADVISORY IS WHERE FREED TIME CAN BECOME REVENUE

61%
of Singaporean practices
offer advisory – and for those that do, it's their top earner.

For non-advisory firms,
34%
cite lack of capacity as a barrier – a problem AI is proven to help alleviate.

TOP PERFORMERS CHARGE MORE FOR THE SAME WORK

Top performers charge **43% more** on average for financial reporting alone.

They're over **2× as likely** to plan a price rise above **20%** this year.

YOUR PLAYBOOK STARTS HERE.

CHAPTER ONE

The modern practice model

Built for success: the structural choices that set top performers apart

While no two firms are built the same, our data reveals success isn't tied to structure or scale alone. Instead, it comes down to how firms run things: being deliberate about who they serve, harnessing AI to produce stronger financial returns, and pricing with discipline. Whether you're a solo operator or eager to grow, you can build an agile modern firm. Firm size may shape the starting point, resources and pace of change – but not the opportunity. A smaller practice might start by adopting one workflow at a time, strengthening existing client relationships and focusing on the services where its expertise is most valuable. This chapter sets the scene: how Singaporean practices are structured, and what top performers do differently



'Focus on client relationships, embrace automation, improve efficiency, and continuously develop skills to provide valuable and dependable accounting services.'

Practice leader, Small firm

Key learnings: what the data tells us about laying the right foundations

Size plays a defining role in practice structure, influencing everything from staffing ratios to service mix. Not every leader is looking to grow, but the choices that enable a modern practice to scale apply at any size: how you shape your team, who you serve, and how disciplined you are about tracking billable time. Here's the blueprint

01 SIZE SHAPES STRUCTURE – DELIBERATE CHOICES CAN SHAPE PROFITABILITY:

top performers are **2.4×** more profitable than lower-margin firms. What sets them apart? Top performers get more financial value out of every hour AI frees up, generate a bigger revenue lift from the advisory work they do offer, and price with more confidence and discipline than the average firm.

02 DEFINE WHO YOU SERVE:

top performers are more likely to primarily serve medium and large businesses (**60%** vs **43%** for the average firm). Regardless of whether your focus is on small or large businesses, being deliberate about your ideal client – their size, sector, and complexity – is the structural choice that shapes everything else

03 BUILD YOUR TEAM AROUND WHO YOU SERVE:

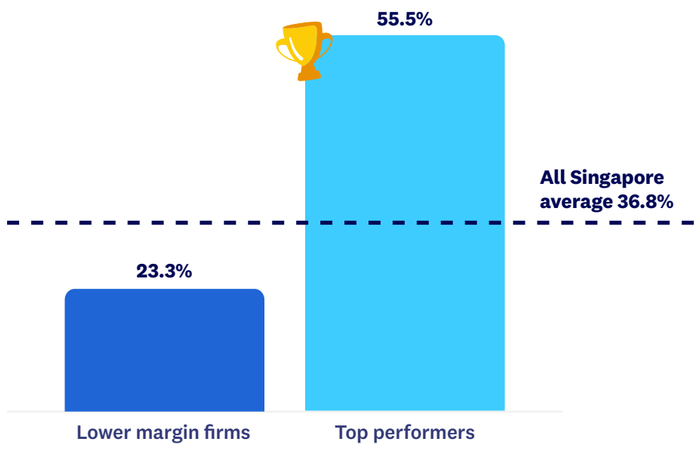
as practices grow, staff roles become more specialised (e.g. separate teams for bookkeeping or advisory) – ranging from **50%** of small practices organised around specialist roles to a peak of **75%** of medium-sized firms. Even smaller operations can benefit from this approach; if headcount allows, consider letting your ideal client profile shape how you structure your team and recruit talent.

04 PROTECT YOUR REALISATION RATE:

8 in 10 Singaporean practices bill 75% or more of their billable hours to clients. Recognising the value of your work is the standard that lets clients do the same.

Decoding the profitability gap

Top-performing practices are **2.4x** more profitable than lower margin firms.



The profitability gap doesn't come down to practice size or structure alone. Instead, we found that top performers tend to share key habits: they get more financial value out of every hour AI frees up, generate a bigger revenue lift from the advisory work they do offer, and price with more confidence and discipline than the average firm.

But none of this lands without the right foundations. Before we spend the following chapters diving into what sets top performers apart, it pays to set the scene.

'We've got to rethink how we measure success – profitability matters, but so do sustainable habits, client retention and staff satisfaction.'

Practice leader, Small firm

Behind the scenes of modern Singaporean practices

Clear trends emerge when you segment the data by practice size. Larger firms are far more likely to primarily serve medium and large businesses – helping them deepen client relationships and focus on higher-value work as they scale. This reflects the scale and support structures larger firms have built, rather than a hierarchy of value – firms that focus on small business clients can specialise and deepen those relationships just as deliberately. Specialisation follows a similar pattern, increasing with size and peaking at medium-sized firms

	Solo	Small	Medium	Large	Why it matters
Team structure					
Practices organised around specialist roles	13%	50%	75%	62%	Specialism increases with size, peaking at medium firms
Average partners/ directors	0.9	2.1	2.9	3.9	Leadership grows with scale
Fully onshore delivery	75%	57%	9%	23%	Offshore use increases with size, peaking at medium firms
Client focus					
Primarily serve medium/ large businesses	15%	17%	48%	92%	Big firms capture the big clients
Clients per full-time employee (median)	30	19	13	5	Fewer clients per person as firms scale

Xero expert insight: your strategy for building a modern practice



XERO EXPERT INSIGHT

Angad Soin
Global Chief Strategy Officer

The data in this chapter reveals the structural building blocks behind Singapore's firms. But structure alone isn't enough to build a modern practice – it needs to serve a clearly defined strategy. Put simply, strategy is about purposeful decision-making. But in order to make strategic choices, you need to know what your endgame is, and how to realise success along the way – whatever it means to you.

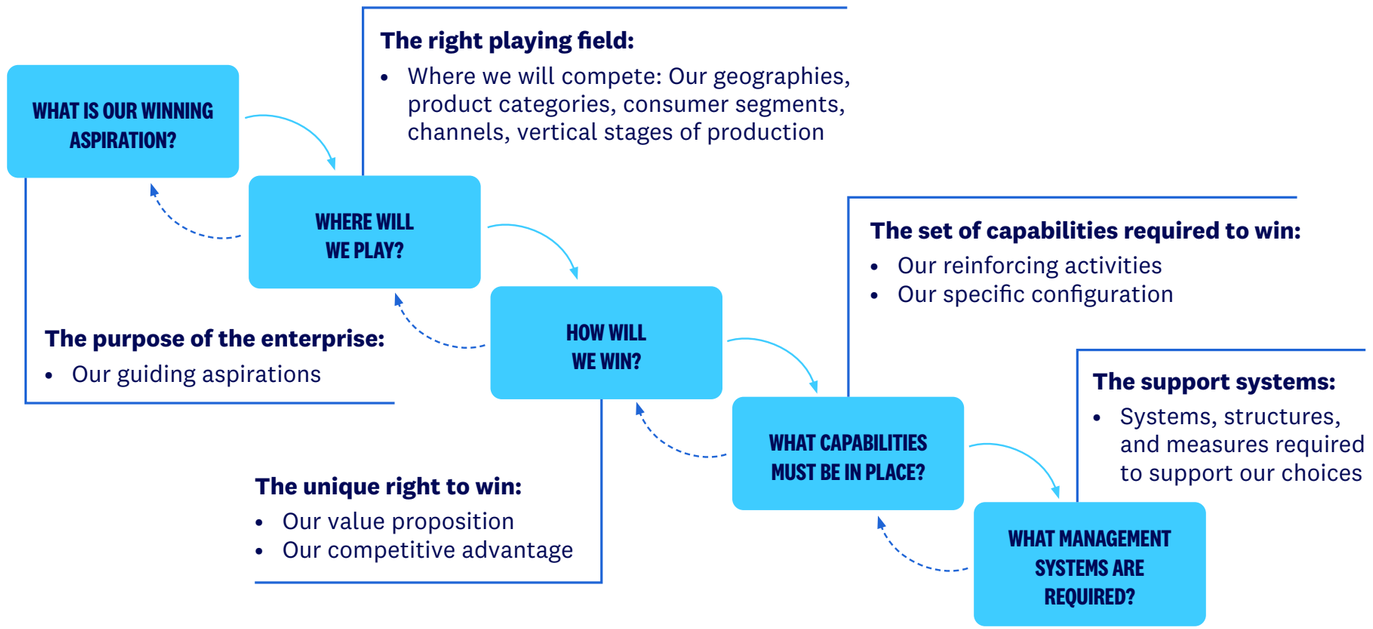
The framework below, adapted from Roger Martin and Alan G. Lafley's Playing to Win, is a useful lens for any practice leader thinking about where they're headed.

Let these questions guide you toward strategic decision-making:

- What does "winning" actually mean for your practice? Depending on your goals, this could be anything from successfully expanding your advisory offering, to scaling a practice with genuine enterprise value you can one day sell.
- How can your definition of "winning" guide all of your decisions?
- Where are you not going to play? Focus is essential: when should you say no?
- What would make a client choose you over another practice?
- The golden question: what needs to be true for these choices to be a winning strategy?

What makes a winning strategy?

An integrated cascade of choices, and reinforcing those choices



Source: Roger Martin and Alan G. Lafley. (2013). Playing to Win.

Case study: Creating a foundation for meaningful advice



FIRM: WLP **LOCATION(S):** Singapore
TEAM MEMBERS: 20 employees **XERO USER SINCE:** 2016

The goal of giving small businesses access to the financial expertise and systems that only bigger companies could afford prompted Li Han Tan to launch WLP with two school friends. Each founder brought a different strength across accounting, business development and HR, shaping the firm's early service offering. Thirteen years on, that thinking still guides their approach. To serve different client needs, WLP has built dedicated teams covering accounting, corporate secretarial services, HR outsourcing and business education. For Li Han, the priority is simple. Get the fundamentals right, then help clients take the next step.

BRINGING DIFFERENT STRENGTHS TOGETHER

WLP runs separate teams for accounting, corporate secretarial, HR outsourcing and its client-education Academy. This specialisation is typical of medium-sized firms in Singapore, where 75% of practices are organised around specialist roles (more than at any other firm size). It lets each team build deep expertise rather than spreading generalist skills thin.

Since COVID accelerated client adoption, WLP made a strategic decision to focus exclusively on Xero. 'We told our clients, we don't use any other accounting software', says Li Han. As a result, the team has a consistent way of working and building its wider tech stack around one platform:

- Hubdoc and Tofu automate data entry.
- Talenox and JustLogin handle HR and payroll.
- MuRho manages inventory.
- Syft Analytics turns Xero data into client-ready reports, saving at least two hours per client and simplifying consolidation for multi-entity clients

'You have to consistently look at what you can improve in your firm. It's not one big implementation at one time. It's always step-by-step progress.'

GOOD ADVICE STARTS WITH THE RIGHT NUMBERS

For WLP, moving into advisory starts with getting the basics right. The firm makes sure clients have clean, timely books and reliable financial information before helping them look ahead. With Syft Analytics, reports and visualisations can be prepared before meetings, giving business owners a clearer view of their finances and leaving more time to discuss what the numbers mean. Instead of spending an hour explaining the figures, the team can focus on what is driving revenue, where costs are rising and what the business could do next.

'You can't really plan if your books aren't up to date. You need the right data first. Once the fundamentals are in place, we can start talking about budgeting and cash-flow forecasting, then move on to tax planning,' says Li Han. That sequence matters when businesses come under pressure. Construction clients, for example, can face collection delays of up to 90 days. With reliable information, WLP can help them see the pressure coming and plan for it rather than reacting when cash is already tight.

The next step is helping clients become more confident with their finances. WLP found that many business owners focus on their top and bottom lines or bank balance without really understanding what the figures are telling them. In 2023, the firm launched its Academy to help clients build those skills and make sense of their financial statements.

As WLP expands its advisory offering, Li Han sees technology as creating more room for accountants to focus on the conversations, relationships and decisions that matter to clients. He explains, 'When we have the information in front of us, we can spend less time explaining the numbers and more time talking about what the client should do.'

LI HAN'S TIPS FOR OTHER FIRMS

1. **Structure your founding team around complementary skills:** when each partner owns a distinct service line, you build capability from day one rather than having three generalists compete for the same work.
2. **Standardise on a single platform:** a consistent core platform can make it easier to train teams, onboard clients and build integrations as the practice grows.
3. **Sequence advisory deliberately:** real-time books come before budgeting, forecasting or tax planning. Explain that order upfront so clients understand why a "no" today sets up a "yes" later.

CHAPTER TWO

The AI advantage

Where AI drives the biggest efficiency gains – and what practices do with the time

Amidst mounting industry pressures, AI promises to arm you with the most valuable asset of all: time. We go beyond adoption rates, uncovering where it's having the biggest impact, which tools are being harnessed, and the way modern practices are rethinking how (and who) they hire. Most importantly, our data reveals that effectiveness ultimately seems to hinge on one thing: knowing your processes. Of the practices actively using AI in day-to-day workflows, nine in ten rate their core business processes as well-documented. This matters because top performers report experiencing 51% more monetary value from AI-driven time savings than the average firm. Why? They're more likely to redirect the time AI frees up into higher-value, billable work. While AI frontfoots the routine, leading practices are investing in what can't be automated: deepening client relationships

When it comes to AI use, these fundamental guidelines factor into what best practice can look like:

Understand it: know what the AI does, its purpose and its limitations.

Control it: review, verify, correct or reject its outputs before relying on them.

Document/evidence: demonstrate the review, decisions and controls applied to the work.

AI guidance and professional expectations will continue to evolve, so be sure to keep checking the latest guidance and requirements from your professional bodies and regulators.

'To stay competitive, the most critical shift for an accounting or bookkeeping business is embracing AI automation for routine execution while transitioning to proactive, advisory-led client relationships.'

Practice leader, Solo practice



Key learnings: what the numbers uncover about using AI with intention

The data is clear: AI is now one of the key starting points for Singapore's practices, not the exception. But experimentation alone isn't the differentiator – how deliberately practices embed it, direct the time it frees up, and build their teams around it is what separates outcomes.

01 BEGIN BY EXPERIMENTING, AIM FOR EMBEDDING:

90% of Singaporean firms have tried AI, and **over half (55%)** are already actively using it in day-to-day workflows. Adoption alone won't move the needle. Depth will.

02 MAP YOUR PROCESSES BEFORE REACHING FOR TOOLS:

active AI users are far more likely to rate their core processes as well-documented (**89%**) than firms who don't use AI (**11%**). AI can only improve what you can already define.

03 START WITH THE SOFTWARE YOU ALREADY USE:

59% of Singaporean firms use AI built into their accounting software. Integrated, in-platform tools are the lowest-friction starting point. For Xero users, that means the ease and security of AI that sits directly within their bookkeeping and accounting workflows. Inside Xero, JAX is your AI finance partner, delivering actionable insights and automating routine financial work, while keeping human experts in control.

04 TRACK TIME SAVED (AND WHERE IT GOES):

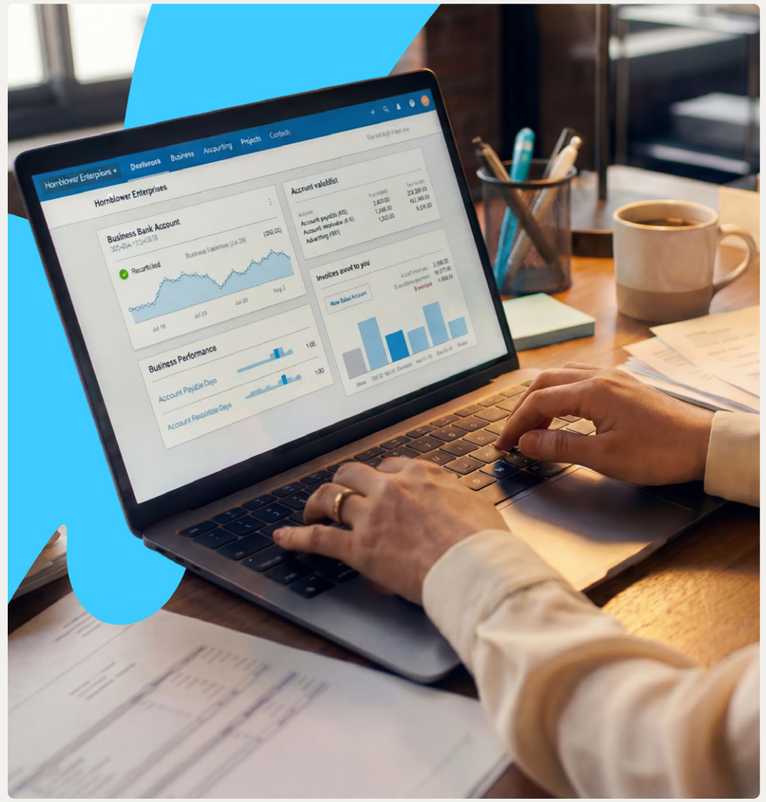
58% of firms are redirecting AI-freed capacity into higher-value advisory work. Without a plan, efficiency gains risk getting absorbed by low-value tasks. Decide where the hours will go – and plan accordingly.

05 GIVE YOUR TEAM TIME TO EXPLORE:

53% of firms say self-led experimentation during work time is an effective route to building AI capability. Create the conditions for your team to learn.

06 HIRE FOR WHERE THE PROFESSION IS HEADING:

8 in 10 (83%) practices have already adjusted their hiring approach in response to AI, including **47%** shifting focus toward tech-fluency and data skills, and **24%** actively recruiting non-traditional roles such as data analysts and tax technologists.



AI adoption is now widespread across Singaporean practices

With 90% of Singaporean practices having tried AI, and over half (55%) already actively using it in day-to-day workflows, experimentation is no longer the differentiator – depth of use is.

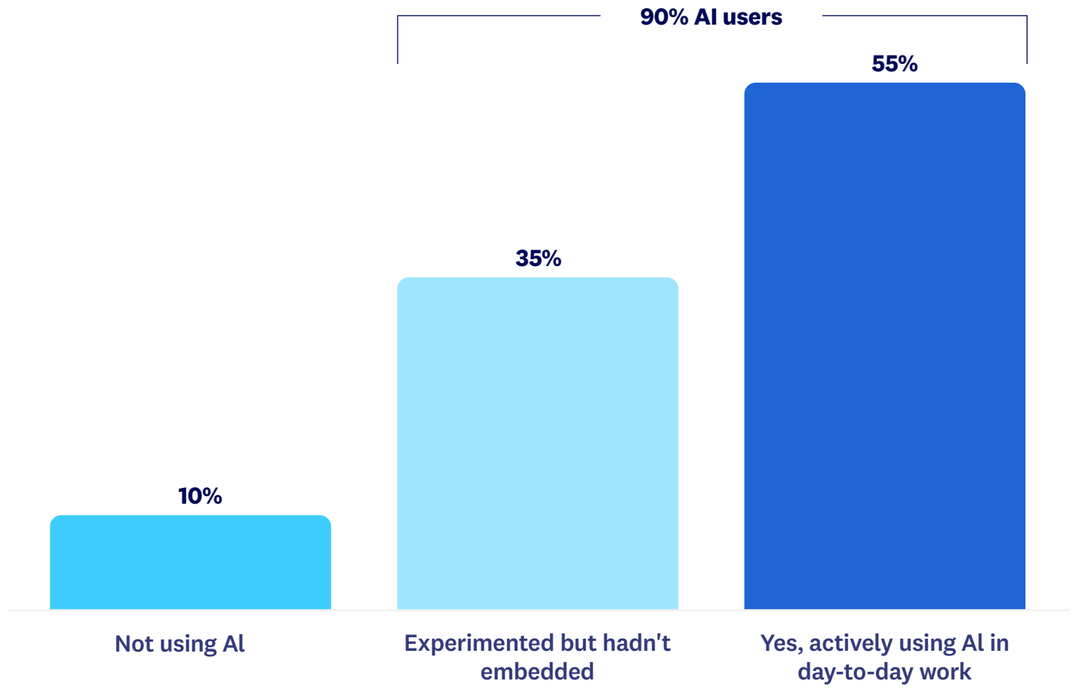
There's a tangible difference between reaching for a tool occasionally and building it into how your practice runs. Embedded AI shapes workflows, saves time at scale, and compounds in value the more consistently it's used.

THE BIGGER THE FIRM, THE DEEPER THE AI USE

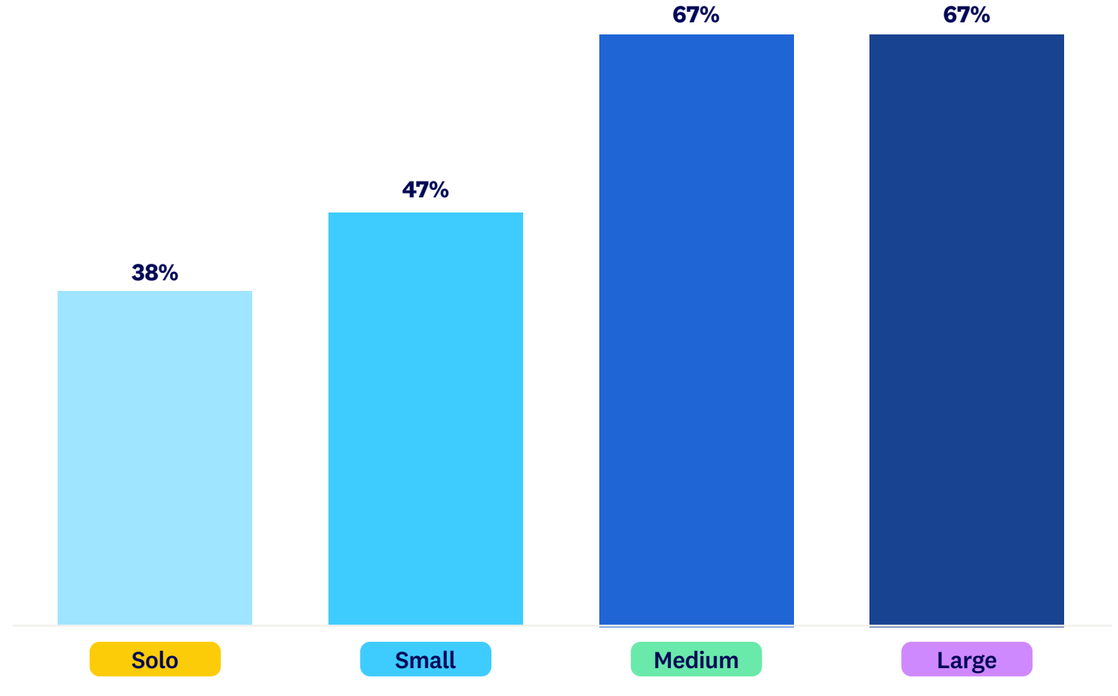
It's a common assumption that smaller, nimbler firms move fastest. But when it comes to AI, size has its advantages – medium and large practices lead the charge in equal measure, with the workflow volume to make AI pay off quickly and the team at hand to embed it properly.

However, this advantage is about capacity, not potential. Smaller practices don't need to wait for scale: starting with automating one well-defined workflow can free up time for client conversations and create a practical path to deeper AI use.

AI adoption in Singapore practices



% actively using AI daily, by firm size



AI IS THE PRODUCTIVITY ENGINE SAVING TIME AND MONEY

By automating tasks like bank reconciliation, invoicing, and data entry, practices are reclaiming hours in their day. But just how much time?

Across all staff combined, the use of AI tools saves firms **10 hours** per week on average.

That means these Singaporean practices save:

1.25 days per week
thanks to AI

When it comes to average monetary savings, top performers see a meaningfully higher return:

All firms average:
$165,000 per year

VS

Top performers average:
$249,000 per year

THE SAME XERO AI, BIGGER GAINS

Looking at practices that leverage Xero's AI capabilities specifically, across all staff combined, Xero users save an average of **8 hours** per week.

When it comes to average monetary savings, top performers again see a meaningfully higher return:

Xero firms average:
$143,000 per year

VS

Xero top performers average
$237,000 per year

All of which goes to show: the tools are already there. It's how you use them that counts.

THE AI YOU NEED IS ALREADY IN YOUR TOOLKIT

Practices are harnessing AI across a range of tools:

- **66%** use standalone AI tool subscriptions like ChatGPT or Claude
- **59%** use the AI tools built into their accounting software
- **59%** use AI in productivity software
- **24%** use general business tools (e.g. CRM)
- **21%** use accounting and bookkeeping-specific practice tools
- **17%** use custom-tailored tools built for their practice

Standalone generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Claude are widely used for research, drafting, and content creation. Used on their own, these tools can save time, but they also introduce risk. The core issue isn't AI itself – it's where and how it's used. Generic AI tools aren't trained on your firm's policies, your clients' data or Singapore-specific accounting and tax rules. They don't understand professional judgement, ethical obligations or regulatory nuance.

AI should never replace professional judgement. Instead, it should support it; handling repetitive, rules-based tasks while humans retain oversight and decision-making.

As automation helps take care of more routine work, your relationships become more important, not less. Accountants and bookkeepers bring the context, expertise and trust that help clients turn information into confident decisions.

Rather than relying on separate tools, firms will benefit from AI that sits directly within their bookkeeping and accounting workflow. This supports transparency, auditability, and human oversight to be built in. For Xero partners, that means the ease and security of an AI-native financial operating system that unifies core financial operations – including accounting, payments, payroll, reporting, tax – and an ecosystem, into workflows orchestrated by JAX, with actions queued for your review.

That AI-native foundation works in three core ways: connected tools that help automate across your practice and work in the tools you're using; collaboration that surfaces client insights before they ask; and custom apps that turn expertise into a competitive advantage. Every one of them is built on Accountable Intelligence™ – Xero's commitment to AI that business can trust.

JAX is your AI finance partner in Xero, working across your clients and practice. It answers your questions, takes on routine work in the background, and surfaces what matters before you ask. Smart Document Capture and Auto Bank Reconciliation are JAX doing the work; chat and proactive insights are how it helps you see further. All of it is built on the philosophy of Accountable Intelligence™.

ACCOUNTABLE INTELLIGENCE™

How trust shows up across JAX:

- **Full transparency.** JAX shows its reasoning at every step. Nothing moves without your approval.
- **Reliable answers.** JAX Assure ensures every answer is reliable with built-in guardrails.
- **Enterprise-grade security.** SOC2/ISO certified. Data never trains third-party LLMs.
- **Trusted at scale.** 20 years of trusted small business data, built with you – now relied on by 2M+ businesses globally

'Moving all our clients to cloud software changed everything for me – making remote collaboration super smooth now.'

Practice leader, Small firm





XERO EXPERT INSIGHT

James Bergin
EGM Technology Research and Advocacy

How you can do more with less using Xero's AI

Smart Document Capture: Smart Document Capture is Xero's built-in way to get cleaner data into the ledger from the start. It reads and extracts key information from receipts and documents automatically, so records can be created quickly with less manual rekeying or switching between systems. Designed for healthier data from day one, less chasing and correction later, and more confidence in everything that follows.

Auto bank reconciliation: Auto bank reconciliation, powered by JAX, helps keep bank transactions and the ledger in sync with less manual effort. When Xero has a high degree of confidence, transactions are matched and reconciled automatically, while everything, including exceptions, are surfaced for review. You can check the reasoning, correct anything that looks off, and review supporting documents, so visibility and control stay with you at all times. The more it's used within your workflow, the more useful it becomes.

With a healthy foundation in place, JAX can help practices unlock capacity by front footing routine work and surfacing what needs more attention. It goes beyond answering questions: JAX helps monitor signals across the workflow and highlight what matters to help enable teams to focus their judgement where it adds the most value. It's designed to support professional oversight, not replace it, and is underpinned by Accountable Intelligence™.

Advanced reporting with Syft: Turn live Xero data into clear, valuable conversations with clients. Syft can help practices create polished reports, forecasts and visual insights that make business performance easier to understand and easier to act on. From tracking performance to planning ahead, it gives you the tools to deliver more confident, forward-looking guidance without building everything manually in spreadsheets.

ENABLING TEAMS TO DO MORE WITH LESS

Already, 36% of practices using AI say it has significantly allowed them to maintain or grow output with their existing teams.

In professions stretched thin by talent gaps and rising workloads, freed capacity is the most valuable resource there is.

'Efficient automation can improve daily workflows, while expanding advisory services gives accounting firms a stronger way to support clients with planning and financial decisions for long-term business success.'

Practice leader, Medium firm

BEYOND EFFICIENCY, AI IS BOOSTING CLIENT INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCE

Improved efficiency and time savings top the list of benefits Singaporean practices report from using AI (**61%**), followed closely by greater accuracy and reduced errors (**50%**).

Enhanced client experience (**45%**), increased profitability (**43%**) and the ability to serve more clients without adding headcount (**41%**) round out the top five.

Together, they point to something more significant than productivity gains alone: AI isn't just helping practices deliver faster, it's enabling them to do deeper, better work.

'Future growth will depend on combining smart technology with personal service – helping clients solve problems while making everyday accounting work faster and more accurate.'

Practice leader, Large firm

TIME SAVED IS ONLY VALUABLE IF YOU KNOW WHERE IT GOES

When we asked practices what they do with the extra capacity AI gives them, clear growth priorities emerged:

58%
are doing more high-value advisory work.

42%
are investing in training and upskilling team members.

41%
are focusing on business development and new client acquisition.

37%
are taking on more clients.

30%
are focusing on innovation projects like new tools, workflows and niches.

'Using automation for routine tasks gives accountants more time to focus on higher-value work that clients genuinely appreciate.'

Practice leader, Medium firm



XERO EXPERT TIP

James Bergin
EGM Technology Research and Advocacy

ELEVATING YOUR AI USE

Avoid the 'productivity paradox', where efficiency gains from AI are absorbed by low-value work. By knowing your key processes and knowing where the value is, you can deploy time saved to the right tasks to amplify your impact. Examine how the AI capability on offer might augment your ability to do more, do things differently, improve your methods, or remove something of lower value. For example, could you:

- Transform unstructured data into a more usable format to enhance your processes
- Evolve a product or offering (for example, business plan creation) to deliver your specialist knowledge more efficiently at scale
- Move to a different and more structured, scientific approach to experimentation – state a hypothesis, define a method, and gather data to prove or disprove it
- Build quality control into your AI workflows – define standards for outputs, review processes, and checkpoints that ensure what leaves your firm is accurate and consistent.

AI IS POWERING A SHIFT TOWARDS HIGHER-VALUE WORK

When accountants were asked which workflows they currently use AI for most, bookkeeping and bank reconciliation led at **61%**.

This was closely followed by management reporting, KPI dashboards and performance analysis at **55%**.

Advisory and planning services (cash flow, forecasting, structuring) followed at **48%**.

This tells its own story: in Singapore, AI's biggest foothold today is in the operational core of the practice – the compliance and reporting work that keeps the lights on – with advisory close behind.

As AI use deepens, this is an area worth watching: the practices getting the most value tend to be the ones actively working AI into higher-value work, not just operational tasks (as explored in the following chapter).

AI IS EVOLVING JOBS

Just 11% of Singaporean practices expect AI to lead to headcount reductions

while 38% expect to restructure roles and teams around new ways of working.

AI is freeing people up to focus on the kind of higher-value work where a human touch makes all the difference.

AI IS RESHAPING WHAT PRACTICES LOOK FOR IN A HIRE

8 in 10 (83%) practices have already adjusted their hiring approach in response to AI.

47% **have shifted focus away from traditional accounting experience toward tech-fluency and data skills, and 40% now treat tech-fluency as a mandatory baseline requirement for every candidate.**

45% **are prioritising soft skills and relationship-management capabilities for the right roles**

24% **are actively recruiting non-traditional roles such as data analysts and tax technologists.**



XERO EXPERT TIP

James Bergin
EGM Technology Research and Advocacy

HOW TO EMBED AI INTO YOUR PRACTICE'S WORKFLOWS

AI can't help streamline your processes if you can't articulate what your team does day-to-day. Successful integration begins with mapping out your core processes to identify bottlenecks and spot where AI can have the most impact.

Try this prompt to kickstart your discovery process: ***'You are an expert at business process modelling. Help me model out the core processes of my accounting [or bookkeeping] practice. Start with the functions that are common to most accounting practices and ask me questions about the steps that we take in our practice to do things differently. Use Event-Driven Process Chain (EPC) notation in your diagrams.'***

THE FOUNDATION OF AI SUCCESS? KNOWING YOUR PROCESSES

The Singaporean practices actively using AI every day have one thing in common: almost **9 in 10 (89%)** rate their core business processes as well-documented, a figure that drops to **11%** among practices who don't use AI.

THE BIGGEST BARRIERS TO AI ADOPTION? PRIVACY AND COST CONCERNS

Despite AI's well-documented efficiency gains, there's still some reluctance to adoption. The top two barriers are data privacy, security and compliance concerns (**59%**) and the cost of AI tools and implementation (**51%**).

Concerns about AI accuracy, including hallucinations or unreliable outputs, follow closely at **50%**. Lack of time to experiment and redesign workflows is a concern for **49%** of practices.

These are legitimate concerns, and exactly what in-platform AI is built to help address.

The good news: AI has proven to free capacity – time that can go straight back into experimenting with new workflows. It helps to view the time spent learning AI not as a 'cost' that takes you away from work, but as a 'capital investment' that buys back future time. Focusing on optimising the right processes could mean, for example, five hours spent today saving five hours every week – a worthy trade-off, indeed.

THE BEST WAY TO BUILD CAPABILITY: GIVE PEOPLE TIME TO EXPLORE

Making space for their team to learn is one of the highest-return investments a practice leader can make. When asked which training type best increases AI usage, they said:

53% **self-led experimentation during work time.**

36% **formal training courses.**

39% **peer-led coaching.**

35% **online self-study.**

The message for practice leaders: create protected time for your team to master these tools (with appropriate security guardrails in place) – not just a training budget.

'Encourage a culture of ongoing innovation where teams actively pursue process improvements, adopt cutting-edge technologies, and deliver more efficient accounting solutions.'

Practice leader, Medium firm

Case study: The firm building its own AI tools, one pain point at a time



FIRM: Harvest Accounting **LOCATION(S):** Singapore
TEAM MEMBERS: 22 **XERO USER SINCE:** 2018



'What's kept us going is just trying to solve whatever problem the client brings to us, and thinking about whether other businesses might benefit from the same solution.'

Matthew Phua

In 2018, Matthew Phua and Bryan Zhao decided they'd had enough of working for someone else. With finance careers built across the globe, they had big plans to leave traditional desktop software behind and build a cloud-based practice entirely on Xero. Today, Harvest Accounting is a fully remote, digital-first firm with a team spread across Asia. They help small businesses get ahead by streamlining their finances, reimagining workflows, and matching them with the right tools in Xero. The firm has grown by around 30% year-on-year for the last seven years and is now a Xero Platinum Partner. Much of that growth can be traced to the way Matthew approaches a challenge. When something slows the firm down, he looks for a way to fix it; increasingly, that means building an AI tool himself.

BUILDING ON WHAT ALREADY WORKS

Harvest has partnered with Xero from day one and Bryan says sticking with a single platform has kept training simple and workflows consistent as their team grows. The same thinking shapes how the firm is set up. Managers lead their own pods, so clients always know who to call, and team members understand the businesses they work with more deeply. It also changes how the firm measures team performance – rather than tracking timesheets, Harvest measures output.

Advisory work follows the same approach. Harvest uses Syft Analytics to prepare for quarterly KPI meetings, cutting preparation time from around two hours to about 30 minutes. This ultimately freed Matthew to begin experimenting with AI. Despite having no formal coding background, he has built four apps this year using **Xero as the single source of truth alongside** Claude and Claude Code, including a tax-preparation tool, an app for tracking changes to financial statements, and a CRM tool.

Matthew is clear that AI doesn't replace accounting expertise; human reviewers check the tax tool's output before it reaches a client. He explains, 'If all your accounts are in Xero, that's the source of truth. AI reads on top of that. You still need people who really understand accounting to read the output and push back where it goes wrong.'

SOLVING REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS

At Harvest, AI experimentation starts with identifying a pain point. Ideas often surface in the firm's monthly meetings, when someone flags a process that's taking too long or proving unnecessarily difficult. 'Someone might say that a task is eating into their time and that gets me thinking,' says Matthew. 'I'll then sit down with Claude and see what comes out of it.'

For now, Harvest's AI focus remains on improving efficiency. If the idea works, the team tries it across their client portfolio before rolling it out more widely. 'You start with one thing and once the kinks are ironed out, it can become a nice service offering that's bundled,' says Matthew.

MATT'S ADVISORY TIPS

1. **Start with the client's problem:** let a real pain point drive experimentation, then ask whether other clients face the same issues. This is how a one-off fix can become a repeatable service.
2. **Build on a consistent foundation:** commit to one platform, like Xero, to keep training simple and every client's workflow repeatable.
3. **Keep humans in the loop:** AI can accelerate the work, but it shouldn't replace professional judgement. Give AI a secure and reliable source of data, such as your accounting platform, and have people with the right expertise review its output before it reaches the client.

CHAPTER THREE

Service portfolio optimisation

Value-added services: where the profit lives and how to get started

Extra time is easily filled in a busy practice. But the time saved with AI carries a higher return when it's directed beyond the everyday, towards assisting and enhancing high-value advisory work. It's worth acknowledging that advisory is open to many interpretations. In this playbook we use it as a broad term for services beyond core compliance – from tax, to more complex strategic advice. However you define it, one thing remains clear: great advisory is a combination of hard-won expertise and reliable financial data. And both are already within reach. With AI reducing the administrative load and clients' financial data readily available through the right tools, the conditions to formalise that work have never been better. 61% of Singaporean practices currently offer advisory services, and it's ranked as the top earner for those who do. Better yet, the benefit can reach well beyond revenue to stronger client relationships and a more resilient business model. The pages that follow reveal which services modern practices are offering, where the margins live, and what's standing in the way.



'We need to stop treating advisory as an add-on and start weaving it into everything we do – clients don't want separate conversations about strategy, they want it baked into the service.'

Practice leader, Small firm

Key learnings: what the data reveals about the advisory opportunity

For the practices that have already made the shift into advisory services, the results speak for themselves: stronger margins, deeper client relationships and a more resilient business model. As client needs grow more complex, the practices pulling ahead are those expanding beyond compliance into tailored, high-value services.

01 THE MARGIN CASE FOR ADVISORY IS CLEAR:

61% of Singaporean practices currently offer advisory services, and it's ranked the top earner for those who do. If you're yet to expand your offering, the numbers paint a compelling picture

02 LOOK TO AI TO FREE UP CAPACITY FOR ADVISORY:

34% of non-advisory practices cite capacity as a barrier, yet **36%** of practices using AI say it has helped them maintain or grow output without extra hires. Automating compliance tasks with AI tools, like Xero's automated bank reconciliation, is a proven way to start freeing up that capacity

03 FORMALISE THE CONVERSATIONS YOU'RE ALREADY HAVING:

32% of non-advisory practices say they just haven't started offering advisory yet, but many are already giving guidance away for free. Start with one client, one conversation, and build from there.

04 TAX AND BUSINESS ADVISORY IS THE STANDOUT PROFIT LEADER:

already offered by **61%** of advisory practices, it's also the single most profitable advisory offering for **58%** of them – a natural extension of the compliance relationship, and an accessible entry point for practices ready to expand.

05 USE CLIENT DATA TO OPEN THE ADVISORY CONVERSATION:

benchmarking tools like Syft let you compare a client's performance against industry peers and other clients, creating a natural opening for proactive advisory conversations. Technology can surface the signal; but it's your professional judgement that turns it into advice that fits each client.

06 THE SKILLS YOU NEED MAY ALREADY BE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS:

24% of non-advisory practices cite a lack of internal skills as a barrier – yet **98%** of advisory practices already use apps to support their work. The tools to get started are likely already in your stack.

COMPLIANCE STILL DOMINATES – BUT ADVISORY IS WHERE THE PROFIT LIVES

Look across the Singaporean practice landscape and a familiar pattern emerges. Compliance remains the backbone; with bookkeeping, tax services, and financial reporting forming the core of the average service mix.

But while advisory services are offered by just 61% of the country's firms, those who do rank it as their most profitable service overall.

A growing number of small businesses are seeking more information, delivered faster. But moving towards advisory doesn't mean abandoning core compliance or adopting a single model. A 'compliance plus' approach can give you an entry point by extending your existing relationships and expertise through one additional conversation or service. It's about scaling: offering an initial advisory service that opens the door to further work.

Service offered	% of Singaporean practices
Bookkeeping	67%
Tax services	65%
Financial reporting	64%
Client advisory services	61%
Payroll	48%
Assurance/audit	26%
Sustainability/ESG reporting	21%

Firm size spotlight: small firms are the most likely to offer advisory services (**72%**) – ahead of even the largest firms (**56%)** – showing that a strong advisory offering isn't just for firms with scale.

ADVISORY CAN HELP REVENUE GROWTH OVER TIME

78% **of practices who offer advisory report that it makes up a bigger share of their revenue mix than it did five years ago**

53% **say it has added more than 30% additional revenue to their practice.**

Top performers see an even bigger lift, with **79%** reporting more than **30%** additional revenue from advisory.

But with clients increasingly seeking specialists who understand their industry and can help them plan for what's ahead, this isn't just a revenue story

'Expanding advisory services alongside compliance work will create stronger client relationships and more stable, long-term revenue growth.'

Practice leader, Medium firm

TAX AND BUSINESS ADVISORY IS THE MOST PROFITABLE SERVICE ON OFFER

Across advisory practices, tax and business is the most commonly ranked #1 for profitability – cited by over half (**58%**) as their single strongest earner.

As a natural extension of the compliance relationship, it's one of the more accessible entry points for practices ready to expand their service portfolio.

'Tax compliance work is important – but the real value-add is helping clients plan ahead and avoid problems before they even appear on the radar.'

Practice leader, Solo practice

LACK OF CAPACITY REMAINS A REAL BARRIER

When it comes to why they don't offer advisory, **34%** of practices cite a lack of capacity – the single biggest barrier, narrowly ahead of not having started yet (**32%**) and clients not being suited to advisory (**31%**).

The good news is that AI is already helping break the capacity barrier down. Practices using AI are already redirecting the time freed towards advisory work, so client conversations can shift to planning for the future.

For those citing skills as a blocker, many are already having advisory conversations – they're just not formalising or charging for them. Tools like Syft and JAX can help bridge that gap, surfacing insights and drafting commentary that turns client data into a conversation worth having.

'Most SMEs are sitting on data they don't know how to interpret – the firms that bridge that gap and actually explain what the numbers mean will keep growing.'
Practice leader, Small firm

THE TOOLS FOR ADVISORY ARE ALREADY IN REACH

Virtually all (98%) practices offering advisory already use tools to support it – with the most common starting point being Excel (**83%**). Xero Analytics is the second most popular at **66%**, meaning many Xero users already have what they need to start the advisory conversation.

Specialist platforms like Fathom (**46%**) and Spotlight (**27%**) are gaining momentum, with Syft (**25%**) also carving out a share – purpose-built for practices that want to take advisory further.



XERO EXPERT INSIGHT

Duran Hamer
GM Sales, Syft

TURNING DATA INTO A SOURCE OF DIRECTION

An AI-powered analytics tool like Syft doesn't just provide data visualisations. It can identify trends, make suggestions about what to do next, and predict where things are headed. That means automatically creating reports, AI-generated summaries, long-term forecasts, and alerts for unusual activity, which come together to help you and your clients get ahead of what's next. As for what comes next; it's your hard-earned expertise and client context that turns a report into a conversation – and a conversation into advice that genuinely changes outcomes. For instance, maybe they want to open a new location or hire an additional staff member. AI can assist with the automation and analysis, but not the professional judgement; it's you who can guide your clients on what makes the most sense for their business. AI should support your expertise, not replace it.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evolving your pricing approach

How Singaporean practices price today – and what it takes to charge with confidence

AI is transforming the economics of the profession. Hourly billing means every hour saved by automation is an hour of revenue lost – a paradox where efficiency becomes a liability. Today, the real opportunity can lie in value-based models that charge for outcomes, not effort. Top performers are already there: charging around **43%** more for financial reporting and over **twice** as likely to plan a price rise above **20%**. The gap isn't just about confidence – it's about recognising what pricing signals. It tells clients how you view your own skills, dictates who you serve and how much you take on. Above all, it's a promise that this investment will be even more valuable to their business and achieving their goals. Get it right, and pricing becomes one of the most powerful levers in your practice.



'By moving away from hourly billing you start selling your clients outcomes and peace of mind instead.'

Practice leader, Medium firm

Key learnings: what the data reveals about pricing with confidence

Setting the right price for your services isn't just about numbers – it's about understanding your value, communicating it clearly and building a sustainable business.

01 MOVE AWAY FROM TIME AS THE DEFAULT:

many practices are already shifting towards fixed or value-based pricing models, with **79%** of client engagements now billed on non-hourly terms. Firms that make the shift can set themselves up to price on the value they deliver, not the hours it took to deliver it.

02 BENCHMARK AGAINST HIGH-PERFORMING PRACTICES:

top-performing firms consistently price with more confidence, charging around 43% more for financial reporting. Clients aren't buying hours; they're buying certainty, accuracy and expert judgement – and communicating this upfront is key.

03 MAKE VALUE VISIBLE TO CLIENTS:

value-based pricing isn't just a pricing model – it's a communication tool. **40%** of practices say it makes client expectations easier to manage, and **51%** say it allows them to more easily upsell services. Clear framing reduces friction and strengthens relationships.

04 BUILD REGULAR, CONFIDENT PRICE REVIEWS:

price increases should be part of normal business practice, not a reaction to pressure. **84%** of practices plan to raise prices this financial year, and top performers are over **twice** as likely to plan increases above **20%**. Regular pricing reviews help protect margins and reflect growing expertise.

05 DON'T LET EFFICIENCY REDUCE YOUR REVENUE:

hourly billing can penalise efficiency. If AI reduces the time needed, revenue falls. Under value-based pricing, those gains stay in the business as improved margin, allowing you to benefit directly from becoming more efficient.

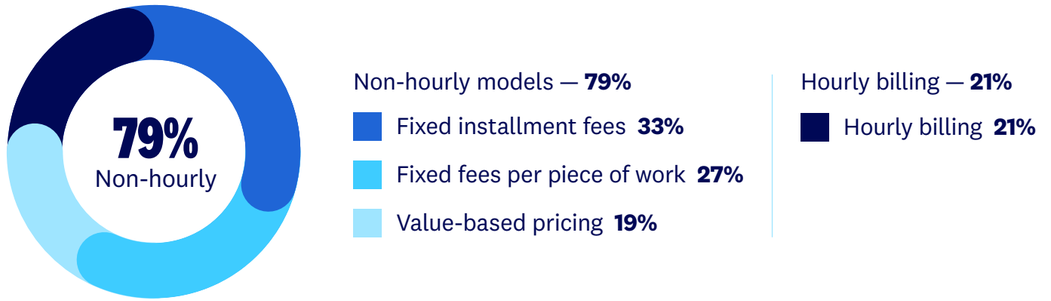
06 DON'T LET CLIENT SOFTWARE COSTS EAT YOUR MARGIN:

learn from the majority of firms either passing software costs on to clients (**35%**) or marking them up (**37%**) so as not to erode their bottom line.



YOUR NEXT STEP UP THE VALUE LADDER

Practices bill an average of **79%** of client engagements on non-hourly terms – most commonly through fixed instalment fees (**33%**) or fixed fees per piece of work (**27%**), with value-based pricing at **19%**.



The bigger opportunity now is moving up the ladder: from task-by-task fixed fees towards tiered packages and value-based models. These relationship-focused approaches can help generate steadier income, deepen client relationships and turn efficiency gains into margin.

When clients pay your fees, they're not simply paying for clean books and a completed tax return. They're paying for the peace of mind that comes with every tax submission, every conversation and every forward-looking projection. That peace of mind is built through clear explanations, proactive conversations and advice grounded in their individual circumstances.

'Improving pricing methods and creating useful service packages can help increase income and grow the business.'

Practice leader, Medium firm

IT PAYS TO PRICE FOR VALUE

Practices already pricing on value report benefits well beyond the bottom line:

58% say it has made their practice more profitable.

51% say it allows easier upselling of services.

54% say it helps clients see more value in their services.

49% say it helps clients better understand their services.

53% say it has helped increase revenue.

40% say it makes client expectations easier to manage.



XERO EXPERT INSIGHT

Sarah Foo, Sales Director - APAC

MOVE FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE AND PRICE ACCORDINGLY

The way a client perceives your fee depends entirely on the timing and relevance of your insights. If you're looking at historical data, you're usually called in when something goes wrong, so your fee is perceived as a damage control cost. When you work with live data and initiate conversations, that same fee feels like an investment.

The shift is from reactive to proactive. From fixing the books to making decisions. From charging a compliance fee to charging for advice that's worth far more. With real-time visibility through Xero, including tools like Analytics and JAX, it's easier to spot what's coming before your client gives you a phone call. That's when your advice carries the most weight and your pricing should reflect it.

TOP PERFORMERS CHARGE MORE FOR THE SAME TYPE OF WORK

When looking at fixed fee rates for key services, top performers charge more.

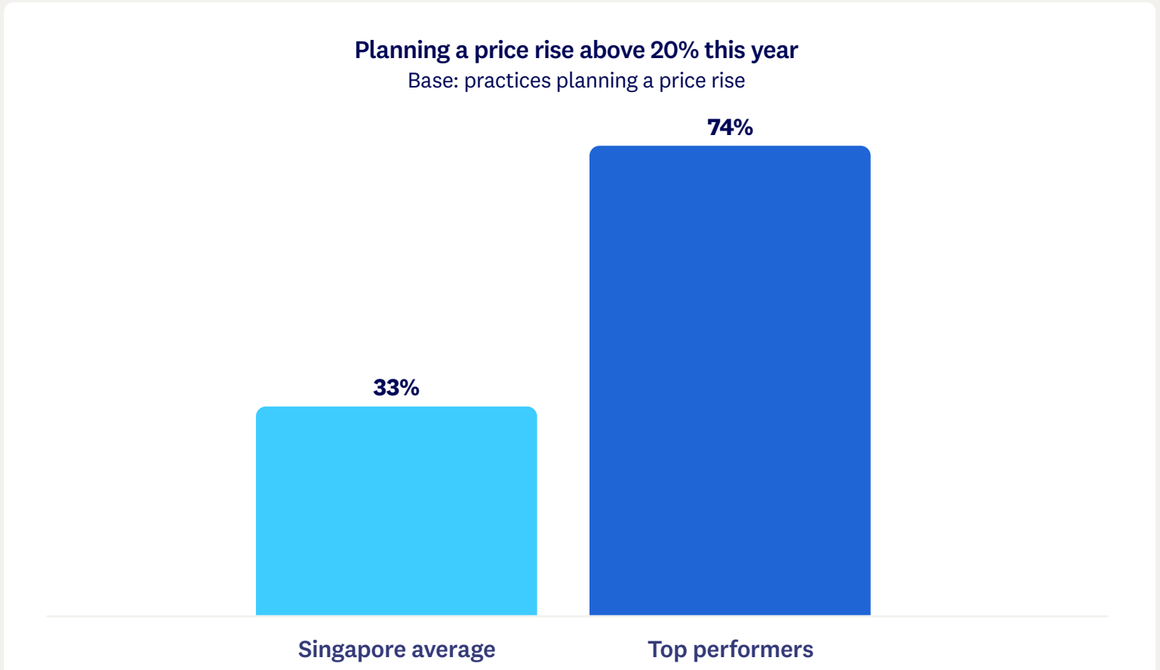
This includes **43%** more for financial reporting, **39%** more for payroll, and **25%** more for bookkeeping services.

These figures show pricing confidence isn't reserved for advisory or other differentiated services – even compliance-driven work like payroll can command a premium when a firm prices with conviction.

TOP PERFORMERS ARE PLANNING SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER PRICE RISES

84% of practices plan to raise prices this financial year. But the real distinction isn't whether practices raise prices – it's by how much.

Among practices planning a price rise, top performers are over twice as likely to plan a price rise above 20% this year – that's **74%** vs **33%**.



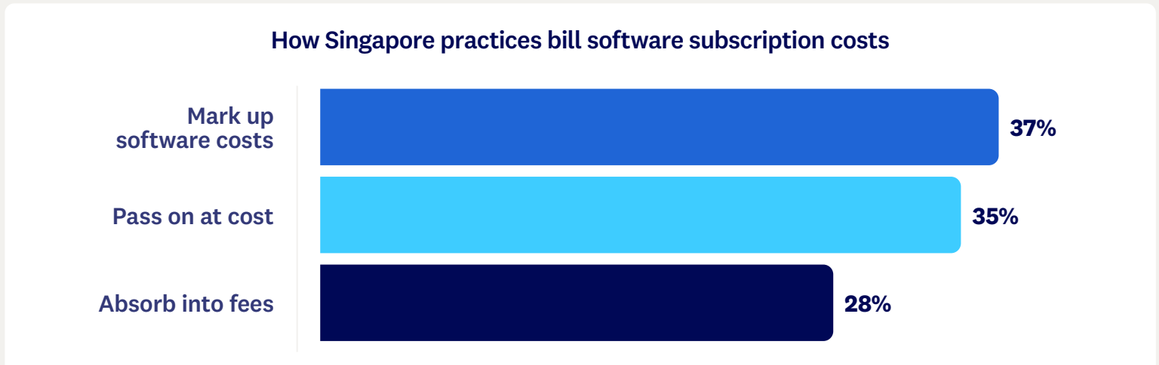
'Regularly assess pricing approaches to guarantee they accurately convey the value, skill, and standards of the services offered to clients'

Practice leader, Medium firm

SOFTWARE COSTS ARE WORTH RECOVERING

28% of practices absorb software costs as part of their fees, without charging clients.

Many Singaporean firms have already moved past this approach: **35%** recover the expense by passing it on at cost, while **37%** go further and mark it up, turning the cost into an added margin line.



Absorbing software costs may give clients a straightforward solution, but it also adds to your overhead. Alternatively, passing on the cost keeps pricing transparent, while marking it up creates an additional revenue stream. The right choice depends on how your practice is set up and how you want to manage client relationships. Whatever you decide, clarity and transparency are key.

Where to from here

While the pace of change shaping today's accounting and bookkeeping industry – and the world at large – can feel daunting, moving into the future with the right tools in place is less a leap of faith than a confident step forward.

Modern Singaporean practices share a common thread. They are:

- Deliberate about who they serve and how they structure their teams, rather than trying to be all things to all businesses.
- Actively embedding AI into daily workflows, and using the time it frees up to grow.
- Directing time saved by AI towards high-value advisory work, training and business development.
- Building a considered service mix, with reliable margin engines like bookkeeping and tax, alongside advisory for growth.
- Pricing with conviction.

Taking these steps is made all the easier with the right software behind you. **The tools enable the shift, but the value is realised through the decisions, conversations and relationships that follow.**

Built for your practice's expertise and your clients' ease, Xero turns live data into clear, visual insights – giving you the clarity to focus on your clients' future. It's why **90%** of accountants and bookkeepers using Xero agree it helps them be more confident advising clients.*

JOIN OVER 250,000 ACCOUNTANTS AND BOOKKEEPERS USING XERO IN THEIR PRACTICE

**Source: Xero survey conducted of 1214 accountants and bookkeepers using Xero globally May-June 2024*

Your checklist for building a modern practice, today

BUILD THE RIGHT FOUNDATIONS

- [ ] Be deliberate about who you serve – focus beats breadth
- [ ] Never let realised value go untracked – protect what you deliver
- [ ] Get your processes in order before reaching for AI tools

EMBED AI INTENTIONALLY

- [ ] Aim to move beyond occasional use, and build AI into the right daily workflows
- [ ] Start with the AI already built into your accounting software
- [ ] Set clear guidelines on consent, data handling, approved tools and human review
- [ ] Measure time saved by AI and direct it towards higher-value work

BUILD YOUR ADVISORY ENGINE

- [ ] Formalise one advisory conversation you're already having
- [ ] Consider starting with tax and business advisory or strategic planning – accessible entry points into advisory
- [ ] Use live client data to spot and start advisory conversations proactively
- [ ] Listen for recurring client needs and let them inform the services you develop

PRICE WITH CONVICTION

- [ ] Look for opportunities outside of hourly billing – for example, price for outcomes, not time
- [ ] Move up the value ladder – explore tiered packages or retainers
- [ ] Build regular price reviews into your calendar – don't wait for pressure to act
- [ ] Recover software costs as a client investment, not a practice overhead

Appendix

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The survey ran across multiple markets (Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Malaysia, South Africa, Ireland, Singapore), with country-specific screening and response lists. This appendix covers the Singapore sample only (for full details on the survey sample and approach, see the About this report page).

ACCOUNTANT AND BOOKKEEPER SAMPLE

We spoke to **422** respondents in practices across Singapore, including **287** accountants and **99** bookkeepers. Respondents identified with the following job titles:

Job title	Total
CPA / Chartered accountant / Accountant	49%
Outsourced / Independent bookkeeper	22%
Tax compliance manager/Tax advisor / Registered Tax Agent	13%
Virtual CFO / Financial advisor / CFA	8%
Business consultant	4%
Payroll specialist	4%

SAMPLE AND WEIGHTING

We weighted the data so that each of the four practice size segments makes up 25% of the total sample. The unweighted breakdown was:

Practice size	Unweighted n	Weighted %
Sole practitioners (0-1 full-time employees)	53	25%
Small practices (2–10 full-time employees)	186	25%
Medium practices (11–50 full-time employees)	131	25%
Large practices (51+ full-time employees)	52	25%
Total	422	100%

CALCULATING AVERAGES

Where questions used a banded scale (ranges rather than exact figures), we used the midpoint of each band to calculate averages. See examples below.

Time saved from AI

Survey question:

Q. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much time does your practice save per week across all staff due to the use of all AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, JAX, Claude, Dext, Zato, Brief, Onboard Me, FYI Automations etc.)

Response option	Midpoint used to calculate average
We're not saving any time	0
Less than an hour	0.5
1 hour to under 2 hours	1.5
2 hours to under 5 hours	3.5
5 hours to under 10 hours	7.5
10 hours to under 15 hours	12.5
15 hours to under 20 hours	17.5
20 hours to under 30 hours	25
30+ hours	30

Money saved from AI

Survey question:

Q. To the best of your knowledge, approximately what is the dollar value your practice saves per week across all staff due to time saved by use of AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, JAX, Claude, Dext, Zato, Brief, Onboard Me, FYI Automations etc.)

Response option	Midpoint used to calculate average
$0 (it doesn't save us any money)	$0
$1 - $499	$250
$500 - $999	$750
$1,000 - $1,999	$1,500
$2,000 - $3,499	$2,750
$3,500 - $4,999	$4,250
$5,000 - $7,499	$6,250
$7,500 - $9,999	$8,750
$10,000 or more	$10,000
Don't know	Not included in calculation

To calculate annual figures, we multiplied the weekly average by 52 (e.g. **~$3,168** per week × 52 ≈ **$165,000** per year, as cited in the report).

ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS

AI users: firms that are either actively using AI in day-to-day workflows, or have experimented with AI but haven't yet embedded it consistently. Firms that haven't tried AI, or are only aware of it without having used it, are excluded from this group.

Non-advisory practices: firms that indicated they don't currently offer any advisory services, based on their survey response.

For full definitions of 'top performers', 'Singapore average', and firm size groupings, see the About this report section.



© 2026 Xero Limited | All rights reserved. Xero and the Xero logo are registered trademarks of Xero Limited and its affiliates.