

2026

Accounting Industry Outlook

AI, Automation, and the
New Workforce

Big Shifts in the Accounting Profession

- **AI & Automation Are No Longer Optional:** Across the profession, AI adoption is accelerating — firms are moving beyond experimentation toward operationalized AI workflows that automate routine tasks and enable real-time analysis. Many firms now report AI having a dramatic impact on practice already.
(accountingtoday.com)
- **Tech Stack Consolidation:** Instead of scattering point solutions, firms are trending toward fewer, more integrated platforms that automate work and surface key insights without adding complexity.
(accountingtoday.com)
- **Continuous Accounting & Closures:** The traditional “month-end close” is evolving toward continuous close processes powered by automation and anomaly detection. This shortens cycles and improves accuracy.
([FloQast](https://floqast.com))

Talent & Workforce Trends

- **Upskilling & New Roles:** Demand is rising for data-savvy accountants with skills in analytics, AI governance, and financial modeling — roles like AI Strategist and Finance Transformation Lead are appearing on job boards. (FloQast)
- **Flexibility and Compensation:** Hybrid/flex work is now expected, and firms are adjusting compensation and career paths to attract and retain talent amid competition from industry and tech. (Robert Half)
- **Training Initiatives:** Intuit recently launched a major career program to train one million future accountants with modern skills, including AI and advisory capabilities. (Stock Titan)
- **Recruiting Advice:** Some firms are cautioning candidates not to rely solely on AI-generated resumes, advocating for personalized expression of skills and judgment. (The Times)

Strategic & Advisory Growth

- **Advisory vs. Compliance:** Firms are steadily shifting from transactional compliance work toward advisory services — a trend highlighted in industry research showing nearly all firms now offer advisory or consulting services. ([Wolters Kluwer](#))
- **Expanded CFO Role:** CFOs and finance leaders are increasingly responsible for technology alignment, governance oversight, and strategic planning as finance becomes more integrated with enterprise strategy. ([Robert Half](#))

Salary & Hiring Outlook

- **Market and Salary Trends:** Comprehensive 2026 guides show moderate salary growth in accounting and finance roles, influenced by talent shortages, AI skill premiums, and competitive recruiting dynamics. ([Workday Blog](#))
- **Contract Work Growth:** Many finance teams are using contract professionals to bridge skill gaps and handle peak cycles, especially in areas like ERP projects, reporting, and analytics. ([Robert Half](#))

Compliance, Regulation & Risk

- **Regulatory Pressure & Oversight:** Accounting regulators face changes — for example, the U.S. PCAOB funding was cut by over 9%, even as regulatory expectations grow around things like AI governance and data lineage. ([Reuters](#))
- **AI Reporting & Control Risks:** As AI drives more business processes, companies must strengthen internal controls and reporting transparency to meet governance and disclosure standards. ([Grassi](#))

ESG & Sustainability Reporting

- **Growing ESG Expectations:** ESG reporting is increasingly part of finance teams' responsibilities, with demand for professionals who can integrate ESG metrics into financial reporting and disclosure. ([Robert Half](#))
- Tools like updated carbon accounting workbooks and sustainability reporting frameworks highlight how environmental metrics are becoming standardized and regulated. ([Water Magazine](#))

JL Accounting Leadership



Deborah Gollin

Senior Managing Partner

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Deborah (Debbie) Gollin leads the Asset Management and Alternatives practice and is also the co-Head of Diversity at Jackson Lucas. Debbie is based in our Hamptons and New York City offices.

Debbie is a seasoned recruiting professional with over 25 years of expertise managing client relationships, strategic development, buildouts and senior search mandates across a select portfolio of quantitative firms, large multi-strategy global hedge funds, algorithmic & systematic trading platforms, global foreign banks, Real Estate firms and Private Equity firms. Prior to moving over to the search side, Debbie served as in-house Head of Talent at global investment banks and leading private and public multi-strategy hedge funds including Citadel, Och Ziff, UBS and Morgan Stanley.

While at Jackson Lucas, Debbie has also built and leads our Quantitative Recruiting practice where we work with a select list of highly successful hedge funds, prop trading firms and alternative asset managers to identify and build their quantitative and quantamental businesses while maintaining limited off-limits conflicts.

Using her experience and vast network, she has hired thousands of professionals across a wide range of needs and acts as a resource to current and potential clients for overall recruiting and talent strategies both domestically and globally.

Debbie holds a B.A. in Political Science from Union College and is trained in Behavioral Interviewing.



Veronica Palaroan

Managing Director

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With over a decade of experience in sales and recruitment, Veronica is a knowledgeable and results-driven retained search professional. She holds a BSBA in Marketing from San Diego State University, which has given her a deep appreciation for the importance of effective written and oral communication with both clients and candidates. Veronica's clients appreciate the personalized services and high-touch collaborative approach she delivers with every search. She goes beyond just resumes and bios, working tirelessly to match the perfect candidate with the right employer. Her passion for her work shines through in every engagement.

Based in the Los Angeles office, Veronica brings a wealth of experience to her role as Managing Director on the Accounting & Finance team. Before joining Jackson Lucas, she spent a total of five years at a boutique firm and a Forbes Top 5 ranked executive search firm, where she refined her skills as a creative sourcer and headhunter.

Specializing in Accounting, Finance, M&A, Private Equity, Real Estate, Tax and Wealth Management, Veronica has worked with organizations of all sizes, from startups to Fortune 500 companies. Her deep understanding of the unique challenges facing each industry allows her to expertly match clients with their ideal candidates.

