

Acolyte Presents

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANTS

Talent Directory – Candidate Profiling Paper 2020



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INTRODUCTION

Acolyte is revolutionising how HR & Talent Professionals access and use talent data to drive effective recruitment.

Whether your workforce strategy is focused attracting the strongest talent or retaining existing staff, Acolyte uses big data, analytics and human experience to give you a unique perspective on your talent landscape.

Acolyte helps HR leaders embed recruitment success throughout their business by providing, crystal clear insight, a fresh perspective, a clear roadmap, and actionable next steps.

Demand for talent has never been more competitive and the best candidates today behave more like customers.

The opportunities presented by on-line job boards, social recruiting and professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, have changed the way that talent interacts with the labour market to find work.

Our mission is to provide you with the insight you need to create competitive advantage in this new talent landscape.

The 'Talent Profiling' series is part of Acolyte's suite of intelligence products designed to help HR & Talent Professionals proactively and successfully attract and retain the talent their organisation needs.

Alastair Gorton
Founder & CEO

METHODOLOGY

Acolyte is an award winning talent consultancy and technology company that has been guiding the recruitment profession for over a decade.

Our analysis focuses on the 5 key areas that every candidate instinctively uses to assess potential opportunities - a proven mechanism for successfully interpreting the motivators of talent working in this sector.



Sharing the perspective of the candidates you wish to recruit provides powerful insight into how talent in the market may perceive your organisation and your opportunities. This is intelligence designed to guide you as you develop your employer value proposition, helping you to communicate and emphasise the things that really make you stand out as an employer.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANTS

Accountants are qualified professionals employed by organisations or private clients to audit accounts, record business transactions, prepare annual reports and financial statements and provide financial advice. They may also be involved in the creation of processes within an organisation and advise on tax laws and investment opportunities.

Their key objectives are to ensure that companies are operating efficiently and effectively, and that management have the information necessary to make informed business decisions.

Accountants can be employed directly by an organisation ('in industry') or work in an accountancy firm ('in practice').



COMPANY & CULTURE

The key to an accountant's motivation is their ability to understand and connect with what the business is trying to achieve. Strong accountants are highly professional and will have a strong sense of ethics and integrity, which they expect their peers to share. Their ability to problem solve requires collaboration across the business.

Employers should involve these professionals in senior-level, strategic meetings to create an understanding of, and buy-in for, the company's strategy. It is also important for the behaviour of the leadership team to reflect ethical values and transparency. Promoting collaboration and forums where professionals can share their expertise will ensure these individuals are able to perform to the highest standard.



Company Journey

Involve them in company strategy



Company Culture

Create an ethical culture, supported by leadership behaviours



Team & Peer Group

Encourage collaboration across teams and the wider business

COMPANY JOURNEY

The role of an accountant focuses on the production of accurate figures that give management and other stakeholders the information they need to manage the business and make key investment decisions. Accountants work with a variety of organisations in different sectors and at different stages of growth. Key to their motivation is that they can understand and connect with what the business is trying to achieve.

Involving these professionals in senior-level, strategic meetings will create an understanding of, and buy-in for, the company's strategy. It will also allow them to see where there will be opportunities for them to contribute to the business's success.

COMPANY CULTURE

Strong accountants are highly professional and will naturally have a profound sense of integrity. It is usually very important to them that their employer and their peers share this sense of honesty and that correct processes and procedures are followed within the company.

This ethical culture is typically characterised through the behaviour of the company's leadership. Companies must ensure there is also transparency around reporting and a robust system of internal controls.

TEAM & PEER GROUP

The accounting profession demands a strong attention to detail, concentration and problem-solving skills. Finance departments aren't always considered the most interactive and social environments, however, as problem solving in this area requires collaboration with people from across the business, strong accountants have had to develop excellent team-working skills. These individuals are typically bright, and their motivation will come from knowing that they will be working with peers that they respect for both their intelligence and integrity.

Employers should encourage collaboration both within the team and across the business in order to get the best from these individuals. In addition, establishing forums for team members to share their expertise will play to the intellectual strengths of these professionals.

CAREER & DEVELOPMENT

Accountancy appeals to a diverse range of characters and strong professionals have adaptable and transferrable skills. For qualified staff, there will almost certainly be Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and, for more junior staff, the qualification itself is a principle motivator. These professionals need to understand how information and money moves around a company and be familiar with the strategic goals of the executive team.

Employers should engage with an accountant's personal development and help them achieve their individual career aspirations. Employers who earn a reputation for supporting the professional development of their finance staff will create positive traction in the talent market. Providing regular access to senior management is also important. It provides context for the work they are doing and allows them to understand the possibilities in terms of career progression.



Career Opportunities

Fully engage with their career aspirations



Professional Development

Support qualification and continuing professional development



Access to Management

Provide regular access to senior management

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Today's accounting professionals rarely see themselves as pure 'number-crunchers' - many accountants are highly flexible and have several adaptable and transferrable skills. The sector appeals to a diverse range of characters who are attracted by the commerciality that the profession offers.

It is important to offer a diverse and challenging career path to retain strong employees. Employers should engage with an accountant's personal development, setting goals around an individual's career aspirations and creating a route to help achieve them. This will not only result in motivated and engaged employees, but it will ensure a higher retention of the strongest talent.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Changes in technology and regulation mean that the accounting industry is constantly evolving. For qualified staff, there will almost certainly be CPD (Continuing Professional Development) requirements placed on them by the body that issued their qualification. For more junior staff, the qualification itself is a strong motivator. The career security and potential financial rewards that the profession affords are considerable, however, becoming qualified is not easy.

An employer that understands these requirements for continuing development and shows that they will invest in ensuring that their staff are up to date with the latest technical knowledge will be attractive to potential employees. Companies that are known for recognising the importance and challenges associated with training, for example by offering a programme of financial support and study leave, create significant traction in the talent market and often attract the best young talent.

ACCESS TO MANAGEMENT

Strong accountants not only need to understand how information and money moves around a company, they also need to be familiar with the strategic goals of the business in order to do their job effectively.

Regular opportunities to engage with senior management are important. This allows team members to contextualise the work that they are doing day to day as well as giving them a 'line of sight' on how their career may progress. The result is typically an increased quality of delivery and significantly more buy-in from the team. A business that builds a reputation for transparency in this way will be able to attract star players into the organisation and solidify the buy-in and retention of key staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPERIENCE

The best accountants are versatile and curious, as well as having strong communication and people skills. They are also natural problem-solvers and many cite their ability to help people in this context as giving them a great deal of job satisfaction. Adding value to a business is a strong motivator for these professionals and a key feature of an their work will be trying to understand their contribution to the company's wider performance.

Offering accountants the opportunity to be involved with several aspects of a company's operations is key to attracting and retaining top talent. Encouraging ownership and cultivating an environment which allows for innovative problem solving and dynamic critical thinking will also enhance motivation levels. The opportunity to be involved in discreet projects where their impact can be felt more tangibly can also increase confidence and motivation.



Role & Responsibilities

Promote ownership and variety of exposure



Experience

Support innovative problem solving



Contribution

Conduct regular reviews to highlight contribution to the business

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountants possess a highly transferable skillset and demand for qualified talent in the market is strong (employees are often approached by recruiters and exposed to a range of careers options). The best accountants will be versatile and curious, as well as having strong communication and people skills, which allows them to extract and communicate complex data to an audience who may be unfamiliar with the numbers.

Offering opportunities to be exposed to several aspects of a company's operations is key to attracting and retaining top talent. Companies should also empower these professionals by encouraging them to take on responsibilities within their remit that they can fully own and be proud of - with any resulting achievements attributed to them directly. This will enhance both motivation and morale.

EXPERIENCE

Accountants are natural problem-solvers with strong attention to detail and they often need to employ a surprising degree of creativity to reach the best solution for their organisations. Many accountants report that their ability to help and work directly with people in this context gives them a great deal of job satisfaction, and it will be important for them to be recognised for this to provide a positive re-enforcement.

Cultivating an environment which allows for innovative problem solving and dynamic critical thinking will help attract and retain the best talent. Empowering these professionals to find creative solutions, improvements and more effective ways of working, will help them flourish and allow them to feel involved in driving the company forward.

CONTRIBUTION

Being able to add value to a business is a strong motivator for any accountant and a key feature of their work will be trying to understand how what they do on a daily basis contributes to the company's wider performance. Typically, this is through meeting deadlines or the production of accurate figures, but they also value involvement on a wider scale.

Giving accountants the opportunity to be involved in discreet projects where their impact can be felt more tangibly can be great for confidence and add considerably to motivation. Being able to celebrate this aspect of the job when advertising for a role will positively impact the number and quality of candidates that apply. Employers should also conduct regular performance reviews, where positive feedback on contribution can be given.

OFFICE & ENVIRONMENT

Accountants can and do work anywhere in the world. They are typically very risk aware and control orientated and the work they do can be highly complex, requiring a high level of concentration and a range of tools and technologies. These professionals are trained to understand how the global business environment interacts and how to collate multi-national results and they are exposed to the technical reporting requirements of a range of international standards.

The integral nature of the accountancy role means their role should be located with easy access to the senior management team. Employers should offer modern offices with an orderly environment as well as up-to-date technology and plenty of space to both collaborate and concentrate. The desire to work overseas will vary between professionals, however, being part of a business that demonstrates a global approach and outlook will be attractive.



Location

Locate the role with easy access to senior management



Premises & Facilities

Offer modern, good quality office space



Opportunities to Travel

Demonstrate a global approach and outlook

LOCATION

Accountants can and do work anywhere in the world. Professionals will be attracted to modern, good quality offices that offer up-to-date technology and systems and plenty of space to both collaborate and concentrate.

The integral nature of the role means their role should be located with easy access to the senior management team.

PREMISES & FACILITIES

Professional accountants are often thought of as extremely precise, with keen eye for detail and a large amount of practical knowledge. Accountants are typically risk aware and control orientated and the work that they do can be highly complex, requiring a high level of concentration and a range of tools and technologies.

An orderly office environment is an important indicator to potential candidates that the business understands the challenges they will face and shares their priorities. That said, employers should ensure offices are not dull and lifeless; creating a working environment where people want to be and are comfortable in will enhance morale and motivation.

OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL

Accountants can be employed in any international location. This is a community of talent that is trained to understand how the global business environment interacts, how to collate multi-national results and who are exposed to the technical reporting requirements of a range of international standards.

Employers should be aware that the desire to travel or work overseas will vary between professionals, however, being part of a business that has a global outlook will often be attractive.

REWARD & RECOGNITION

Excellent team-working is a key skill of any accountant and a strong and positive team atmosphere will be attractive to these professionals. They will generally stick to traditional working hours in an office environment, however, the advantages of flexible working are not going unnoticed by this profession. Accountants are known for being well-paid and this is often a key driver for many, along with regular hours and good benefits.

Employers should instigate regular team building activities as well as social events or celebrations at the completion of key deadlines. This will demonstrate appreciation and strengthen group dynamics. Organisations that demonstrate flexibility around working hours and offer home-working options will have a competitive edge where all else is equal. An attractive reward structure will be key, and employers should ensure they acknowledge hard work with competitive annual pay increases.



Atmosphere

Instigate regular team building activities and social events



Life Outside of Work

Demonstrate flexibility around working hours and patterns



Reward & Remuneration

Implement an attractive reward structure

ATMOSPHERE

The ability to work as part of a team is a key skill of any accountant and a strong team atmosphere will be an attractive offering. These professionals will also value a positive working environment as this helps to increase performance and productivity.

Employers should instigate regular team building activities and outings in order to help strengthen group dynamics. This will go a long way in bringing these individuals together to work as a unit and create a positive and motivating environment. In addition, social events or celebrations will be appreciated at the completion of key deadlines and will demonstrate employers value the team efforts.

LIFE OUTSIDE OF WORK

While Accountants are more likely to stick to traditional working hours in an office environment, the advantages of flexible working are not going unnoticed by this profession. Respecting their personal lives will develop trust and increase motivation levels.

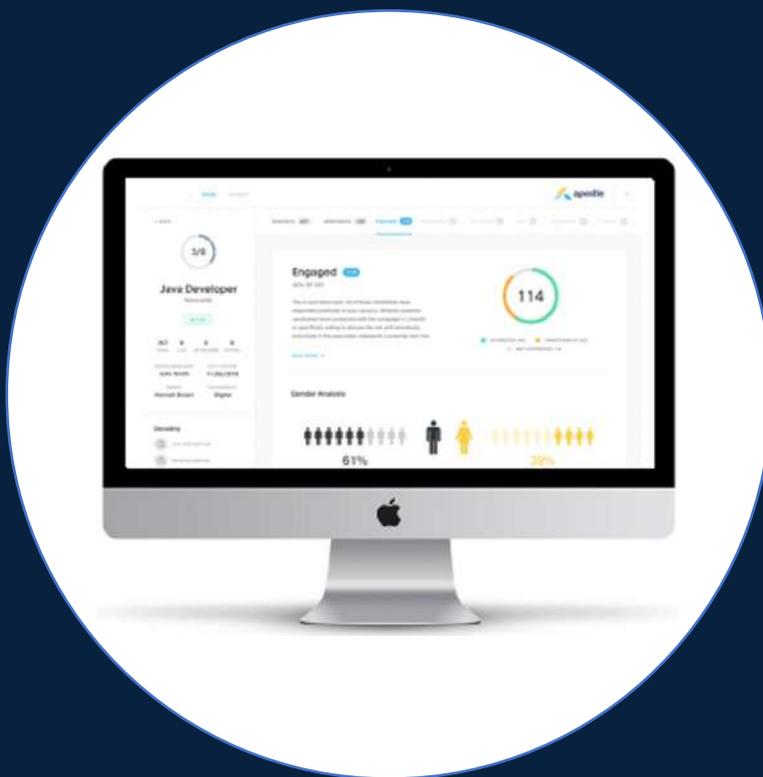
Organisations that demonstrate flexibility around working hours, such as enabling parents to arrive later or leave earlier, and offering home-working options, will have a competitive edge where all else is equal. Accountants who feel valued as individuals will naturally offer stronger engagement levels and greater productivity when they are in the office. This flexibility is also particularly important for companies keen on driving the diversity agenda.

REWARD & REMUNERATION

Accountants are known for being well-paid and this financial motivation is often a key driver. Those who work in this profession will also generally enjoy regular hours, good benefits, and the ability to plan for the future with a degree of confidence.

A competitive reward structure will be key in attracting the best talent. It is also important to note that there is strong demand for qualified talent and that competitive pressures do have an impact on the salaries that employers may have to offer.

While offering an attractive starting salary will entice the strongest individuals, employers should ensure they continue to reward hard work with regular reviews and a competitive annual pay increases. This will serve to enhance retention as professionals will feel valued for their loyalty and contribution.



THE ACOLYTE TALENT PLATFORM

FIND

Choose from the best PASSIVE and ACTIVE talent. Search functionality that gives your team direct access to every candidate at every level in any sector or geography.

RETAIN

Immediately access key information that will maximise retention in your workforce. Including: Diversity & Inclusivity, Salary Benchmarking, Talent Hotspots, Competitor Activity & Candidate Sentiment Analysis.

HIRE

Campaign management that identifies, screens, qualifies & introduces you to exactly the right people. Improving hiring success and adding powerful diagnostic capabilities for every recruitment campaign.

GROW

Also benefit from access to Acolyte's suite of talent intelligence services which provide the customised, data driven analysis you need to inform strategic thinking and drive growth.

HIRE TALENT DIRECTLY

Acolyte's mission is simple:

To create a platform that offers employers the insight and recruitment solutions they need for direct, scalable and cost-effective access to the high-quality talent required to meet their business objectives.

We harness data, AI and the latest technology to energise hiring in your business and empower your in-house recruitment and HR teams to deliver direct hire strategies.

Success



"Professional, quick to deliver results & cost effective, In a trial between contingent agencies alongside Acolyte and the best and successful candidates always came via the Acolyte Platform"

