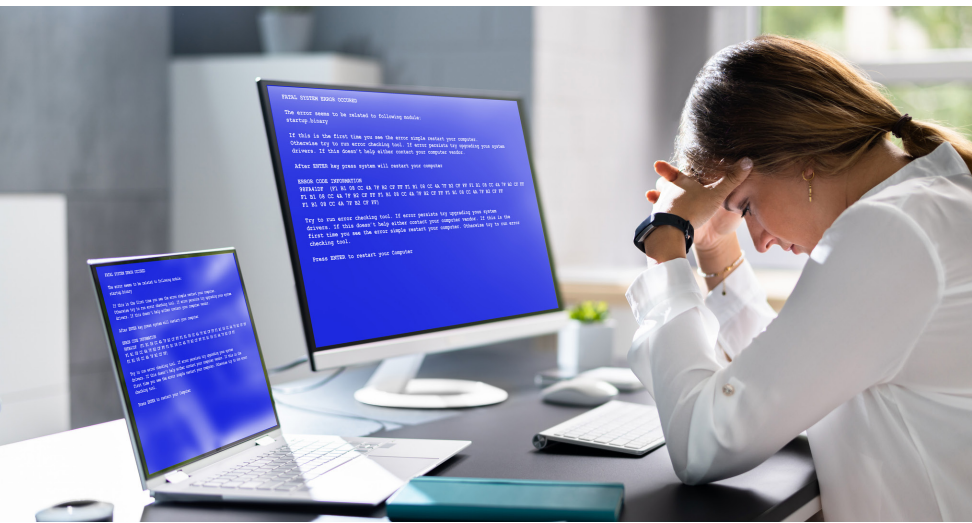


Welcome to our monthly newsletter for Tech-Talk members. We hope you find this useful, but as always, please contact Billie Mcloughlin for further help or if there are any topics you wish to discuss.

## CrowdStrike outage and what you need to know!



CrowdStrike might be a company you had not heard of until last week.

They are a leading cybersecurity company based in Austin, Texas and provide essential protection against ransomware, malware, and other internet threats. Their flagship product, Falcon, is a cloud-based programme designed to safeguard businesses from cyberattacks without the need for extensive local software installation.

Recently, a routine update to the Falcon software on Windows systems caused significant disruptions. This update, released on 19th July, led to widespread crashes affecting millions of users. The error was due to a coding mistake, which resulted in the infamous “Blue Screen of Death” for many PCs, halting operations across various sectors including banking, healthcare, and emergency services.

The outage is expected to have cost businesses \$5 million!

For accountants, this incident underscores the importance of robust cybersecurity measures and the potential impacts of software glitches. While CrowdStrike has issued a patch to resolve the problem, the situation serves as a reminder to stay vigilant.

## Software Spotlight : AccountsIQ

If your clients are outgrowing Xero, perhaps their transaction levels are too high; then AccountsIQ should be explored.

They offer award-winning cloud-based accounting software designed for multi-entity company. Created by accountants, it provides a unique platform that automates the processing of accounting records, consolidates accounts across subsidiaries, and facilitates remote collaboration.

‘Life after Xero’ can often be expensive, but AccountsIQ offers an affordable solution

that continues to be scalable and comes with exceptional support from their team.

Key features include detailed business intelligence for informed decision-making, automated financial consolidation saving up to a week each month, and seamless integration with other cloud-based applications.

AccountsIQ enhances productivity and growth, making it an ideal choice for clients seeking efficient and scalable financial management solutions.

# 5 Steps to Get Started with Zapier: How to Get Your Apps Talking to Each Other

Trying to get your apps to 'talk' to one another is becoming an increasingly popular demand. Accountants recognise the frustration of rekeying information, and as technology develops, expectations that information can sync between systems are rising.

Automation can also be a game-changer for accountants due to saving time by streamlining repetitive tasks and reducing errors. Zapier is an excellent tool for connecting your apps and automating workflows.

Here's a five-step guide to help accountants in the UK get started with Zapier and make their apps communicate seamlessly.

## Step 1: Review and Map Your Processes

Before jumping into automation, review your existing processes:

- **Brainstorm With Your Team:** Identify key processes in different departments like sales, operations, marketing, and finance.
- **Break Down Each Process:** List all steps, the goals, involved parties, and the software used.
- **Identify Inefficiencies:** Look for duplications or steps that can be streamlined using software.
- **Map Your Processes:** Use a spreadsheet or a process mapping tool to document the optimised processes. This will help you decide which processes are ready for automation.

## Step 2: Understand Zapier's Key Terms

Getting familiar with Zapier's terminology is crucial:

- **Apps:** These are the software tools you use. Zapier integrates them to pass data and automate workflows.
- **Zaps:** Automations that connect two or more apps, triggering specific actions when something happens in one app.
- **Triggers:** Events that start a Zap, for example, receiving a new email.
- **Actions:** Activities that occur as a result of the trigger, like updating a database.

## Step 3: Choose the Right Zapier Plan

Zapier offers various plans:

- **Free Plan:** Ideal for beginners, 2 step Zaps only and 100 tasks per month.

- **Professional:** Unlimited Zaps with over 750+ tasks, starting at £15.96/month.
- **Team and Company Plans:** Suitable with over 2,000 tasks from £55.10 per month with enhanced features.

## Step 4: Navigate the Zapier Platform

Zapier's platform is designed to be user-friendly:

- **Main Dashboard:** Manage your Zaps, build new ones, and view your Zap history.
- **Connecting Your Apps:** Select an app, authorise it with your login details, and connect it to other apps.
- **Prebuilt Templates:** Use these to get started quickly with common automations.

## Step 5: Build and Test Your First Zap

Creating your first Zap involves setting up triggers and actions:

- **Set Up a Trigger:** Choose an event in an app that will start your workflow, such as a new email received in outlook.
- **Define the Action:** Decide what happens next, like adding data to a spreadsheet. You can include multiple actions in a single Zap.
- **Testing:** Use the 'continue' button to move through steps, testing each stage to ensure data flows correctly.
- **Activate Your Zap:** Once everything works as expected, turn on your Zap to start automating.

By following these five steps, accountants can leverage Zapier to automate routine tasks, enhance efficiency, and improve productivity. Start connecting your apps today and experience the benefits of seamless automation in your accounting practice.

