Annual report

2026 U.S. Accounting and Tax **Pricing Benchmark**

- Benchmarking what accounting firms charge, how they raise fees, and where pricing confidence is heading in 2026/2027
- Insights from +360 accounting firms across the U.S.
- Pricing trends, fee increases, advisory growth, and profitability insights from firms nationwide
- Expert advice from Ryan Lazanis, CEO of Future Firm, and Dawn Brolin, CPA, CFE and CEO of Powerful Accounting, Inc

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Overview: Pricing has become a growth strategy, not just a revenue lever

It's a new era of maturity for accounting firms — one where pricing is evolving into one of the most important tools for improving profitability, managing capacity, and supporting long-term growth.

As firms continue to navigate rising operating costs, talent shortages, increased client expectations, and growing demand for advisory services, their approach to pricing is becoming less reactive and more intentional.

Ignition's 2026 U.S. Accounting & Tax Pricing Benchmark Report provides a comprehensive view of how accounting and bookkeeping firms across the United States are approaching pricing today.

Based on a survey of 368 accounting firms, the report examines pricing benchmarks, pricing models, fee collection practices, planned price increases, and pricing confidence across the profession.

Highlights from the report

Accounting firms continue to demonstrate growing confidence in their pricing strategies. This year's benchmark shows that firms are increasingly embracing fixed-fee and value-based pricing, proactively raising fees, and expanding higher-value advisory services.

Several findings point to a profession that is becoming more intentional about pricing and profitability.

These findings suggest the profession is moving beyond reactive pricing decisions and toward a more strategic approach to profitability, service positioning, and long-term growth.

In this report, you'll find:

- Insights into the pricing models firms are using today
- Fee collection trends and recurring billing behaviors
- Planned price increases and the motivations behind them
- Pricing confidence levels, challenges, and outcomes
- Practical recommendations for strengthening pricing strategy

As advisory work expands and recurring revenue models become more established, pricing is evolving from an administrative exercise into a core business strategy.

For firms reviewing pricing in 2026, the question is no longer whether fees should increase. The question is how to build a pricing strategy that supports profitability, reflects value delivered, and creates a stronger foundation for future growth.

77% of firms plan to increase prices in the next 6–12 months

Annual price increases are becoming standard practice across accounting firms.

86% report confidence in their pricing strategy

Most firms describe themselves as somewhat or very confident in their current pricing approach.

64% of firms use fixed-fee or value pricing for bookkeeping services

The shift away from hourly billing continues across recurring accounting services.

45% of firms charge $1,000 or more for advisory services

Strategic advisory work continues to command premium pricing.

60% of firms reported little or no client resistance after raising prices

Most firms experienced either no pushback or only minor resistance after increasing fees.

24% fear losing clients when raising prices

Yet 60% reported little or no client resistance after increasing fees.

Nearly 25%

of firms charge $2,000 or more for business tax returns

Higher pricing tiers continue gaining traction across business compliance services.

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Research methodology and sample

Ignition surveyed 368 accounting professionals across the United States in May 2026 to better understand pricing behaviors, fee structures, pricing confidence, and pricing plan trends across the profession.

The survey included responses from both existing Ignition customers and firms not currently using Ignition, creating a broad benchmark of accounting firms operating across multiple service lines and market segments.

Respondent profile

- The survey included:
- 368 total respondents
- 222 Ignition customers
- 146 non-customers

Geographic distribution

Respondents represented firms across all major U.S. regions.

The Southeast accounted for the largest share of respondents (23%), followed by the Pacific region (21%), the Midwest (19%), the Southwest (16%), the Northeast (13%), and the Rocky Mountains region (8%).

Community served

More than half of respondents primarily serve suburban communities (51%), while 39% operate primarily in urban markets, and 10% focus on rural communities.

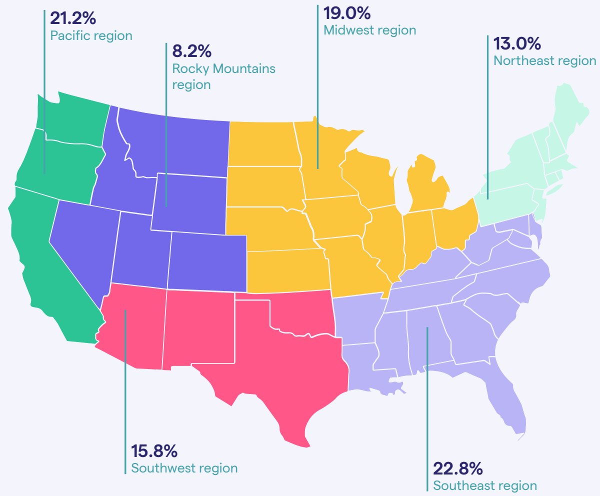
This distribution highlights the continued importance of suburban small-business markets within the accounting profession.

Firm revenue

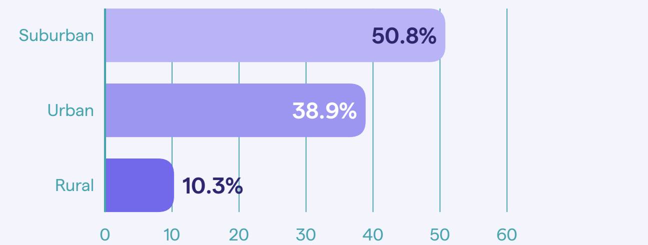
The benchmark primarily reflects established small and mid-sized firms.

Nearly half of respondents (46%) reported annual revenue between $251,000 and $1.4 million. A further 20% generated less than $150,000 annually, while 21% reported revenue exceeding $1.4 million.

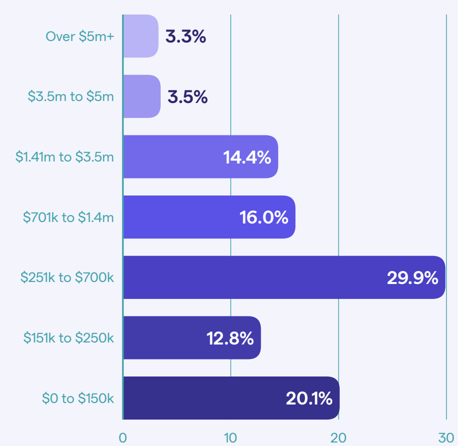
What region of the US is your business based in?



What is the primary community that you provide services to?



What is your firm's annual revenue range?



Firm type

Full-service accounting firms represented the largest segment of respondents, accounting for 48% of the sample.

Tax-focused firms represented 31%, followed by bookkeeping firms (8%), niche or specialized firms (6%), advisory-only firms (3%), and other firm types (4%).

Firm size

The survey audience was heavily concentrated among small firms.

Nearly 64% of respondents operate as sole practitioners or employ between two and five team members. Another 29% employ between six and twenty staff.

Notably, this reinforces the importance of pricing efficiency, service packaging, and operational leverage for firms with lean teams and limited capacity.

Methodology notes

Some survey questions were conditionally displayed only to respondents offering specific services. As a result, total respondent counts vary between questions.

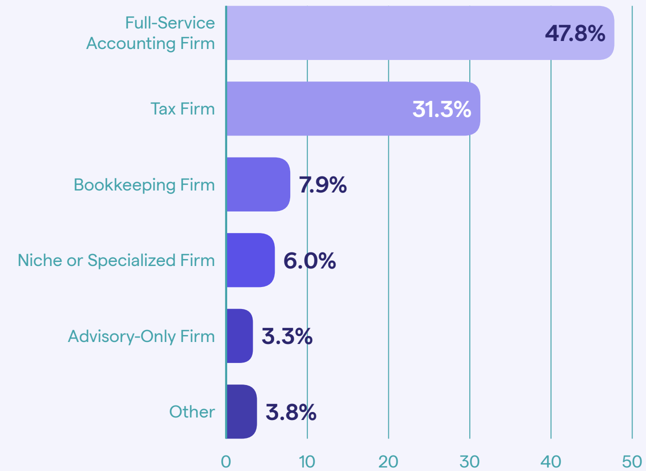
Certain questions allowed respondents to select multiple responses. Percentages for these questions may therefore exceed 100%.

Percentages referenced throughout this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number for readability.

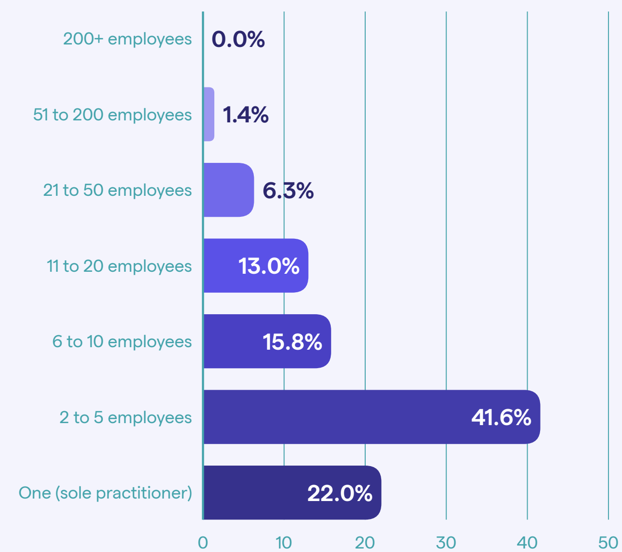
Throughout this report, references to customer and non-customer differences are based on directional analysis of survey responses from Ignition customers (n=222) and non-customers (n=146). To improve readability and benchmarking consistency, charts and visualizations present combined survey results unless otherwise stated.

Where meaningful differences between customer and non-customer responses emerged, these insights have been highlighted throughout the report to provide additional context around pricing behaviors, confidence levels, and operational maturity.

How would you categorize your firm?



What is the staff size of your firm?



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Executive highlights

Accounting firms continue to demonstrate increasing confidence in their pricing strategies, with fee increases, recurring pricing models, and premium advisory services becoming more common across the profession.

The findings suggest firms are moving beyond reactive pricing decisions and adopting a more intentional approach to profitability and growth.

1. Fixed-fee pricing continues to dominate

Fixed-fee and value-based pricing models now significantly outweigh hourly billing.

2. Business tax return pricing continues moving higher

More than half of firms charge between $1,000 and $1,999, while nearly one in four charge more than $2,000.

3. Advisory services command premium fees

Forty-five percent of firms charge $1,000 or more annually for tax planning and advisory services, while nearly one-quarter charge over $2,000.

4. CFO services generate the highest recurring fees

Among firms offering CFO and controller services, more than half charge at least $1,500 per month, with one-quarter charging over $2,500 monthly.

5. Client resistance remains lower than expected

More than 60% of firms reported either no client resistance or only minor pushback after increasing fees, while many firms that lost clients still maintained or improved profitability.

6. Pricing confidence continues to grow — but a value gap remains

While firms generally feel confident in their pricing process, only 11% report being very confident that their current pricing fully reflects the value they deliver. This may represent the profession’s next stage of pricing maturity: moving from confidence in the process toward confidence in the value captured.

Tax preparation services

Tax preparation remains the largest compliance service line for many accounting firms, but the way they price and package this work continues to evolve.

The data suggests firms are steadily moving away from traditional hourly billing in favor of pricing structures that provide greater predictability for both the firm and the client. Fixed-fee pricing, minimum-fee models, and value-based approaches now represent the dominant pricing methods across tax preparation services.

This shift reflects broader changes within the profession. As technology reduces administrative effort and clients increasingly expect certainty around fees, firms appear more willing to price around complexity, expertise, and outcomes rather than time alone.

Ignition Pricing Benchmark Insight

Firms demonstrating more mature pricing practices report significantly higher confidence in their pricing strategy. While most firms feel confident overall, the strongest confidence levels are concentrated among firms that have standardized pricing, recurring billing, and established service packages.

Pricing models

Traditional hourly billing now represents a small minority of tax preparation pricing models. Just 5% of firms primarily use hourly rates, while 73% rely on minimum-fee, fixed-fee, or value-pricing approaches.

Minimum fee plus complexity pricing remains the most common model at 29%, closely followed by fixed-fee pricing at 27%. Value-based pricing accounts for a further 17%.

The findings suggest pricing maturity continues to increase across the profession, with firms seeking more scalable pricing structures that reduce dependence on time-based billing.

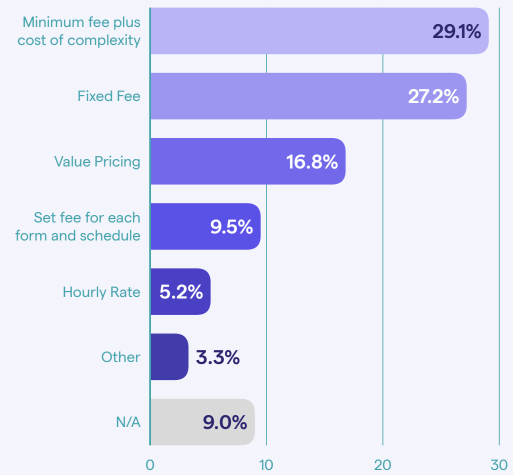
Individual tax return pricing

Pricing for individual tax returns remains concentrated in the middle of the market. Nearly two-thirds of firms charge between less than $400 and $799 annually for a basic individual return, creating a broad pricing center for the profession.

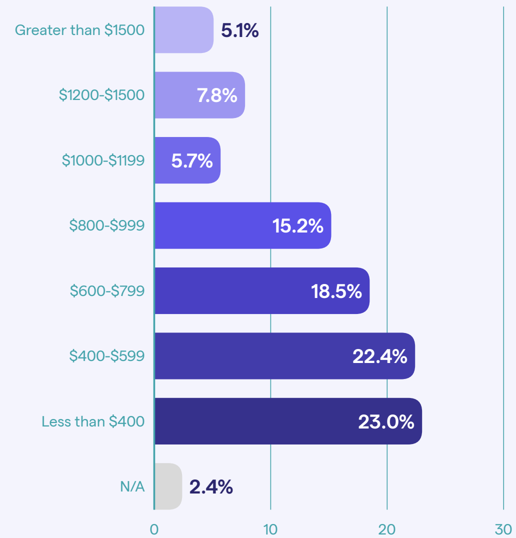
At the same time, premium pricing continues to emerge. Almost one in five firms now charges more than $1,000 annually for a basic individual return, demonstrating that many firms have successfully repositioned individual tax work around expertise, specialization, and client experience rather than volume.

Ignition customer responses are notably concentrated within higher pricing tiers, suggesting firms with more mature pricing practices may be better positioned to command premium rates.

How do you currently price your tax preparation services?



What is the average fee your firm currently charges annually for a basic individual tax return?



Business tax return pricing

Business tax returns continue to command significantly higher fees than individual tax work. More than half of firms charge between $1,000 and $1,999 annually for business tax returns, while nearly one-quarter charge $2,000 or more.

The largest pricing concentration falls between $1,500 and $1,999, reinforcing this range as a benchmark for the majority of firms serving business clients.

The continued strength of higher pricing tiers reflects increasing complexity, greater advisory expectations, and the growing importance of business clients within firm growth strategies.

Fee collection timing

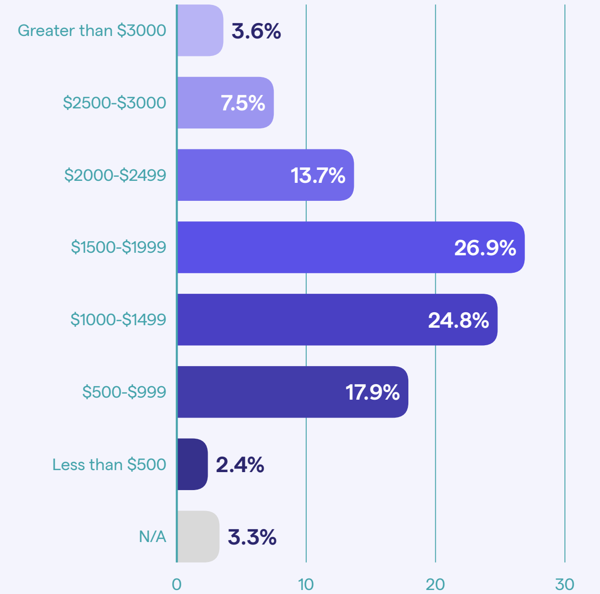
Despite growing pricing sophistication, most firms continue to collect tax preparation fees after work is completed. More than half of respondents report collecting payment upon completion, while approximately one-third collect either deposits or full payment upfront.

Although completion-based billing remains dominant, the data suggests fee collection behaviors are gradually evolving. Firms collecting payment upfront or requiring deposits demonstrate many of the same characteristics associated with pricing maturity, including stronger pricing confidence, higher-value service offerings, and broader adoption of fixed-fee pricing.

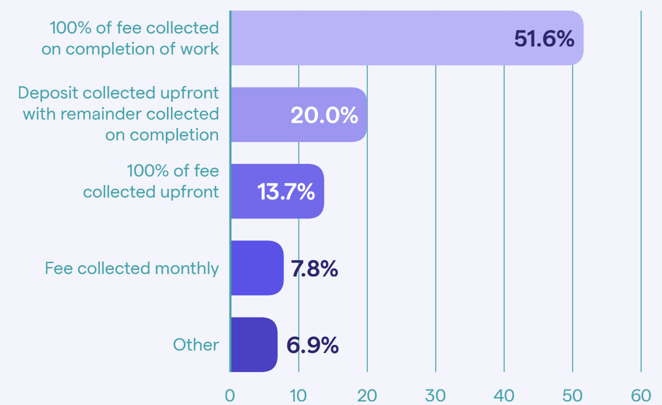
The movement toward upfront collection may represent one of the profession's next major operational shifts.

"The biggest mistake firms make is assuming clients are buying tax returns. They're not. They're buying confidence, responsiveness, and expertise. When firms understand that, pricing conversations become much easier." - Dawn Brolin, CPA, CFE and CEO of Powerful Accounting, Inc.

What is the average fee your firm currently charges annually for business tax returns?



When do you typically collect your fees for tax preparation services?



Tax planning and advisory services

Tax planning and advisory services have become one of the strongest indicators of pricing maturity within the accounting profession.

Unlike compliance work, advisory engagements are often positioned around outcomes, strategic guidance, and long-term client value. As a result, firms appear increasingly comfortable applying premium pricing structures and recurring billing models to these services.

The data suggests advisory work is becoming a meaningful growth driver for firms seeking to expand beyond traditional compliance engagements.

Ignition Pricing Benchmark Insight

Ignition customers demonstrate stronger adoption of fixed-fee and value-based pricing models across advisory services. They are also more heavily represented in higher advisory pricing tiers, suggesting greater confidence in pricing strategic expertise and client outcomes than time alone.

As firms continue expanding advisory offerings, these findings reinforce the broader shift toward value-driven pricing and recurring revenue models.

Pricing models

Tax planning and advisory pricing is now heavily concentrated around fixed-fee and value-pricing approaches. More than half of firms use either fixed-fee or value-based pricing as their primary advisory pricing model, while just 21% continue to rely primarily on hourly billing.

This represents one of the strongest examples of the profession's transition toward outcome-based pricing. Because advisory engagements often involve strategic expertise rather than clearly measurable hours, firms appear increasingly willing to align pricing with value delivered over effort expended.

Annual advisory fees

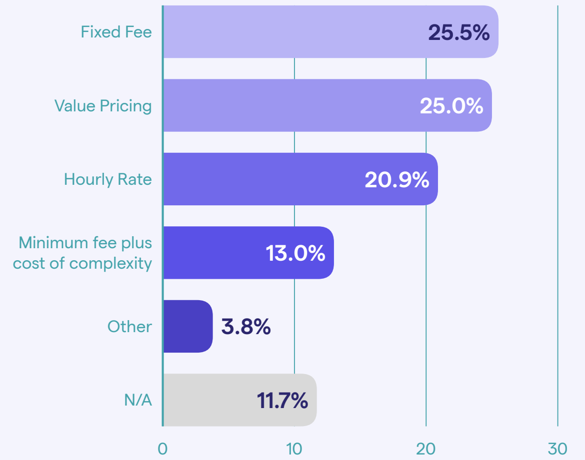
Advisory pricing spans a remarkably broad range, reflecting the diversity of services offered under the advisory umbrella.

However, the premium end of the market continues to grow. Forty-five percent of firms charge at least $1,000 annually for advisory services, while one in five charge over $2,000 annually.

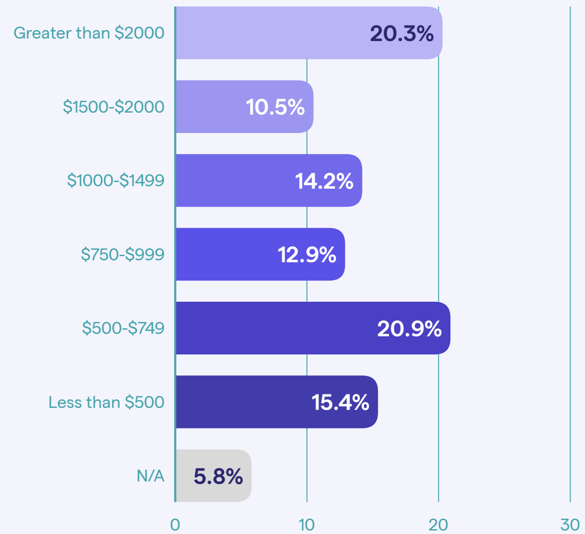
The largest premium segment falls within the $2,000-plus category, pointing to a broader industry trend. Advisory services are no longer being treated as supplementary offerings attached to compliance work.

Increasingly, firms are positioning advisory as a standalone service category capable of commanding premium pricing, recurring revenue, and stronger client relationships.

How do you currently price your tax planning and advisory services?



What is the average fee your firm currently charges annually for Tax Planning & Advisory services for one entity and associated individuals?



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Fee collection practices

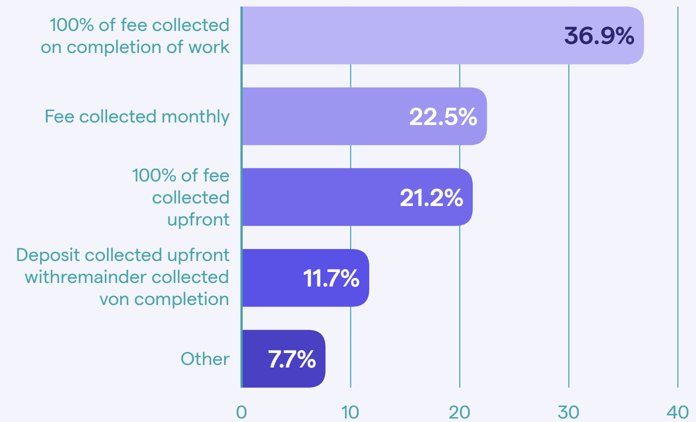
Collection practices for advisory services differ significantly from tax preparation services.

While completion-based billing remains common, firms are substantially more likely to collect fees upfront or bill clients on a recurring monthly basis. More than 43% of firms collect advisory fees either upfront or monthly. This reflects the ongoing shift toward recurring advisory relationships and subscription-style service models.

Monthly billing appears particularly common among firms demonstrating more mature pricing behaviors, supporting the idea that recurring advisory revenue is becoming an increasingly important component of firm growth strategies.

"The reality is that there is very little pushback by a client when we ask for payment up front. The majority of the time, this is a limiting belief. I was able to achieve $0 A/R from simply stating as a matter of fact that payment is collected prior to the services commencing." - Ryan Lazanis, CPA and Founder, Future Firm

When do you typically collect your fees for tax planning and advisory services?



Bookkeeping and accounting services

As one of the most established revenue streams across the profession, recurring bookkeeping and accounting services remain ahead of the curve when it comes to pricing.

The findings suggest bookkeeping pricing has largely completed the transition away from hourly billing and toward recurring fixed-fee engagements.

Pricing models

Fixed-fee pricing is now the dominant bookkeeping pricing model, with nearly two-thirds of firms using either fixed-fee or value-based pricing. Only 8% continue to rely primarily on hourly rates.

The prevalence of recurring engagements, standardized workflows, and automation likely contributes to this shift.

As firms become more efficient operationally, pricing appears increasingly disconnected from time spent and more closely aligned with ongoing client outcomes.

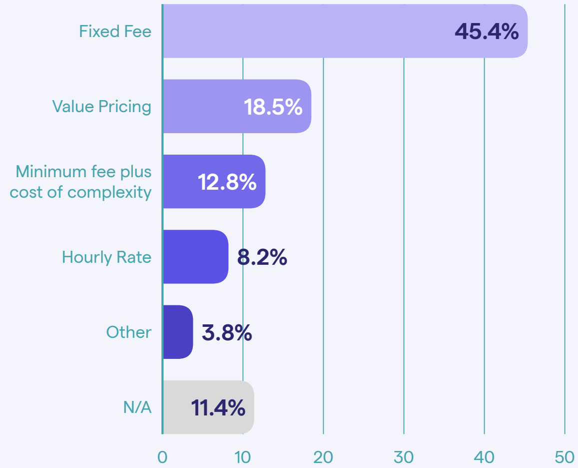
Monthly pricing benchmarks

The center of the bookkeeping market falls between $250 and $749 per month, where nearly 58% of firms are currently priced.

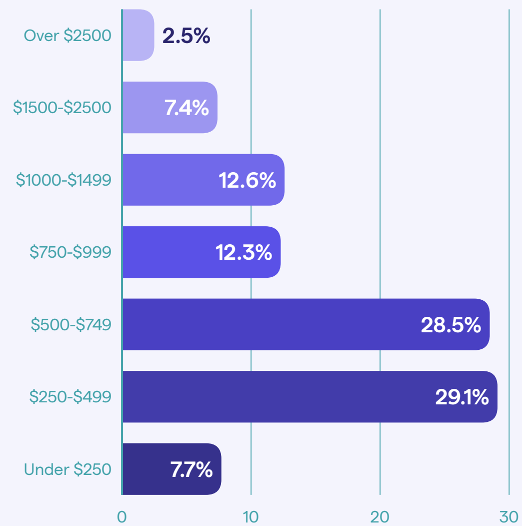
However, pricing dispersion continues to increase. More firms are moving into higher recurring pricing tiers, with approximately 35% charging $750 or more monthly. Ignition customer responses remain concentrated in higher pricing brackets, reinforcing the relationship between pricing maturity and recurring revenue optimization.

"I'm happy to see this trending in the right direction, but there are still far too many firms charging at the bottom threshold. Clients at that price point are generally the most price sensitive ones, and data is showing that these clients are the first to complain and the first to switch to a cheaper firm." - Ryan Lazanis

How do you currently price your monthly Bookkeeping/Accounting services?



What is the average fee you charge clients on a monthly basis for monthly Bookkeeping/Accounting services?



CFO and controller services

CFO and controller services represent one of the profession's most significant growth opportunities. These services command substantially higher recurring fees than traditional bookkeeping engagements and often serve as a gateway to deeper advisory relationships.

Despite growing demand for strategic financial guidance, nearly 45% of firms do not currently offer CFO or controller services. This represents one of the profession's most significant untapped growth opportunities. As firms increasingly look to diversify revenue streams and move upstream into higher-value advisory work, CFO services offer a natural pathway to stronger recurring revenue and deeper client relationships.

Ignition Pricing Benchmark Insight

The continued growth of CFO services demonstrates how accounting firms are moving upstream from compliance and transaction processing toward strategic business advisory.

Pricing models

Among firms offering CFO services, fixed-fee pricing is the dominant approach.

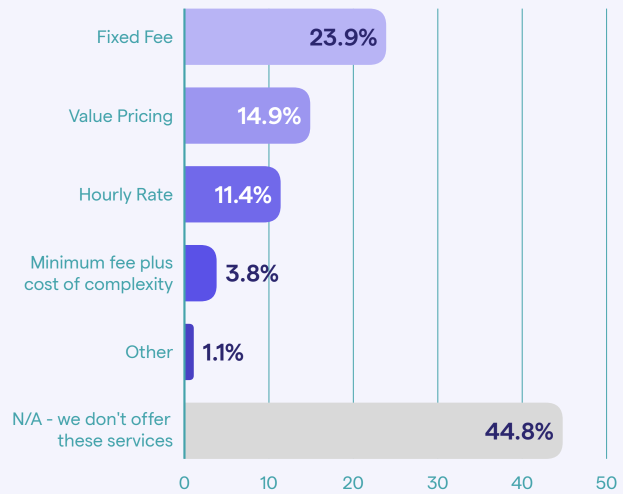
Value pricing also plays a meaningful role, while hourly billing accounts for a relatively small portion of engagements. This aligns closely with broader advisory pricing trends and reinforces the strategic nature of CFO work.

Monthly pricing benchmarks

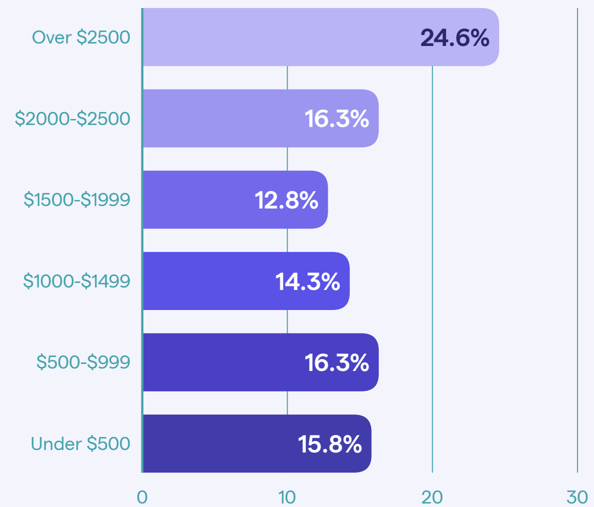
CFO and controller services command significantly higher recurring fees than bookkeeping services.

More than half of firms charge $1,500 or more per month, while nearly one-quarter charge over $2,500 monthly. The premium nature of these engagements reflects the higher level of strategic involvement, business insight, and ongoing advisory support required.

How do you currently price your CFO/Controller services?



What is the average fee you charge clients on a monthly basis for CFO/Controller services?



Price increases and pricing confidence

Historically, firms often increased prices only when external pressures demanded it. Today's data suggests something different.

While cost recovery remains important, a growing percentage of firms appear to be using pricing intentionally to shape client portfolios, improve profitability, and support long-term growth objectives.

The findings suggest the profession is moving beyond occasional fee adjustments and toward more deliberate pricing management.

"If you're not reviewing pricing annually, you're effectively giving clients a discount every year. Most clients understand that costs rise, and expectations change. What matters is communicating clearly and confidently." - Dawn Brolin

Ignition Pricing Benchmark Insight

Ignition customers report higher levels of pricing confidence than non-customers and are more likely to increase prices proactively. This suggests that firms with more mature pricing processes may be better equipped to review, communicate, and implement fee increases on a regular basis.

Rather than treating price increases as reactive responses to rising costs, these firms appear more likely to view pricing as an ongoing component of business strategy.

Firms planning price increases

More than 77% of firms plan to increase prices during the next 6–12 months. This makes fee increases one of the most widely adopted business practices across the profession.

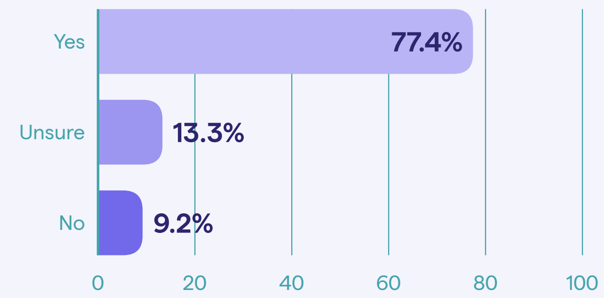
Only 9% of firms report having no plans to increase pricing. The data suggests annual repricing is increasingly viewed as a standard component of maintaining profitability.

Planned increase percentages

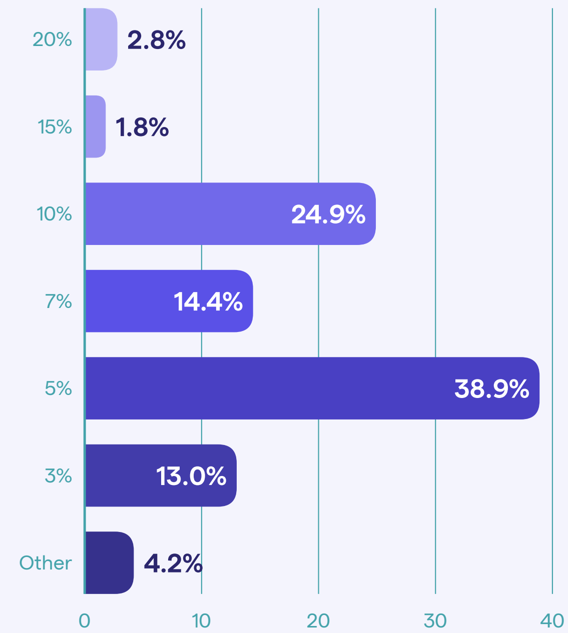
The most common planned increases are 5% and 10%. Together, these two pricing strategies account for nearly two-thirds of all planned increases.

While moderate increases remain the norm, the distribution of responses suggests firms are becoming more deliberate about matching increases to service value, profitability goals, and client segments.

Does your firm plan to apply a price increase across services in the next 6–12 months?



By how much will your firm increase prices across all services?



“As I mentioned in last year’s report, 5-10% is simply not enough. If your profits are too low and/or you’re dealing with cash flow issues, the pricing strategy has to change. We achieve this through larger increases. Think of the last time you raised prices by 5-10%, where most clients accepted. That means we didn’t hit the threshold yet. You should want some of your clients to say “no”. - Ryan Lazanis

Why firms are raising prices

Rising business costs remain the dominant driver behind fee increases, with more than half of firms citing cost pressures as their primary motivation.

However, the data also reveals a more strategic layer emerging beneath cost recovery. More than 30% of respondents report raising prices to improve margins, reposition services, offer premium offerings, or improve client quality. This suggests the profession is gradually shifting from reactive pricing toward proactive profitability management.

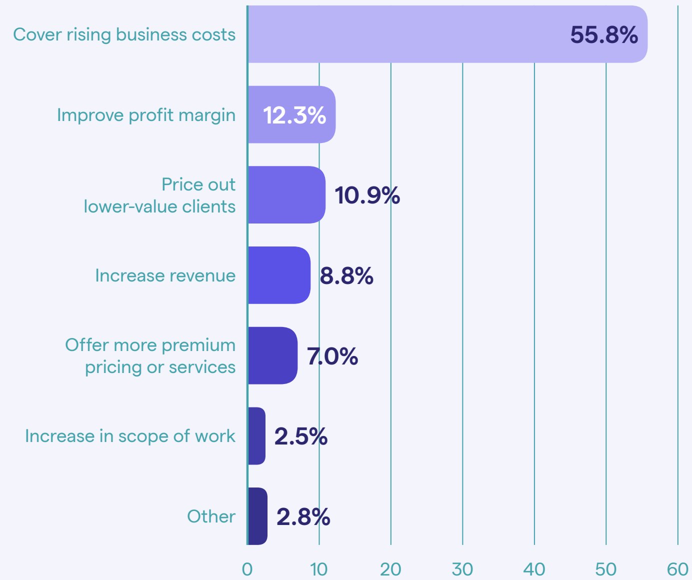
Validate your next price increase

Use real-world benchmark data to understand where your pricing sits before sending your next proposal.

Explore Price Insights

See how it works

What is the primary reason you are raising prices?



Pricing challenges and outcomes

This section reveals perhaps the most important finding in the entire benchmark: the profession's perception of pricing challenges tends to differ significantly from the firms' outcomes.

Ignition Pricing Benchmark Insight

Across tax preparation and advisory services, Ignition customers are more likely to collect fees upfront or through recurring billing arrangements and report stronger confidence that their pricing reflects the value they deliver. These behaviors point to a broader level of pricing maturity that extends beyond fee setting alone.

The findings suggest that firms with greater pricing visibility and more standardized processes may experience less uncertainty around pricing decisions and stronger alignment between value delivered and value captured.

Barriers to raising prices

Fear of losing clients remains the largest emotional barrier to increasing prices. Nearly one-quarter of respondents identified client loss as the primary factor preventing them from raising fees more regularly.

However, the most common response overall was not a barrier at all. One-third of firms reported that they do not hold back from increasing prices. This may represent one of the strongest indicators of growing pricing confidence throughout the profession.

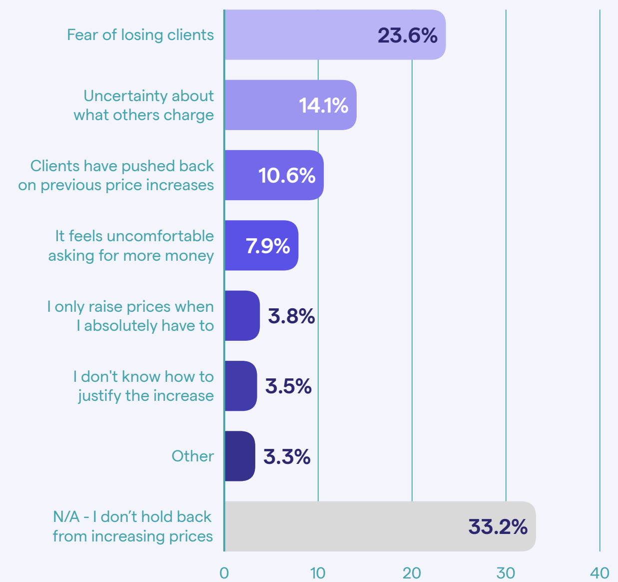
"It's normal to be concerned about losing a client due to a price increase. First, pruning C/D clients is actually a good strategy to improve your firm. Second, you can stage your price increases so that you're not repricing every single client at once. See how clients react and then iterate on the next batch of clients." - Ryan Lazanis

What happens when firms raise prices?

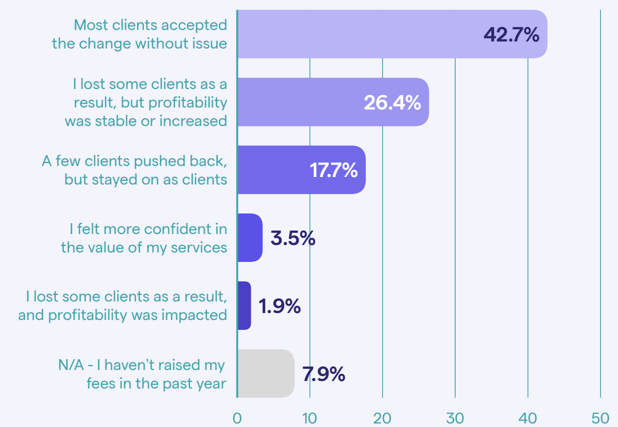
The outcomes reported by firms paint a very different picture from the fears many firms continue to hold. The largest group of respondents reported that clients accepted fee increases without issue. Many others reported losing some clients while maintaining or improving profitability.

Only a very small percentage reported negative financial outcomes after increasing prices, which suggests firms may substantially overestimate the risks associated with repricing services.

Either now or in the past, what has primarily held you back from increasing your prices more regularly or significantly?



If you raised your fees in the past year, what outcomes did you experience?



Confidence in pricing strategy

Overall confidence levels are strong. More than 86% of respondents describe themselves as somewhat or very confident in their pricing strategy. This suggests most firms believe they have a reasonable framework for making pricing decisions.

However, confidence is not evenly distributed. Ignition customers consistently report stronger confidence levels than non-customers, reinforcing the relationship between operational maturity and pricing confidence.

Does pricing reflect value?

This question exposes the profession's next major challenge. While firms generally feel confident in their pricing process, relatively few are fully confident that their pricing captures the true value they deliver.

Only 11% report being very confident that their pricing reflects value. This gap between pricing confidence and value confidence may represent the next stage of pricing evolution.

As firms become more intentional about pricing, access to market data becomes increasingly valuable. Benchmark reports, pricing frameworks, and pricing enablement tools can help firms validate pricing decisions, identify opportunities for improvement, and approach pricing conversations with greater confidence.

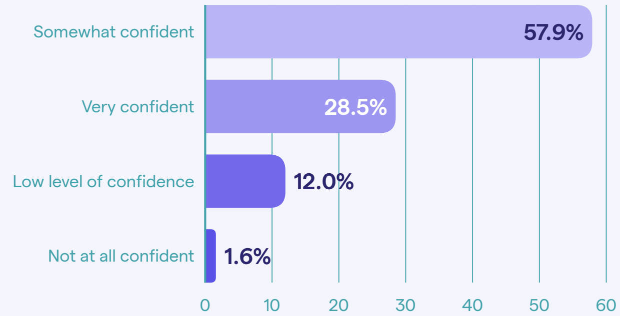
"The fear of client pushback is usually far greater than the reality. In my experience, clients rarely leave because of a reasonable fee increase. They leave when they don't understand the value they're receiving." - Dawn Brolin

Challenges firms face when raising prices

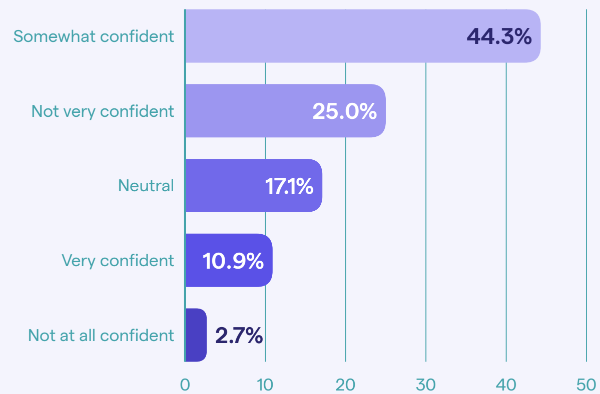
The most commonly cited pricing challenge aligns clearly with the other findings: difficulty quantifying value, identified by nearly 46% of respondents. Firms increasingly understand that their expertise is worth more than hours billed, but lack the frameworks or data to articulate that value with confidence.

Uncertainty about what others charge ranked second, with 42% of respondents citing a lack of market visibility as a persistent obstacle. Inconsistent pricing across clients followed at 37%, pointing to a structural challenge familiar to many growing firms. Pricing evolved organically over time, client by client, without a consistent underlying framework.

How confident are you in your current pricing strategy and process?



How confident are you that your current pricing reflects the true value of your services?



Time required to scope and price work was flagged by one-third of respondents, reinforcing the operational cost of pricing decisions that lack standardization. Fear of client pushback was cited by 40%, despite data elsewhere in this report suggesting that actual client resistance is far lower than anticipated.

Taken together, these findings suggest that most pricing friction is not external. It stems from internal gaps in frameworks, market data, and confidence around value communication.

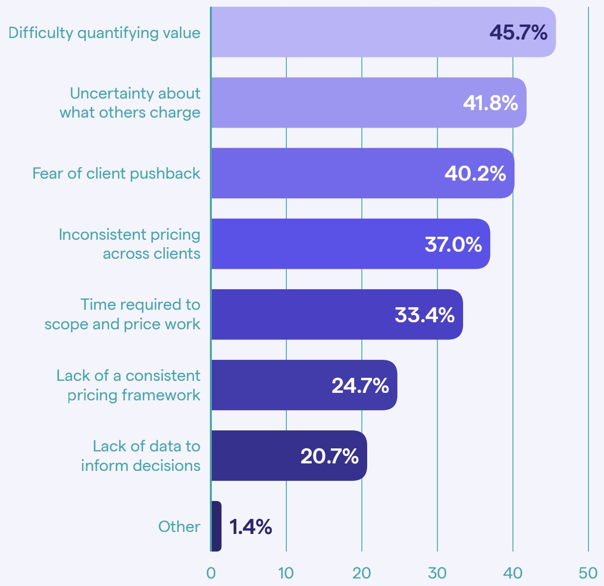
"Justifying your value is not always the simplest thing to do. We know we're worth it, but communicating this in clear terms is not always easy. My approach is to zoom out and think of how we're getting the client from Point A to Point B. Clients are interested in the end result, not the extra few hours of time we spend on them. Always try to zoom out and frame your prices in terms of the results that you achieve for them." - Ryan Lazanis

Close the confidence gap

Price Insights helps firms benchmark fees against thousands of accounting engagements, reducing uncertainty and supporting more informed pricing decisions.

Explore Price Insights

What are the biggest challenges you face when pricing your services?



Key takeaways for firms

The findings in this year's benchmark point to a profession that is becoming increasingly intentional about pricing.

While rising costs continue to influence fee decisions, the broader story is no longer about simply charging more. Firms are beginning to rethink how they package services, communicate value, and build pricing into their overall growth strategy.

Several themes emerged consistently throughout the data.

Pricing confidence is increasing

One of the strongest findings in this year's report is the level of confidence firms have in their pricing approach. More than 86% of respondents reported being somewhat or very confident in their pricing strategy, and one-third stated that they do not hold back from increasing prices when necessary.

Firms are moving beyond survival pricing

More firms appear willing to evaluate pricing proactively rather than waiting for margins to deteriorate. This shift reflects a broader business maturity trend. Firms are increasingly using pricing to shape their client portfolio, improve profitability, and create capacity for higher-value work.

Value pricing continues to gain momentum

Across nearly every service category, fixed-fee and value-based pricing now outweigh traditional hourly billing. This trend is particularly evident within advisory, bookkeeping, and CFO services, suggesting the profession is becoming more comfortable monetizing knowledge over labor.

As automation continues to reduce manual effort, firms are responding by adopting pricing models that better align fees with outcomes, expertise, and business impact.

"Hourly billing creates a ceiling because revenue is tied to effort. The firms scaling most effectively today are building pricing models around expertise, outcomes, and ongoing value." - Ryan Lazanis

Advisory services continue commanding premium pricing

Firms offering advisory and CFO services consistently report higher pricing tiers, recurring billing models, and greater confidence levels.

As compliance becomes increasingly automated, advisory services may continue to represent one of the profession's largest growth opportunities.

Confidence and value are not the same thing

Perhaps the most important finding in this report is the gap between pricing confidence and value confidence. Most firms believe they have a reasonable pricing process, but far fewer believe their pricing fully reflects the value they deliver.

This distinction matters. The next stage of pricing maturity is not simply raising prices. It is developing the confidence, frameworks, and market validation necessary to align pricing more closely with client outcomes and business impact.

Pricing and packaging remain the biggest untapped opportunities for accounting firms

By Ryan Lazanis, CPA, Founder & CEO, Future Firm

I've spent the last 8 years working with thousands of accounting firm owners around the world, and one thing continues to stand out: pricing remains one of the most powerful (yet most underutilized) levers firms have to improve profitability and create more freedom.

The findings in this year's benchmark reinforce what I see every day through my work at Future Firm.

I'm encouraged to see that many firms are finally starting to raise prices to what they're worth and are more confident in their pricing strategies. Fixed-fee pricing continues to gain momentum, more firms are raising prices regularly (though not enough!), and advisory services are commanding increasingly premium fees. These are all positive signs that the profession is becoming more intentional about pricing.

At the same time, the data suggests there is still significant room for growth.

While most firms report confidence in their pricing strategy, relatively few are very confident that their pricing fully reflects the value they deliver. I get it, this is not always easy to communicate. As a result, too many accountants continue to underprice their expertise. Ultimately, it all starts with believing in yourself and knowing you're worth it. That's the first step!

Pricing well is important because the busiest firms are often the ones charging the least. They're serving too many clients, working too many hours, and creating unnecessary complexity in their business. Better pricing and packaging can change that.

When firms charge appropriately for the value they provide, several things happen. Profitability improves. Capacity increases. Teams become less overwhelmed. And firm owners gain more flexibility to focus on growth rather than constantly managing their workload.

Remember: Fewer clients in the firm for the same amount of money is a huge win!

I know firsthand how challenging pricing can be. When I launched my own cloud accounting firm, my prices were far lower than they should have been. It took years of testing, refining, and learning to build a pricing model that reflected the value we delivered and supported the type of business I wanted to create.

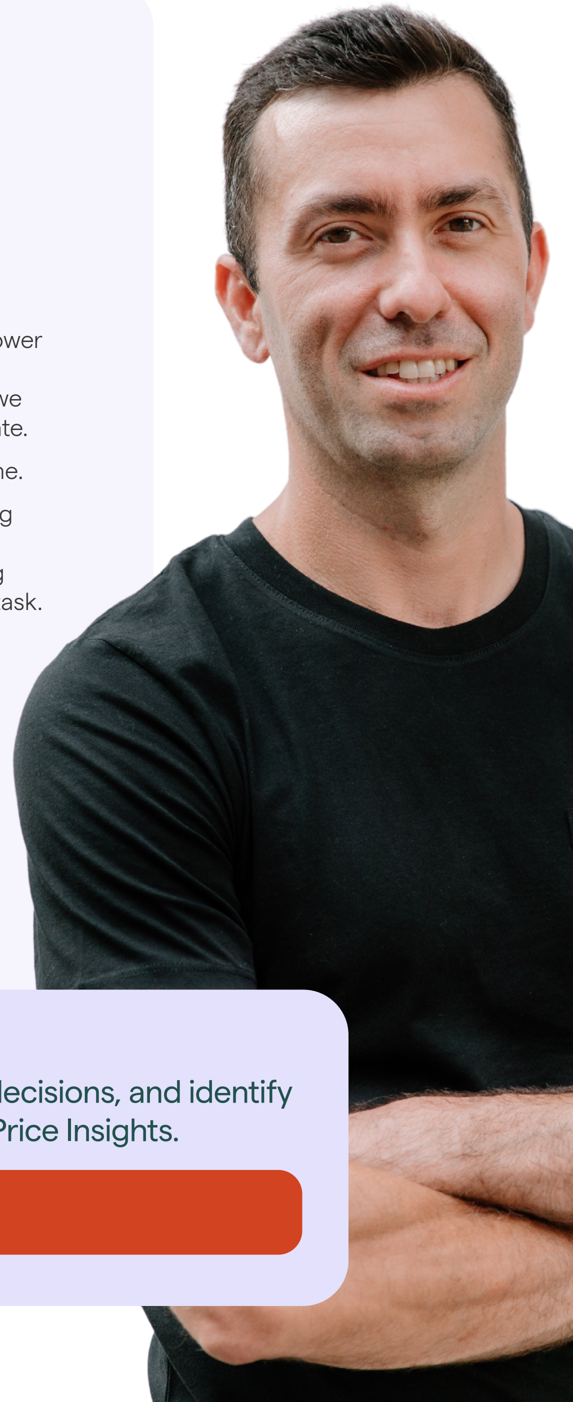
The good news is that firms don't need to figure it out alone.

Whether you're reviewing your service packages, preparing for your next round of price increases, or expanding into advisory services, the most important step is to start treating pricing as a strategic capability instead of an administrative task.

The firms that do this consistently tend to build stronger margins, better client relationships, and more sustainable businesses over time.

If you're looking to strengthen your pricing strategy, start by benchmarking where you are today. Resources like **Ignition's Price Insights**, combined with proven pricing and packaging frameworks, can help reduce uncertainty, build confidence, and ensure you're capturing more of the value you deliver.

Ryan Lazanis, CPA, Founder & CEO, **Future Firm**



Practical pricing recommendations

Pricing confidence is rarely created through instinct alone. The firms reporting the strongest pricing outcomes typically share common habits, including regular pricing reviews, standardized service packaging, and clear communication around value.

The following practices can help firms strengthen pricing consistency and improve long-term profitability:

1. Review pricing annually

Regular reviews help firms account for rising costs, changing service complexity, evolving market conditions, and improvements in expertise. Annual reviews also make increases feel more predictable for both firms and clients.

2. Benchmark before making changes

Understanding how your fees compare to firms offering similar services can reduce uncertainty and provide greater confidence when implementing increases.

3. Focus on value, not just effort

Clients rarely measure value in hours. When evaluating pricing, consider the outcomes delivered, risks reduced, opportunities identified, and time saved for clients.

4. Standardize where possible

Clear, consistent service packages, pricing guidelines, and engagement frameworks can help firms make pricing decisions more consistently.

5. Use fixed-fee pricing strategically

Fixed-fee pricing continues to gain momentum across the profession because it can simplify sales conversations, improve forecasting, and strengthen client trust.

6. Create premium service tiers

Not every client requires the same level of support. Tiered packages help clients understand value while creating opportunities to introduce advisory services, additional support, and higher-value engagements.

7. Build pricing into your renewal process

Treat pricing reviews as a normal part of client management rather than a separate event requiring special justification. Pricing discussions are often easier when incorporated into a predictable annual review process.

8. Collect payment earlier

Upfront and recurring payment models can improve cash flow, reduce administrative work, and increase collection consistency.

9. Communicate value before price

Clients are more likely to accept pricing changes when they clearly understand the outcomes being delivered. Responsiveness and regular communication of results, strategic advice, and service improvements help reinforce value over time.

10. Treat pricing as a business strategy

Pricing influences profitability, capacity, client quality, and growth. Viewing pricing as a strategic capability versus an administrative task can have a lasting impact on firm performance.

Conclusion

The profession appears to be entering a new phase of pricing maturity.

Firms are becoming more proactive, more confident, and more strategic in their approach to pricing. Yet significant opportunities remain to better quantify value, standardize pricing decisions, and build more scalable pricing frameworks.

The firms that thrive over the next decade will likely be those that view pricing not as an annual adjustment, but as an ongoing business capability. Those who lead this transition will be best positioned to capture the full value of the expertise they deliver.

About Ignition

Accounting firms are increasingly expected to do more than deliver compliance work. They must manage proposals, scope engagements clearly, collect payments efficiently, and create consistent client experiences — all while protecting profitability.

Ignition helps accounting firms automate and streamline the entire client engagement lifecycle. With proposals, engagement letters, automated billing, payment collection, and pricing insights in a single platform, firms can reduce administrative work while creating a more consistent and scalable client experience.

Whether you're reviewing your pricing strategy, introducing new service offerings, or preparing for annual client renewals, Ignition makes pricing easier to implement and easier to manage.

It all starts with ignition

24%

average revenue growth in 12 months

40%

more revenue with AI-powered Price Insights

91%

of payments collected automatically

ignitionapp.com

*Source: Based on Ignition and third party data