INTUIT Accountants

How to implement AI in your tax and accounting firm

AI PLAYBOOK

Table of Contents

Executive summary

Once a futuristic buzzword—and even feared because of the unknown—artificial intelligence (AI) is now part of our daily lexicon. While many tax professionals have a cursory understanding of AI's functions and capabilities, it's no longer a "nice to have" to simply know about AI; today, it's a must for any tax and accounting firm. Armed with this knowledge, you can make your workflows enormously efficient by eliminating repetitive and time-consuming tasks, effectively building a future-ready firm.

Familiarizing yourself with the benefits and capabilities of AI starts with understanding what tools are at your disposal. From converting tax jargon into easy-to-understand language to summarizing client meetings at the click of a button, these tools—and the prompts you enter into them—are beyond powerful. Offerings like ChatGPT, Claude, Fathom, and many others will carve out more time in your day to focus on higher-value work, ultimately empowering your team to do their best and helping you deliver quality service to your clients.

An accountant's AI tool options include:

| ChatGPT | Otter.ai | Gemini | Fathom | Copilopt | Claude | Lindy.ai |

and many more.

Wondering where to begin? Intuit Accountants has rounded up the AI options that are most useful to accountants and their daily workflows. In this playbook, learn more about the tools you need in your toolbox, as well as the best ways to use them.

Many thanks to Nick Boscia, CPA, EA, and H. Randy Hughes, CPA, EA, CTC, CTRS, for reviewing the content in this playbook.

Nick Boscia   H. Randy Hughes

Chapter 1: Kick off your first AI project

You know using AI will supercharge your firm—but where do you begin? Weaving AI tools into high-impact, low-risk tasks (think expense categorization or drafting emails) is a manageable way to get started.

Here are three simple project ideas you can put in place to save time and increase efficiency.

1. Effortlessly take client meeting notes

Think about the last client meeting you hosted, whether in person or virtually. Were you scribbling notes on a notepad or furiously typing during your chat? To keep a log of important topics discussed—and action items for after your meeting—you can use AI to take notes during your client discussions.

This implementation of AI falls under the "AI meeting summary" category—and we're going to get into the weeds a bit here and there. These tools typically record your meeting and generate a transcript, then use natural language processing and machine learning to provide a top-level summary and identify key takeaways. While there are many tools on the market that can do this, you can opt for Otter.ai, Fathom AI notetaker, or built-in AI capabilities in Zoom.

Tools like Otter.ai and Fathom can take an hour-long discussion and condense it into a short, easy-to-read summary. As it generates a real-time transcription of your meeting, AI also keeps a log of action items for the meeting's participants. These tools can integrate with the virtual meeting software you already use, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, SharePoint, and Google Meet. And if you're having an in-person meeting with a client, you can use Otter.ai to record the meeting, or simply upload your own recording afterward to receive an actionable overview.

A summary on its own is helpful, but it's what you do with the summary that allows you to use AI to its full advantage. After your meeting, send your completed AI summary to junior accountants on your team. They can use it to implement the tax advisory ideas you discussed, all without you having to repeat (or re-type) a thing.

2. Aggregate the latest tax law information

When you sit down at your computer on Monday, do you take a quick scroll through the newest articles from sites such as the Intuit® Tax Pro Center, Accounting Today, and the CPA Practice Advisor? It's crucially important to stay up to date with the latest tax law information, but it's not always possible to read each and every report. AI can simplify this process for you.

◇ Lindy

Prompt a tool like Lindy.ai to summarize the most recent articles, then ask that it send those summaries to your email. You can even ask it to send those summaries to your staff as well, allowing everyone to stay informed just by keeping abreast of their inboxes.

Using Lindy.ai's AI news tracker tool, you can enter a prompt like this:

Search for the latest tax law insights from the past week using reputable sources, including the Intuit Tax Pro Center, Accounting Today, CPA Practice Advisor, and the IRS Newsroom.

*Provide as much information as possible from the search results, including:*

Article titles   Authors (if available)   Publication dates

Short summaries or excerpts of the articles   Source URLs

Any noteworthy details or data mentioned

Next, you can input instructions for the summary, such as:

Draft a professional email summarizing the latest tax insights. Use the provided summary as the content, ensuring the tone is appropriate and the structure includes a greeting, introduction, main content, and polite closing. **Summary instructions:** *Using the provided article summaries on tax law insights, generate an actionable list. Focus on providing key points such as:*

Top three takeaways or trends   Relevant statistics or data points   Recommendations based on the trends

Write this list in under 250 words, structured for quick consumption. Ensure the tone is concise and professional, and that the list provides actionable insights.
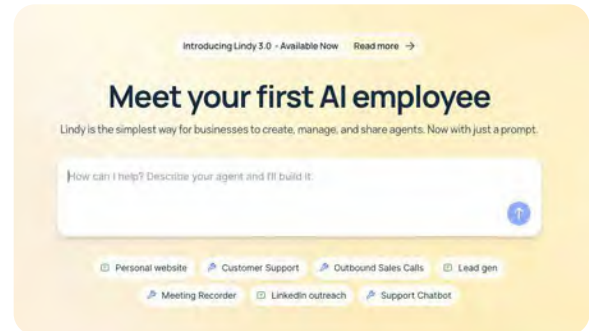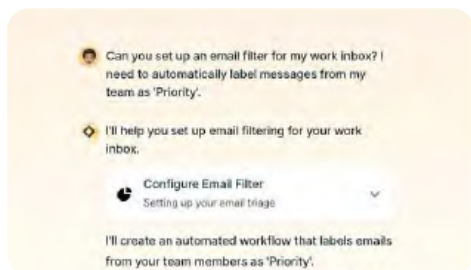
Then, in the next step, you can enter the email addresses you'd like the overview sent to, as well as when it should be delivered (such as every Monday morning at 9 AM). A task that's taken you a few minutes to complete will now save you hours of news gathering and reading each week.

3. Convert your technical tax explanations into layman's terms

You've likely spent years breaking down highly technical and objectively complicated tax strategies into understandable bites for your clients. Though it's an important part of the job, it's also time-consuming. That's where AI can come in to help. New AI tools work to convert your technical explanations into layman's terms; using them when emailing with clients can not only save you time, but improve client response times.

Generative AI (or GenAI) chatbots like ChatGPT, Claude, and Google Gemini excel in language-related tasks, which means they are ideal for translating complicated concepts and jargon for customized client explanations—as long as your instructions are clear and specific. One of the best prompts for this kind of translation is *"Explain this to me like I'm 5."*

You can type that question into your preferred AI tool, paste the text you'd like it to convert, and watch it generate an easy-to-understand answer for your clients. And if you need it to sound even more casual, you can ask the tool to *"Make the answer feel more conversational."* It can also tailor the tone based on your audience, whether that's a high-net-worth individual or business owner, and it even can be trained on your firm's style or tax planning language. From there, you can even ask AI to incorporate that explanation in a new email draft for your client. After a quick review, you can simply copy and paste the text into an email and send it off.

Chapter 2: Dig into your AI toolkit

There are seemingly endless AI-powered tools on the market to enhance your workflow, so it can be hard to know which ones are worth investing time and money into.

We've identified 12 of the most impactful tools for accounting firms to increase efficiency across the board.

General

ChatGPT

Tools like ChatGPT can understand nuanced questions in everyday language and provide highly accurate responses because it was trained on some 300 billion words, according to Forbes. While you can access this intel with ChatGPT's free offering, its paid option, which costs $20 per month, provides faster response times, offers priority access during high-traffic periods, generates images, allows advanced voice mode, and uses more advanced training models. Tell ChatGPT, *"In 200 words, update me on tax news since Monday, and provide links to your sources."*

Claude

Claude is another GenAI tool similar to ChatGPT, yet it has different strengths. Claude is particularly adept at conducting in-depth analysis, handling large volumes of information, and offering a nuanced understanding of text. Translation? It can analyze and summarize lengthy PDFs in a flash. You might also opt for Claude if you're hoping for it to produce a more natural writing style in emails or other client communications. Try pasting in your email text and saying, *"Rewrite this email to sound friendly yet professional."*

Business clients

Gemini

You likely already have access to Gemini, Google's AI assistant, but you may not be taking advantage of some of its powerful features for accountants, such as spreadsheet and financial statement analysis. To supercharge your work, you could pose the prompt, *"Review this P&L and point out any irregularities or areas to investigate."*

Copilot

Similarly, Microsoft's Copilot offers a suite of tools that are especially helpful for firms and tax advisory, particularly while using Excel. Copilot can generate financial models, analyze trends, create pivot tables, identify anomalies, and more. You could ask Copilot something like this: *"Summarize revenue by region for the past six quarters and create a chart showing trends."*

Practice management

Karbon

Karbon is designed specifically for tax and accounting firms, featuring functionalities such as client management, workflow automation, time and budget tracking, email integrations, and reports and insights. Best of all? It integrates seamlessly with Intuit ProConnect™ Tax and QuickBooks® Online. You could ask Karbon to trigger a recurring bookkeeping task every month, like "Review uncategorized transactions in QuickBooks."

Ignition

Ignition, which also integrates with ProConnect Tax, excels at creating brand proposals, onboarding new clients, and automating things like invoicing and workflows. Soon, it will introduce an AI-powered pricing suggestion tool that could help firms operating across the country create competitive proposals for different markets. You might set up an automation configuration that generates invoices monthly on the 1st, or one to sync those invoices with QuickBooks for reconciliation.

Client communications

Otter.ai

This tool generates a real-time transcription of your meeting, keeping a log of action items for the meeting's participants. You can also upload audio files to Otter.ai and have it summarize them for you. The next time you sit down with your client face to face, you could record the meeting with your smartphone and have Otter.ai transcribe and summarize it.

Fathom

Fathom's AI notetaker is a powerful (and free) meeting assistant that records, transcribes, and summarizes your Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams calls. Call summaries are auto-generated, and a highlights feature makes it easy to share portions of the call with colleagues. You could sign up for Fathom's Team Edition, allowing many members of your firm to access transcriptions and summaries in the shared Team Call Library.

SmartVault

Thanks to AI-powered automation, SmartVault can streamline the client intake process for tax preparation by automating tasks like generating custom questionnaires and document requests based on last year's returns. SmartVault integrates with Intuit Lacerte® Tax and ProSeries® Tax, and it organizes client responses and documents into formats that are ready for tax software integration. When you use its SmartRequest AI™ feature to generate custom questionnaires, you can also upload client requests in bulk to save time, then have it send automated document request reminders to clients' emails.

Agents

Accounting Agent in Intuit QuickBooks
This agentic AI within QuickBooks keeps your books clean and accurate by automatically categorizing transactions, detecting and resolving anomalies, and reconciling accounts–flagging what needs approval or attention. *Try visiting the "Bank Transactions" tab, then tap the "Suggested by AI" icon next to a transaction to review Accounting Agent's work.*

Payments Agent in Intuit QuickBooks
Helping you get paid faster and pay bills on time, this agent monitors your cash flow and optimizes invoicing and payment collection. Next time you need to send an invoice, *tap the "Intuit Assist" icon on the left side of the screen to upload a file, image, or text that Payments Agent can use to create the invoice for you.*

Lindy.ai agents
With Lindy, you're encouraged to build and customize your own AI agents, which can be trained to help with compliance workflows, source leads, and more. As an executive assistant might help you prepare for a meeting, ask Lindy to *"Send me a note five minutes before each meeting that lists the attendees, recaps our recent emails and meeting recordings, and includes the virtual meeting link."*

Understand how AI integrations in Intuit ProConnect Tax make your workflow more efficient and save you time.

Download this white paper today

Chapter 3: Review an AI security checklist

In any conversation centered around AI, data security is bound to be mentioned. In fact, 31% of respondents in the 2024 Intuit QuickBooks Accounting Technology Survey reported data privacy and security as their biggest AI concern, ranking it far ahead of other concerns like job replacement and implementation costs.

The bottom line is this: Accountants and their clients want to know that their information is protected from third parties, especially as it relates to sensitive financial or tax-related data. Download this checklist and keep it handy for you, your firm, and your clients.

How can an AI newcomer properly evaluate a tool's security?
Here's an actionable checklist to use before adopting an AI-powered helper.

Data privacy and confidentiality

☐ Find out whether the tool has a published privacy policy—then review it.

☐ Confirm data is encrypted "in transit," or while moving between your browser and the AI tool's server, as well as "at rest," when it's stored in the tool's database.

☐ Scan the tool's descriptions for security-related labels like:
- TLS (Transport Layer Security)
- SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)
- AES-256 (Advanced Encryption Standard, 256-bit)

☐ See whether the tool stores or retains input data, and if so, whether it can be deleted.

☐ Take a more detailed look at its use of data, including whether client data is shared with third parties or used for training. If so, ask if you can opt out of data collection or model training.

Data transparency

☐ Look for documentation from the tool's vendor about how the AI model works, as well as what its inputs, outputs, and limitations are.

☐ See whether you can review and/or approve data before it's stored and analyzed.

☐ Confirm there's a clear contact for support and security issues.

☐ Look into whether the company is transparent about their AI training sources and update cycles.

Compliance with industry standards

☐ Determine whether the tool is SOC 2 or ISO 27001 compliant.

☐ Ensure it supports GLBA requirements.

☐ Confirm it is compliant with IRS Publication 4557 (Safeguarding Taxpayer Data).

Access controls and authentication

☐ Find out whether the tool supports multi-factor authentication.

☐ Consider whether you can restrict user access based on roles.

☐ See whether there's an audit log or activity tracking available.

☐ Determine how easily users can be onboarded or offboarded from the tool in the event of staff turnover.

System integration and data handling

☐ Research whether the tool integrates securely with the software you're already using, such as QuickBooks.

☐ Understand how backups, data recovery, and data deletion are handled.

Incident response and support

☐ Find the company's documented incident response plan, if any.

☐ Ask how quickly the vendor commits to reporting data breaches.

☐ Determine whether the company offers service-level agreements for operation and support, or in other words, a formal promise about how reliable their service will be.

Chapter 4: Discuss your AI usage with clients

Now that you've got a handle on how you can use AI tools in your firm, as well as how to evaluate their security, you'll want to communicate your AI usage with your clients. Put yourself in their shoes. After all, unless they are coding engineers, AI tech and terminology is likely still new to them, and helping them to understand it is crucial. See our Glossary on page 16 for help defining common AI terms.

First, it can help to highlight the benefits of AI, especially for those who are unfamiliar with them. Explain how it makes your team more efficient by eliminating rote work, as well as how it offers improved financial forecasting and enhances the accuracy of their books and returns.

Next, acknowledge their concerns and possible skepticism, especially when it comes to data security. While automating expense categorization—and even drafting emails—may seem harmless, both functions involve your clients' business information. This is where an overview of your AI data security comes in: You can point out, for example, that their data is encrypted, that it's not used for external AI training models, and that your AI software adheres to IRS Publication 4557, which outlines the laws for protecting taxpayer data. Then, you'll want to disclose exactly what your firm uses AI for, from GenAI to Intuit agents.

Once your client has a clear picture of your AI usage, it's a best practice to obtain explicit consent from them to share their information with the third-party tools you work with. While it may seem unnecessary at first, it's worth erring on the side of caution with disclosure and consent. It can also help foster transparency and trust between you and your clients.
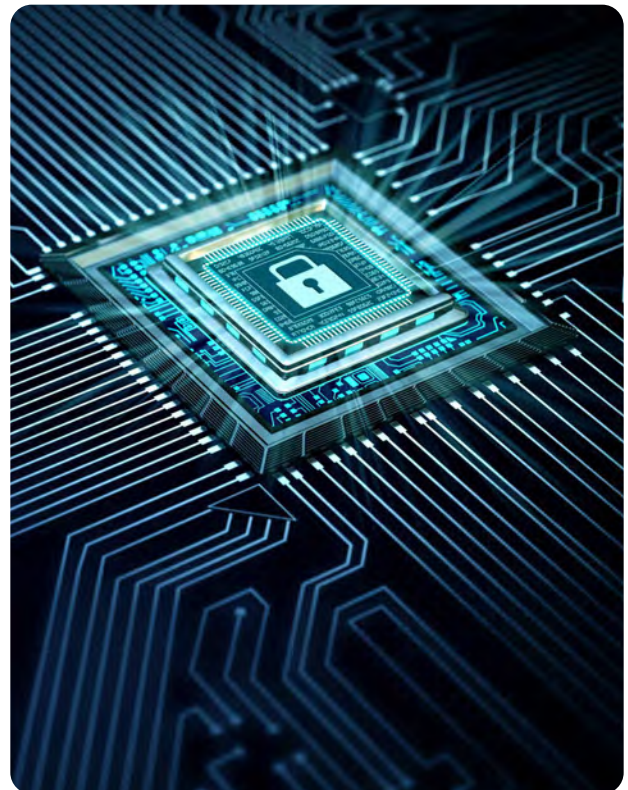
This email template explains your AI usage to clients, notes how you safeguard their data, and asks for their consent:

Subject: Transparency Around Our Use of AI Tools

Hi [insert client's first name],

I hope you're doing well! I wanted to take a moment to share how I'm using AI tools to support the work I do for you, and how your data is protected in the process.

[Insert firm name here] uses AI to automate routine and repetitive processes—like document organization, task tracking, and data entry—so we can dedicate more time and attention to the complex, strategic work that requires human insight. So thanks to AI, you're getting even more value out of your partnership with us. It enhances our efficiency, but it's never a replacement for our professional expertise or judgment.

To streamline workflows and deliver even more accurate, efficient service, here are the AI-powered tools I use:

- *QuickBooks' AI features to help categorize transactions and flag potential anomalies*
- *ChatGPT to draft and refine client communications like this one, saving time while ensuring clarity*
- *Microsoft Copilot to assist with building financial models and analyzing data*
- *Karbon to automate parts of my internal workflow, so I can stay focused on your priorities*
- *[Insert other specific uses]*

I also want to assure you that your data is handled with the utmost care. There are many ways we protect your information: For example, all client data is encrypted both in transit and at rest, which is when information is moving between our browser and the AI tool's server, as well as when it's stored in the tool's database. Additionally, your data is never used to train any external AI models. No one outside [insert firm name here] has access to your data through these tools. Plus, our processes are fully aligned with IRS Publication 4557, which outlines safeguards for taxpayer data.

Your trust in us is paramount, so we want to be completely transparent. Please let me know if you're comfortable with the use of these AI tools in the services I provide. If at any point our use of AI changes or expands, you'll be the first to know.

Thank you, and feel free to reach out with any questions!

Best regards,
[Your full name]
[Your title and firm name]
[Contact info]

No matter how you employ AI in your day-to-day, emphasize to your clients that they're still getting your expertise. While AI is a helpful tool that can automate processes and eliminate low-value work, it's not a replacement for your experience and knowledge when it comes to their finances.

Join the ranks of Intuit Accountants today

Intuit® Accountants serves and provides a community for tax and accounting professionals, who are at the heart of everything we do. Intuit Accountants supports Intuit's cloud-based professional tax software ecosystem that works together to make your job easier, enabling you to grow your firm and serve clients with one powerful suite of software. It encompasses ProConnect Tax, Lacerte Tax, ProSeries Tax, QuickBooks accounting and bookkeeping, and more. Intuit's solutions also streamline workflows, automate tasks, reduce manual data entry errors, and create efficiencies so work is completed faster.

Books	Tax			Advisory
INTUIT quickbooks	**INTUIT** ProConnect™ Tax	**INTUIT** Lacerte® Tax	**INTUIT** ProSeries® Tax	**INTUIT** Tax Advisor

Intuit Accountants can access Intuit Tax Advisor, an integrated advisory tool that uses AI to automatically generate strategies for client tax savings. Intuit tax software is the only tax software that combines QuickBooks Online Accountant and Intuit Tax Advisor for maximum productivity and exceptional results.

AI advantages for Intuit Accountants
Intuit ProConnect Tax leverages AI to enhance your expertise (not to replace it), helping drive efficiency and support accuracy. Intuit used customer feedback to develop AI-powered features, including the following:

Intelligent data import: Say goodbye to tedious, error-prone manual data entry. Our intelligent import uses AI to help extract data from a wide array of source documents like W-2s and 1099s. After AI populates the data, you review and confirm it, ensuring accuracy and freeing up your staff for more complex tasks and valuable client interactions.

AI-driven review engine and diagnostics: Compliance is non-negotiable. Our AI-assisted review engine works tirelessly, constantly checking against diagnostics to help catch potential errors and bringing them to your attention often before they become significant issues. This deep, contextual analysis can significantly reduce review time and bolster confidence in the final product you approve. It's like having an expert set of eyes on every return, around the clock, to assist you.

Predictive navigation: Navigating complex returns can feel like a labyrinth. Our "Smart Nav" feature employs AI to simplify this, suggesting your path based on screens visited and the type of return. Smart Nav is your guide that can reduce the learning curve for new staff and empower experienced preparers to work more efficiently, based on the suggestions it provides.

As a cloud-based professional tax software ecosystem, Intuit Accountants modernizes your workflows by taking care of tedious, low-value tasks with ease. Whether your firm has 10 users or 1,000, custom pricing options cover all firms with tax return bundles of every size. Call **877-646-3979** or visit **accountants.intuit.com** today to get started.

Conclusion

Integrating AI tools such as chatbots and meeting note-takers into your everyday workflow can revolutionize how you handle tasks, including information aggregation, legal document analysis, expense categorizations, and accounting queries. Helping your clients readily understand various AI terms—and the overall technology landscape as a whole—is powerful, too, because it puts you on the same page and allows you to speak the same language.

While no AI assistant is perfect, many of them offer fast and convenient solutions for challenges faced by accounting professionals. However, as society pushes the boundaries of what AI can achieve, it's important to remember the significance of verification, especially for complex tasks. Still, on the whole, AI is a transformative force that can significantly boost efficiency, allow professionals to focus on high-value advisory work, and ultimately provide a superior client experience. By strategically implementing certain tools and prompts, you can revolutionize the way your firm works for the better.

Glossary

Generative AI (GenAI): AI (like ChatGPT and Claude) that can create new content like text, images, or coding.
Real-world example: You can ask Claude to write a client email that explains how the new §174 amortization rules affect their startup.

Machine learning (ML): A type of AI that learns from data and improves over time automatically.
Real-world example: Machine learning can detect anomalies in bookkeeping data or predict which clients are most likely to be audited based on past IRS data patterns.

Natural language processing (NLP): AI's ability to understand and work with human language, whether spoken or written.
Real-world example: Thanks to NLP, you can prompt ChatGPT to explain §199A or §1202 in simple terms for clients.

Large language model (LLM): A type of AI (like ChatGPT or Gemini) trained on vast amounts of text to understand and generate language.
Real-world example: Based on its LLM, Gemini can help draft client emails about tax strategy or new legislation.

Robotic process automation (RPA): Tools that automate repetitive tasks by mimicking user actions.
Real-world example: An RPA can automatically download and categorize IRS transcripts.

Model: The "brain" of the AI, or what processes the prompt and generates a result.
Real-world example: You can use a specialized AI tax model trained on IRS publications and tax law to better answer client questions.

Training data: The data used to train and shape an AI model.
Real-world example: Feed the AI your firm's past memos and client tax strategies as training data so it can generate consistent advice.

Hallucination: When AI generates an incorrect or made-up answer.
Real-world example: AI incorrectly says your client can deduct their home gym as a business expense, so you correct it before using the model for further client use.

Application programming interface (API): A way for software to connect and talk to other software, including AI and AI integrations.
Real-world example: Integrate ChatGPT into your tax software to automatically generate line-by-line tax return explanations.

Token: A chunk of text the AI processes, such as a word or a part of a word.
Real-world example: You're using AI to analyze a 100-page PDF of a client's IRS audit correspondence, but it only has a token limit of 50 pages.