

# TAX TALKS

Australia's Tax News Podcast - The Podcast for Australian Tax Professionals

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## 170 | Accounting Automation

Accounting automation sounds great. Just automate everything and put up your feet. But of course the reality is very different.

### Accounting Automation

How can we automate our work flows to become faster and more efficient? This is the question we asked Chris Hooper of Accodex in Adelaide.

Here is what we learned but please listen in as Chris Hooper explains all this much better than we ever could.

*To listen while you drive, walk or work, just access the episode through a podcast app on your mobile phone.*

### Implementation

Start with your own practice. Implement the apps you want your clients to see. Master them internally. And that will give you the basis to help your clients. Accountants usually test new accounting products for efficiency before rolling them out to clients. Accounting automation has to start at home.

### Process Change

You can't just change one process a time. A lot of firms build this dogs breakfast of a software stack that does not necessarily make much sense or stand the test of time.

Accounting can exist in isolation to the rest of the business. So you can move it over without changing much else. It can sit in isolation. Not ideal but it can work for some time.

The same applies to reporting dashboards, analytics and data warehouses – they are all relatively easy to implement on a stand-alone basis as well.

But once you start talking about CRM or payments systems, you start to impact a lot of users, customers and the business as a whole and it becomes a much more complex process. You need to think about the whole of the business.

### Professional Help

Chris Hooper is keen on engaging professionals. An accounting firm implementing their own organisational IT strategy is asking for trouble. Without the assistance of a seasoned expert there will be a lot of wasted time around trial and error.

## Integration

Many integrations are click and connect. A working knowledge of SQL is advantageous when working with large companies because they deal with a lot of databases. SQL is really just fancy Excel, so useful to accountants to learn. It will allow you to get applications to talk to each other that might not have open APIs. But beyond that you should start talking to software engineers.

## Accodex

Everything Accodex can move to the cloud, they moved to the cloud. They built their own CRM system. They took Salesforce as a blank canvas and then spend a couple of million dollars to customise it to fit the purpose of an accounting firm. The CRM is a big motivation for partners to join Accodex.

## Not One Size Fits All

The good thing about Salesforce is that you can tailor is specifically to your needs that you can't do some of the other SAAS products (SAAS = Software as a Service).

Zoho is a good lightweight local product that can be implemented quite quickly and cheaply. But you need to be look at all of this in the context of the practice's objectives. It is not going to be one size fits. Otherwise every single accounting firm would have the exact same technology.

## Software Stack

Look at software in three categories:

### # 1 Client Stack

These are the applications that the client uses to run their business. If the client has a log-in to that application, it is a client stack application.

### # 2 Partners Stack

This is the software the partners use to actually perform or do their job.

### # 3 Corporate Stack

These are Google apps, CRM, LMS and the lot. These apps have nothing to do with producing client outcomes. They are internal/overhead systems. For example our learning management system (LMS). That software has nothing to do with producing client work. It's not used by the client in their business so it is part of the corporate stack.

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