

Make use of technology in accounting for SMEs

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Monday, 22 Apr 2019



Tech touch: Technology can help SMEs that are underserved by the accounting fraternity, says Chong.

THE use of technology in accounting for small and medium sized enterprises proffers huge opportunities for both the service providers and users.

A good example of this is cloud computing, points out Steven Chong Hou Nian, the newly appointed managing partner of UHY Malaysia.

"With cloud computing, the accountant can view entries or invoice clients and many other things all on the go. Best part, both the accountant and the client can look at the same information at the same time. All this reduces time and enhances efficiency," Chong says.

Technology applications that help you store documents and data digitally are also widely available and are very cheap, Chong points out.

One reason why the usage of technology will become increasingly important in the context of accounting for SMEs in Malaysia is this: Malaysia has a relatively low number of accountants per capita.

"So SMEs in Malaysia are underserved. But technology can help bridge that gap," Chong adds.

In a recent article in ACCA's AB magazine, Chong is quoted as saying that accounting practitioners need to consider the value add that such new technologies would bring.

"Look at the new capabilities that the firm would acquire. Look at the excitement that it would create among its talents. Look at the opportunity costs of clients that the firm would not be able to service if it did not have the required new capabilities and services," he was quoted as saying.

The article had highlighted that adoption of higher-level technologies by accountancy firms in Malaysia is still low, according to the Malaysian Institute of Accountant's (MIA) recent digital technology blueprint.

The report showed that while 92% of respondents occasionally or frequently used accounting software, the adoption rate of other technologies such as data analytics, fintech and artificial intelligence was below 25%. The national accountancy body also noted that while it has observed rising interest in technology among its members, there were also accountants who were uncomfortable with its adoption.

AB Magazine said that this highlights one of the biggest changes confronting the profession: the impact of evolving smart technology and how accountants can use it to enhance traditional ways of working.

Besides being an elected council member of MIA, Chong is the founding chairman of MIA's Digital Economy Task Force. That role has led him to work with key accounting and technology figures from the industry to develop various initiatives that drive awareness and innovative technology among accountants in Malaysia.

In its press release relating to the appointment of Chong as managing partner for UHY, Chong is described as "a vocal champion of technology adoption among accountants in Malaysia."

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Accounting , SME