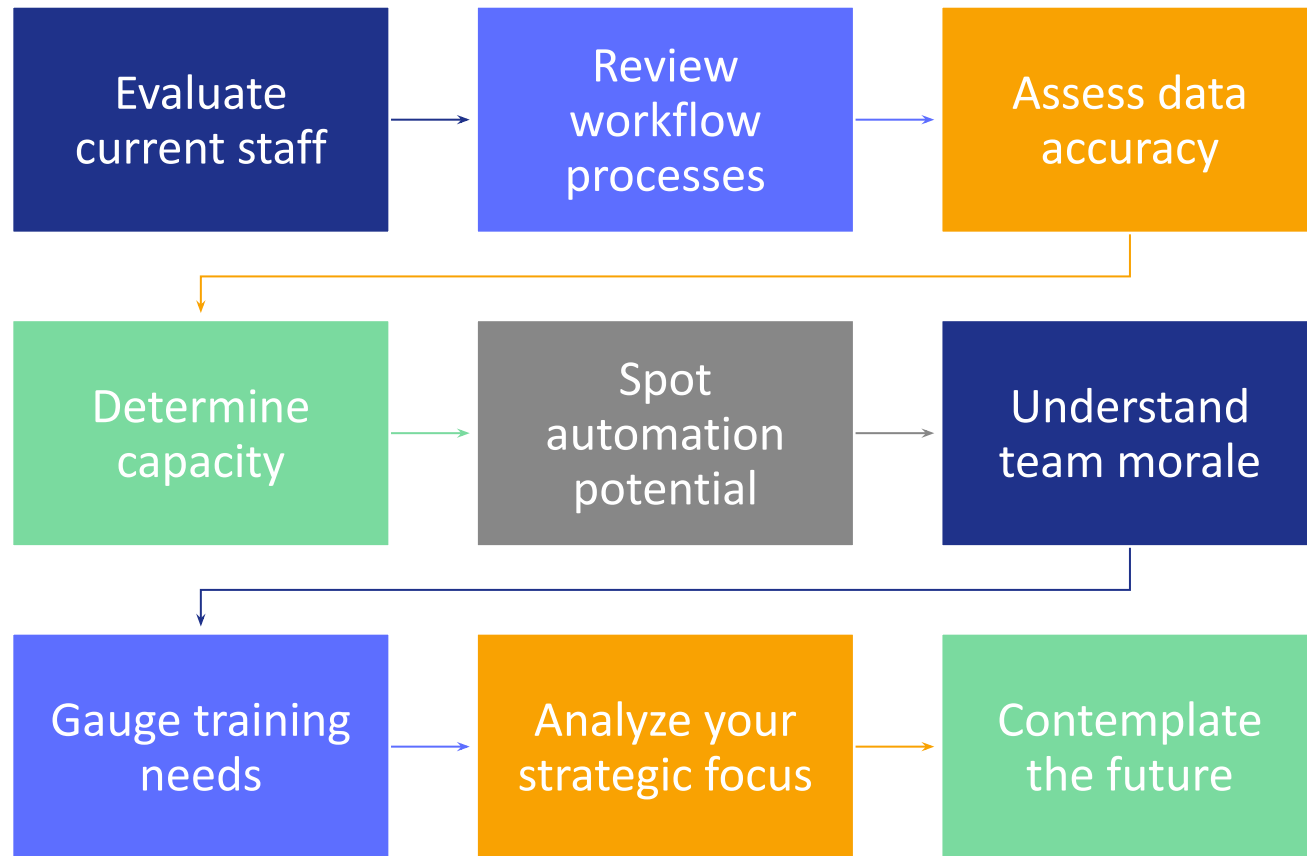




9-point action plan for short-staffed accounting teams

125,058	154,568	95,054	124,500
125,487	56,845	97,511	125,000
124,000	110,000	99,011	154,000
1450	150,000	99,216	95,000
	35,000	101,090	154,200
		101,684	110,000
		101,962	89,000
			50,000
			700

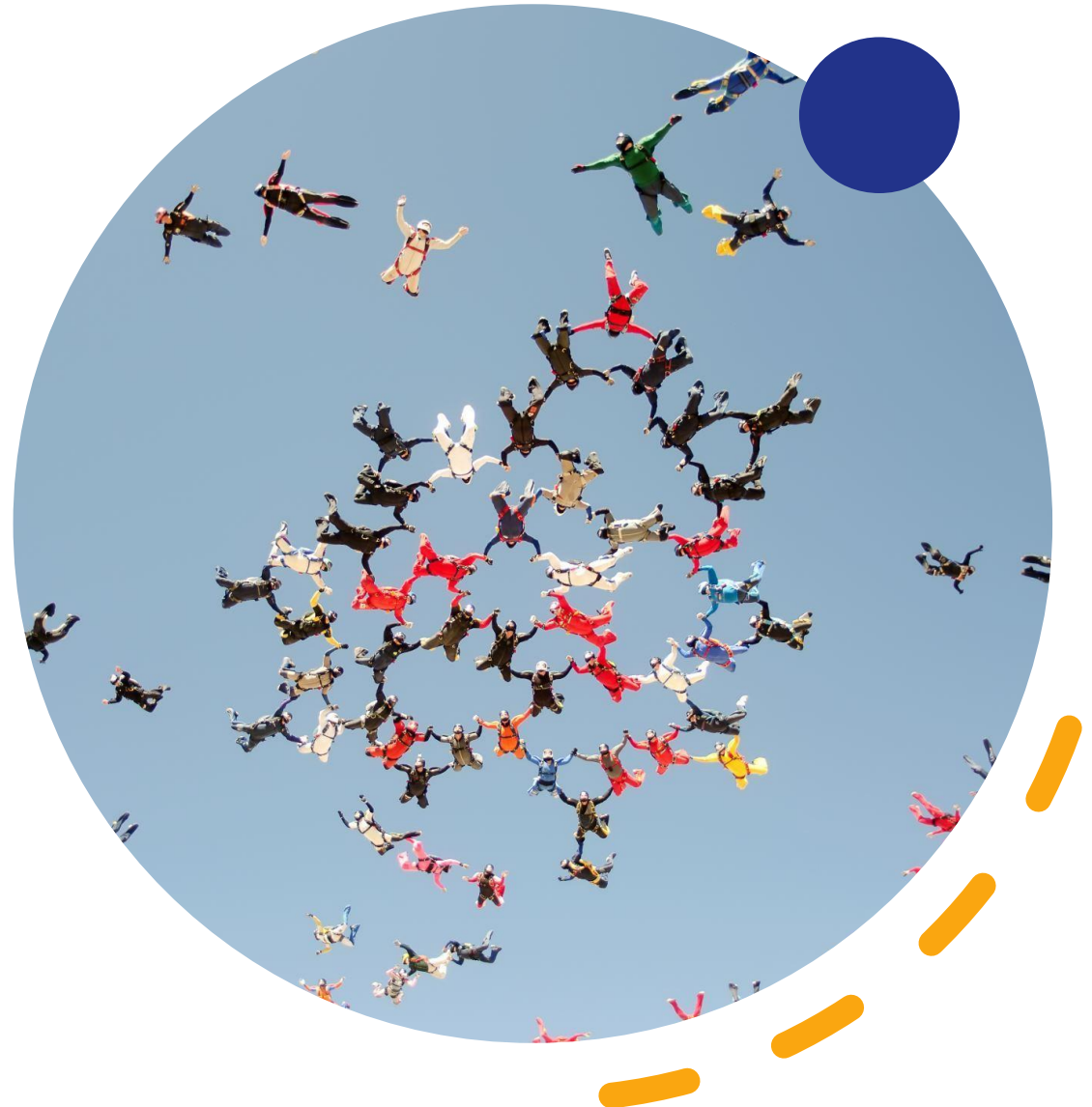
This action plan can help you:



- Assess your team's current capabilities
- Identify areas that need immediate attention and improvement
- Reflect, analyze, act

Evaluate current staff

- Which skills does your team possess?
- Are there gaps you need to address? (No one's perfect)
- Rank a list of what each person needs to work on, so you & they can tackle one thing at a time
- Use as part of performance management to motivate your team to improve their skills



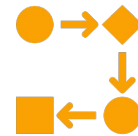
Review workflow processes



Are there bottlenecks or inefficiencies in your current workflows?



Bring your team together and identify each key workflow



Write down the key steps in each workflow and ask three questions for each step:

1. How much effort does this step require?
2. Does this step add value to the process?
3. Can this step be done more efficiently?



Then give the owner of each process the opportunity to make changes that either reduce the effort, add value or increase efficiency

Assess data accuracy



How often do errors occur, and where are they most likely to happen?



Data is often at the core of many challenges and arguments. If your data isn't trusted, there are multiple versions, or the data doesn't provide the full context — you have a data problem!



Compile a list of the data sources you rely on and identify any recurring errors you find, gaps in them, or where you have multiple sources



Once you know the main sources, you can rank them from most to least critical, by how much rework they cause, and by tracing duplicates back to the source



Identify those that cause the most pain. Work with the owner to reduce the challenges.

Determine capacity

- With current staffing, what's maximum transaction volume your team can handle efficiently?
- Capture volume in each data source you work with
- Use the list of workflows & data sources you produced earlier and add details on current volume & growth you anticipate
- Add estimates from your team on time they spend each month/quarter working with that data
- Focus on data sources that suck up the most time & whose volume is growing





Spot automation potential

- Which tasks consume the most time & could benefit from automation?
- Select one to three workflows, data sources, or tasks to automate that will create efficiency fastest to alleviate some painful spots & show success
- It's easier to automate areas that might require change management if you've already got positive momentum to build on

Understand team morale

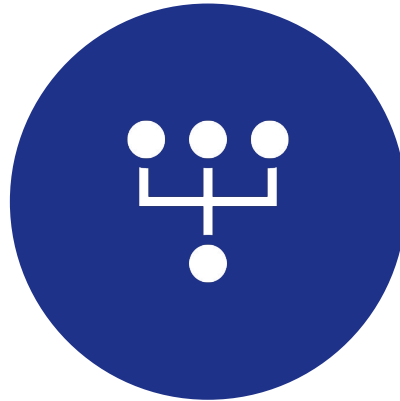
- How is the team coping with increased workload?
- What support systems are in place to help them manage?
- Increase communication and teamwork to get things done.
 - Consider processes that are bottlenecks – can others step in to help?
 - Adjust an upstream workflow so that things are better prepared
 - Automate some of steps?
- Give people working on painful tasks a vision of a better future and get them involved in solving their challenges. Most people don't fear change: they fear *losing control*.



Gauge training needs



What training or professional development does the team need to cope with changes?



Engage team in the transformation to prepare them to handle the ever-evolving nature of their jobs



Give them a say. It will help them cope and likely result in net time savings, as they may not require training at all.

Analyze your strategic focus

- Are strategic tasks receiving enough attention, or is the focus mainly on transactional activities?
- Most accountants *want* to be good business partners and add strategic value
- Processing details, troubleshooting data issues, or handling month-end processes make it hard to prioritize support for operating teams
- Check in with both your team & the operations teams — are they getting enough time and information to do their jobs well?
 - If they are, you're golden!
 - More likely than not they aren't; prioritize value add services you can provide and start small: add an hour or two a week of serving up data, then another to discuss their priorities and find ad hoc support you can provide.
- Each small step moves you toward prioritizing these activities and provides value

A photograph of a business meeting. In the foreground, a person's hands are visible, holding a tablet displaying a dashboard with charts and graphs. Another person is holding a smartphone. In the background, a man in a dark suit and tie is holding a white coffee cup. A woman in a dark blazer is gesturing with her hand near her face. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment.

Contemplate the future

- How will your team manage as the business scales and transaction volumes increase?
- How will you adopt technology?
- What can you do now to get ready?
- Maybe you can take some baby steps that free up a few hours here and there for your team. Prioritize activities that you can add in small bites

