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Grow without the chaos:
Your 5 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 research we've conducted with Censuswide has revealed something striking: UKI accounting practices are losing an average of £176 in potentially billable hours per accountant, every single day. For a practice with just 21 accountants, that's over £1 million in lost billable time each year.

But the cost isn't just financial. Partners are spending more time on internal administration than they are advising clients – the work that actually drives growth and builds relationships.

This matters because right now 51% of practices tell us growth is their top strategic priority. Yet they're trapped in inefficiencies that make growth nearly impossible to achieve.

We've spent years working alongside accounting firms across 18 countries, supporting over 1,000 practices including all of the Big 4. What we've learnt is this: good intentions aren't enough. Digital transformation requires a structured approach, clear priorities and a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths about how we're working today.

This whitepaper maps out that approach. It's based on real data, real experiences and real outcomes from practices that have made the journey successfully.
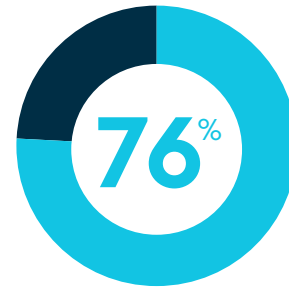
Lisa Miles-Heal
CEO, SIlverfin

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The numbers tell the story

UKI practices are feeling the pressure:

51%

of UKI practices cite growth as their main strategic goal for 2025

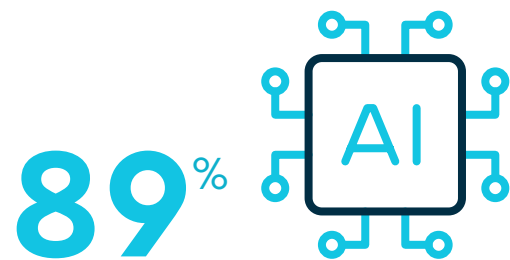**76%**

consider digitalisation as its top priority

1.2hrs

lost per day per accountant to inefficiencies that could be automated

25%

of UKI accountants show signs of burnout

1.5x

more time spent on internal admin versus client advisory work

89%

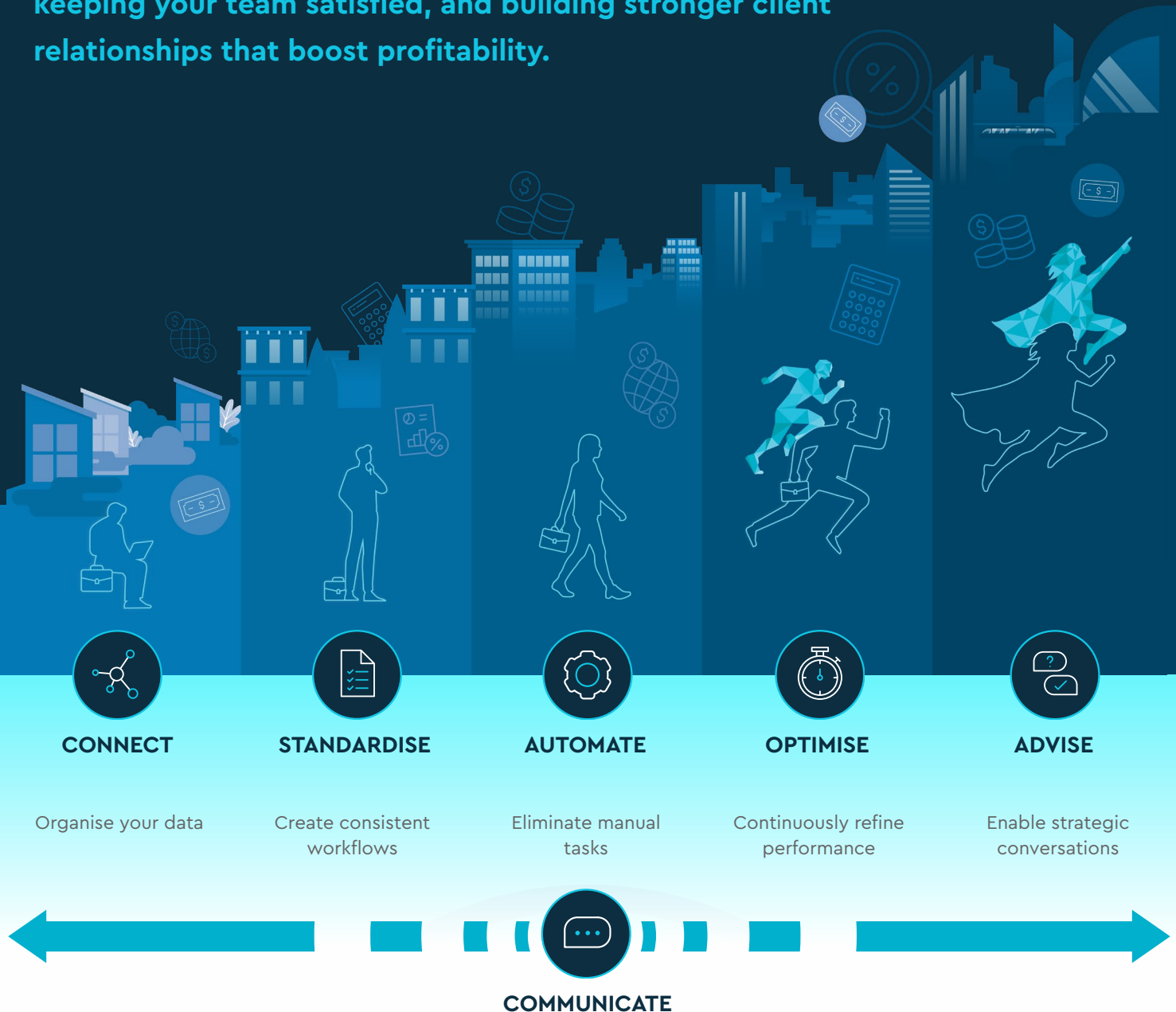of UKI practices have invested in automation and digital tools in the last year alone

The good news?

There's a concrete roadmap to more efficient, profitable practice management. This whitepaper reveals the five stages of digital transformation and how to apply them to make your practice future-ready.

Your five-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	STANDARDISE	AUTOMATE	OPTIMISE	ADVISE
Organise your data	Create consistent workflows	Eliminate manual tasks	Continuously refine performance	Enable strategic conversations

COMMUNICATE

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Stage 1: Connect

The challenge:

Out-of-date accounting data scattered across different tools, often manual folder structures and various platforms. This is becoming an even bigger issue as government bodies like Companies House and HMRC increasingly mandate digital-only filing and communication, pushing firms to move away from legacy, paper-based processes.

The solution:

Organise your data by centralising and structuring it from different sources and in different formats into one platform.

What it delivers:

- Single source of truth accessible by all
- Real-time insights in files as data changes
- Independence from client accounting system preferences
- Meets the growing demand for digital compliance

Mark Thurston,
Director, Gascoynes

"Legacy accounting software that lived on desktops was holding us back and creating issues across the board. Silverfin was the first aspect we took on, moving working papers and accounts production into the cloud."

Silverfin's role:

The Silverfin Data Hub connects with commonly used accounting software and data sources through direct integrations and open APIs. Live data syncing means you're always dealing with the latest information that flows into digital working paper schedules. Our 50+ integrations include platforms like Xero, Sage, QuickBooks and many more.

See how **Gascoynes** is able to work more efficiently, collaboratively and consistently since partnering with Silverfin

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Stage 2: Standardise

The challenge:

Team members work in their own way, causing inefficiencies and quality differences. This lack of consistency makes collaboration and training more difficult across the team.

The solution:

Work with refined and quality controlled workflows, templates and checklists.

What it delivers:

- Faster and more consistent completions
- Better internal collaboration
- Faster "time to competency" for new joiners
- Reliable output, ready for senior oversight and input

James Darby
Senior Manager,
Bishop Fleming

"Previously, we used a well-known desktop product, but it lacked the flexibility and ease of use we needed. It wasn't uncommon for one person's accounts to look completely different from another's."

Silverfin's role:

Silverfin's AI Mapping feature delivers Chart of Accounts mapping with 98% accuracy, plus standardised digital working paper templates dramatically accelerate this process. For example, mapping 200+ accounts can be reduced from 1 hour to just 10 minutes with AI.

See how **Bishop Fleming** enhanced its year-end accounts and client engagement with Silverfin

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Stage 3: Automate

The challenge:

Repetitive manual tasks waste time and disengage your team - from the work itself and from building client relationships. These small, routine actions quickly add up, slowing down productivity across the business.

The solution:

Automate tasks such as reconciliations, controls and reporting.

What it delivers:

- Time savings of up to 50% per client on annual accounting
- Fewer human errors
- More capacity for higher value, more rewarding work

Jo Gibson,
Partner

"We've grown about £200,000 over the last three years and only recruited an extra one or two staff. The difference is Silverfin."

Silverfin's role:

Silverfin's Accounts Production and Corporation Tax modules automate data flow from working papers to statutory accounts and CT600s, with automatic iXBRL tagging. This eliminates manual re-entry and ensures compliance with UK regulatory requirements.

See how **Hurst** achieved seamless growth and strategic focus with Silverfin

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Stage 4: Optimise

The challenge:
Improved processes are ready to scale, but lack of visibility makes it difficult to refine performance most purposefully.

The solution:
Monitor your processes and performance continuously, and improve based on insights. This means using clear, data-driven reports to set success measures and objectives.

For example
A firm might track the average time spent on specific tasks to identify bottlenecks, or monitor the number of review cycles a client file goes through to improve quality and efficiency.

What it delivers:
- Firm-level view of work in progress
- Proactive checks for risks and opportunities on every file
- Better quality control and clearer focus for senior oversight
- Easier management of your internal operations

Russell Frayne,
Director of Transformation, Gravita

"Instead of reviewing the data manually, we ran it through Silverfin Assistant. The tool ran around 100 checks and spotted four new opportunities, but also four errors that were spot-on. It would have taken an accountant 30 minutes or more."

Silverfin's role:

Silverfin Assistant and Insights run automated checks on client files, identifying unusual balances, missing transactions and outliers. The Insights module provides firm-wide visibility into work in progress, while Silverfin Assistant flags specific client file issues automatically - and when you spot an issue or opportunity in one file, it can surface the same pattern across your entire portfolio instantly.

See how **Gravita** saved time and improved compliance with Silverfin's AI assistant.

![Silverfin by VISMA logo]

Stage 5: Advise

The challenge:

Your client is looking for more than just annual or quarterly compliance, they trust you to bring valuable insights into how to make their business better. You need tooling that leverages your expertise and their data to prove you are more valuable than a generic ChatGPT prompt.

The solution:
Use AI to identify discussion topics and prepare impactful agendas based on client data analysis.

What it delivers:
- Higher client satisfaction
- New advisory services and revenue models
- A strategic partner that delivers significant billable value
- Ready-to-go client meeting agendas

Hollie Moore,
Early Careers Manager, BKL

"With the introduction of AI and the increased amount of technology, advisory is going to become more and more part of our day to day jobs as accountants."

Silverfin's role:

Silverfin's AI features like Silverfin Assistant, Insights and Talking Points suggest discussion topics based on client data and accountants' notes, turning insights into structured conversation guides that help deliver impactful advisory services.

BKL

See how **BKL** has been able to offer its clients more strategic advice from real-time data with Silverfin

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Communication

Digital transformation is easier when your team works on it together. Throughout all five stages effective communication with colleagues and clients amplifies everything else to new levels.

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

Martin Bugg,
Digital Partner,
Larking Gowen

"The ability to message someone through the software with your review point for them to be notified, pick them up and action them in a more of a real time manner is a great benefit."

Silverfin's role:

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 when key contacts change on either side.

Where does your practice stand today?

Stage	How your practice current works	What's holding you back
01. Connect	Using multiple disconnected systems	Data scattered, being re-entered and becoming outdated
02. Standardise	Each team member has their own approach	Work quality varies between teams and offices
03. Automate	Heavy reliance on manual processes	Time wasted on repetitive tasks
04. Optimise	Know things could be better but lack visibility	Can't pinpoint where improvements are needed
05. Advise	Struggling to prepare meaningful client conversations	Limited insights to drive s trategic discussions

Do you recognise your practice?
Then you know exactly what your next step should be.

How Silverfin's AI innovation accelerates transformation

Powering your digital transformation journey with advanced technology

The five-stage journey becomes exponentially more powerful when supported by cutting-edge AI technology. Silverfin doesn't just provide software - we're pioneering the future of accounting through our investments since 2021 in AI and automation.

While many practices struggle with basic digitisation, forward-thinking firms are already leveraging AI to leapfrog competitors. Our dedication to accountant led innovationensures you're not just keeping up with change, but leading it.

The Silverfin AI stack

AI Mapping

Before AI can deliver insights, data must be standardised

- AI-powered Chart of Accounts mapping
- Turns hours of manual work into minutes
- Enables consistent reporting and downstream AI usage

AI Input

Silverfin automates repetitive data entry

- Upload documents such as loan agreements and VAT returns
- AI extracts and fills in the correct fields
- Smart, fast and friction-free

Silverfin Assistant

With clean data, AI starts delivering real value

- Intelligence assistant scans for missing entries, inconsistencies & human oversights
- AI that never sleeps, flagging what tired eyes might miss
- Runs hundreds of automated checks per client file

Talking Points

Enabling meaningful client conversations

- AI suggests discussion topics based on client data & accountants' notes
- Turns insights into a ready-to-go agenda
- Helps make accountants indispensable advisors

FUTURE STATE

AI Agents

**From AI assistants to autonomous digital colleagues**

- AI agents that work independently across the entire client lifecycle
- Proactive identification and resolution of compliance issues
- Self-managing workflows that anticipate client needs

Industry trends: UKI practices lead the way

UKI practices aren't just thinking about digital transformation - they're actively investing in it. According to our 2025 research:

Efficiency gains

89%
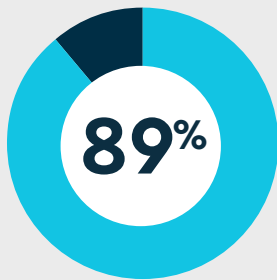
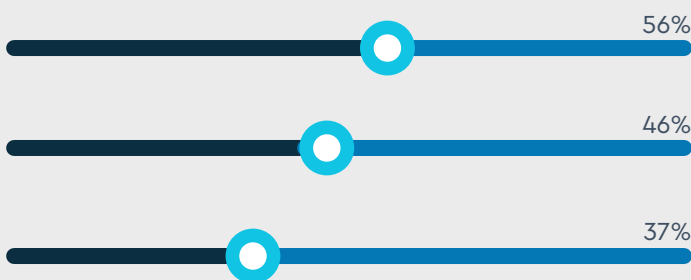of UKI practices have invested in automation and digital tools in the last year.

AI adoption

85%

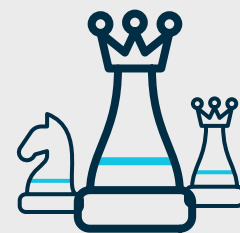say AI has helped their practices save time, with average time savings of **9%**.

Focus areas

56%

46%

37%

56% invested in financial reporting tools, **46%** in management reporting, **37%** in corporation tax solutions.

Strategic priorities

51% cite growth as their main strategic objective, but partners currently spend only **14%** of time on strategic planning.

Source: Silverfin Report 2025: [All Accounted For](#)

Ready for your next step?

The research is clear: practices that act decisively on digital transformation won't just keep up - they'll lead their market.

Get inspired.
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Let's talk.
Chat with our experts about your digital transformation journey.

[Book a chat]