WHITEPAPER

Grow without the chaos:
Your 4 stage digital transformation guide

Where does your accounting practice stand in its digital transformation journey?

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Introduction: The digital transformation imperative

The global accounting services market reached $736 billion in 2025. Whilst 83% of firms reported increased revenue, 94% of leaders cite talent and recruitment challenges as the primary constraint on growth. The message is clear: firms can't simply hire their way to expansion. Technology adoption is accelerating as firms seek solutions. Yet many practices struggle with the fundamental challenge: how to standardise operations whilst maintaining the flexibility needed for diverse markets and client requirements. The path forward requires more than technology deployment - it demands a structured approach to digital transformation.

Global accounting practices are experiencing challenges across multiple dimensions:

- **Operational inefficiencies:** Compliance workflows remain repetitive and manual, creating duplication and reducing profitability
- **Talent constraints:** Firms need technology that multiplies capacity without proportionally increasing headcount
- **Change resistance:** Long-term employees may resist new systems due to concerns about changing roles and capabilities
- **Client expectations:** Clients expect consistent service delivery across all offices, with standardised compliance as the foundation for advisory services
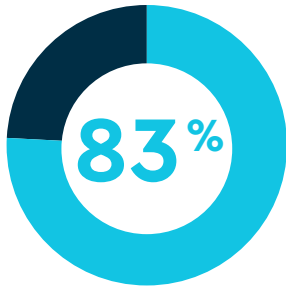
The good news? There's a proven roadmap. This whitepaper reveals Silverfin's four-stage digital transformation framework and how to apply it to make your practice future-ready.

Lisa Miles-Heal
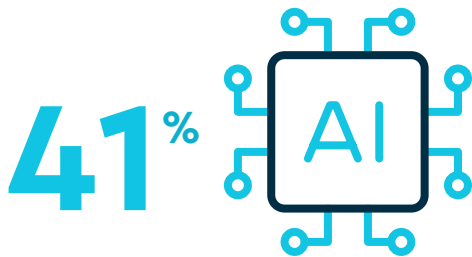CEO, SIlverfin

The numbers tell the story

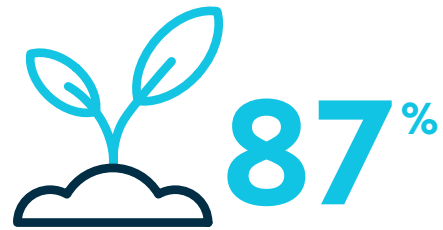Global practices are navigating unprecedented change:

83%

of firms globally reported increased revenue in 2025, up from 72% in 2024

94%

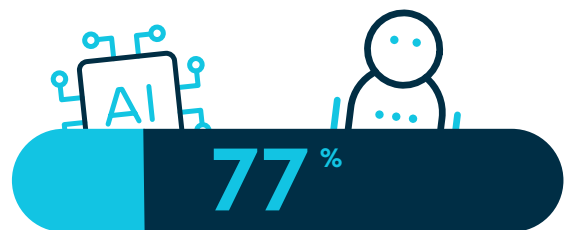of firm leaders believe talent and recruitment challenges will significantly affect their capacity for expansion

41% AI

of firms now use AI, quadrupling from just 9% in 2024

87%

of firms with highly integrated technology experienced revenue growth

93%

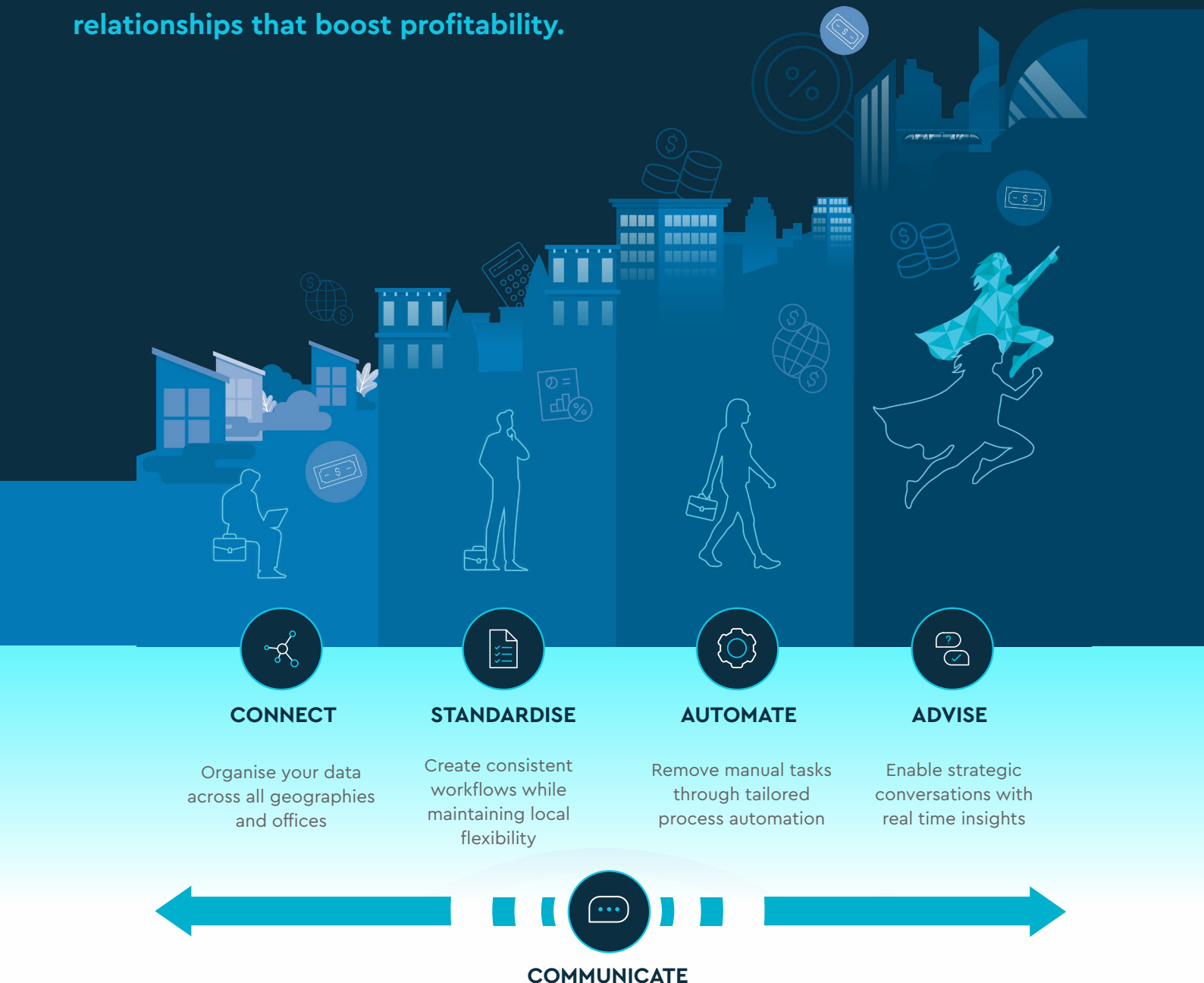of firms now offer advisory services, up from 83% in 2024

77%

of firms plan to increase AI investment over the next three years

The real differentiator isn't just adopting technology - it's adopting it strategically, with a clear roadmap that multiplies capacity without burning out your team.

Your four-stage digital journey

The digital transformation journey describes how accounting practices can evolve from manual processing to an automated, advisory model. Rather than a hierarchy, think of this as a progression where each stage builds upon the previous one. Throughout all stages, effective communication across both your clients and teams evolves to be more insightful and enabling.

Each stage grows your practice by making it more efficient, keeping your team satisfied, and building stronger client relationships that boost profitability.

CONNECT
Organise your data across all geographies and offices

STANDARDISE
Create consistent workflows while maintaining local flexibility

AUTOMATE
Remove manual tasks through tailored process automation

ADVISE
Enable strategic conversations with real time insights

COMMUNICATE

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by VISMA

Stage 1: Connect

The challenge:
Accounting data is scattered across different tools, platforms, and manual folder structures. This makes it difficult to maintain a single source of truth.

The solution:
Centralise your data by integrating all your data sources into one platform.

What it delivers:
- Single source of truth across global operations
- Real-timevisibility into all office performance
- Foundation for standardised reporting and analytics
- Easier integration of acquired practices

Papa Bathie Gueye
PKF Rubiks

"With Silverfin, we no longer print, copy nor use binders which creates great savings and is good for the environment. But most importantly, Silverfin has allowed me to gain confidence in the controls I do as a manager. From the comfort of any room around the world with an internet connection, I can access my team's work in real time and review it with ease."

The Silverfin Data Hub connects with commonly used bookkeeping systems, ensuring live data syncs directly to working papers and financial statements. For firms using niche or proprietary systems, Silverfin enables you to build custom data connectors that handle your specific software ecosystem. When direct integration isn't feasible, secure data upload capabilities ensure no system is left behind. This means you are always dealing with the latest information, with zero manual re-entry. Explore our 50+ integrations.

Platform opportunity
Build custom data connectors and mapping tools that handle your specific software ecosystem and local compliance requirements.

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Stage 2: Standardise

The challenge:

Every office works in their own way, causing inefficiencies and quality differences across global teams. This can make it difficult to scale and ensure a consistent client experience.

The solution:

Work with fixed workflows, templates and checklists developed collaboratively with your firm. Rather than imposing rigid, pre-built templates, Silverfin enables you to create standardised frameworks that reflect your methodology, while accommodating local market needs and regulatory requirements.

What it delivers:

- Consistent and faster completions across offices
- Better internal collaboration and resource sharing
- Framework for scaling advisory services

Platform opportunity

Our Collaboration tool brings together messaging, tasks and review within your workflows, enabling teams to work seamlessly and consistently.

Matúš Jenčík
BDO Slovakia

"Another benefit [of Silverfin] is that using AI tools in our outsourcing environment means we're one step ahead in our digitalisation process, keeping us adapted to current market requirements."

Stage 2: Standardise

Standardisation across offices and acquisitions

Standardisation is essential for global practices. It's the key to achieving:

- **Operational benefits:** It enables easier sharing of team members across offices, especially important in tight labour markets. It improves efficiency and consistency in service delivery while providing a framework for teams to work within established rules
- **Client benefits:** It ensures a consistent client experience across all offices
- **Growth benefits:** It's essential for cross-country expansion and resource sharing, provides a foundation for technology adoption - and is critical for environments where data quality is essential

The M&A challenge

Even firms using the same platform often work very differently. Best practice is to plan standardisation as part of the acquisition strategy, harmonising core financial data structures early. Focusing on an 80% standardisation with 20% flexibility allows you to use acquisitions as an opportunity to implement best practices.

Measuring standardisation success

- **Financial targets:** Increase revenue per employee, improve margins and reduce the hourly cost of production
- **Operational targets:** Address people shortages through efficiency, achieve faster job completion times and improve job satisfaction and retention

Stage 3: Automate

The challenge:

Manual, repetitive compliance workflows don't leverage connected data, creating duplication and reducing time available for higher-value work.

The solution:

Build custom automation that eliminates repetitive tasks while maintaining quality and compliance standards. With Silverfin, data flows directly from working papers to statutory accounts with zero manual re-entry. This significantly cuts accounts production time

What it delivers:

- Significant time savings on compliance work
- Reduced human errors and rework
- Capacity creation for advisory work
- Improved job satisfaction and retention

Papa Bathie Gueye
PKF Rubiks

"The gain in time [we've achieved with Silverfin] has really helped me and our staff really focus on other tasks with greater added value. Silverfin has been a life saver."

Platform opportunity

Custom automation workflows, automated reconciliations, and intelligent routing that reflect your specific processes and quality standards. Regulatory changes automatically update templates, so there's no manual tracking required.

Quality assurance

Use automated validation and checking processes to build confidence in automated outputs while maintaining necessary human oversight and review.

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Stage 4: Advise

The challenge:

Having created capacity through automation, practices need tools and processes to identify client opportunities and prepare strategic conversations.

The solution:

Leverage standardised data and processes, as well as Silverfin's latest AI feature Talking Points to generate insights that support advisory services. Combined with our Insights tool and custom analytics capabilities, you can proactively identify opportunities and build reports that help drive more impactful client conversations - turning consistent client data into a foundation for scalable advisory services.

What it delivers:

- Higher client satisfaction through proactive advice
- New revenue streams from advisory services
- Stronger client relationships and retention
- Competitive differentiation in the market

Platform opportunity

Build custom analytics, reporting tools and client dashboards that help identify opportunities and support strategic conversations. This enables you to transform standardised compliance processes into the foundation for scalable advisory services, using consistent data to identify client opportunities.

Papa Bathie Gueye
PKF Rubiks

"I no longer have to keep notes of my review comments and task requests, or send emails to staff as I can send messages on specific accounts directly from Silverfin. It's made the communication more effective and the follow-ups more precise."

Communication

Digital transformation only works when your team can actually work together. Throughout all four stages effective communication with colleagues is what makes everything else possible.

The challenge:

Endless email threads, missing attachments, handwritten notes that need deciphering. Team members working in isolation across different applications, unable to see what colleagues are handling or where bottlenecks are forming.

The solution:

Integrated messaging, tasks and review directly into workflows so teams can collaborate in real time with no risk of losing work.

What it delivers:

- Full visibility with real-time insights into who's doing what
- Complete audit trails of all activities and communications
- Seamless handovers when team members are absent
- Direct client collaboration through secure portals

Silverfin's Pulse feature brings messaging, tasks and review into a single platform. Multiple team members work on the same client file simultaneously, assign tasks to colleagues, and flag work ready for review - with complete tracking logs of all activities and conversations. The feature extends to clients, enabling them to work directly with you on working papers, reports and financial statements. With complete, auditable records of all communications, you can maintain service quality even during staff transitions and ensure nothing gets lost in handovers.

The reality

Firms that treat transformation as a technology project fail. Firms that treat it as a people project succeed.

Change resistance stems from fear and lack of confidence, not opposition to improvement. Address those emotional concerns through clear communication, peer support, demonstrated value and decisive leadership.

This framework has worked across hundreds of global practices - from 50-person firms to Big 4 practices with thousands of staff.

The one thing that kills digital transformation isn't resistance from staff. It's ambivalence from leadership.

Calculate what manual processes are costing you globally

Consider the cumulative impact across all offices of:

- Manual data entry between systems
- Inconsistent processes requiring rework
- Inability to share resources between offices
- Post-acquisition integration challenges
- Lost advisory opportunities due to a focus on compliance

The Silverfin Platform provides the foundation for your custom transformation solution.

Ready for your next step?

Each stage brings you closer to a future-ready global practice. Less repetitive work, more strategic insight and stronger client relationships across all offices and geographies.

Ready to see your firm's transformation pathway in action?

Book a consultation with our platform specialists to discover how global practices are building standardised, automated, advisory-focused operations.

Book your demo today