

THE PROFILE OF THE ROMANIAN ACCOUNTANT

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Abstract

Tax and accounting rules are required by law for each company. The accountant has an important role in the life of an enterprise, contributing greatly to the business success. The study aims to identify the benefits, requirements and features specified to apply for a job as accountant. The methodological approach is empirical one. The study take into account the job offers mentioned in December 2016 under one of the most popular Romanian jobs sites.

Keywords: accountant, job, profile, role, Romanian

1. Introduction

Businesses have known for long time continuous development in various fields. The accounting profession has had to cope with this development. Accounting is “the language of business”, the accountant providing information related to financial accounting, managerial accounting, tax, payroll, estimating income and expenses.

In terms of professional training, the accountants are forced to refine and adapt their knowledge, especially to legislative changes. In terms of requirements, employers increasingly require well trained people who quickly assimilate knowledge and adapt them to work. On the other hand the labor market in the accounting field is characterized by an imbalance, demand exceeded supply jobs. Thus, the remuneration of the professional accountant experienced some changes, too.

The report from 2016 of International Accounting Bulletin highlighted the decreasing revenues from fees to accounting firms outside the group BIG 4. The analysis of this information by executives and directors from accounting associations concluded that the evolution of technology change the accountants' role. An accountant evolves from a compliance officer to a strategic adviser¹.

Choosing an accountant is particularly important because he is someone who will be with you in your journey to success². An accountant became a partner who cares about the success of clients' business and provides essential support³. A study undertaken in 2013 by the accounting software giant Sage highlighted the increasing confidence in the advice business

accounting. The relationship with the accountant becomes a partnership not a purely transactional relationship⁴.

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountant identified a strong recognition of the valuable contribution of accountants to the running of business and of the key role in helping companies act ethically toward stakeholders⁵.

Starting from the ideas mentioned above, this study aims to analyze the requirements for jobs in the accounting field, in order to shape the profile of the accountant in Romania. The recruitment site with the highest number of visitors in the country was chosen as the database for data collection.

The study aims to identify: wage, type of job, the gender diversity, which areas of the country are looking for accountants, if are required foreign languages, if knowledge is tested, which are the accounting software required.

The assumptions of the approach are:

H1: An accountant needs economic studies

H2: There are more chances of employment in the capital of the country.

H3: English is the most requested foreign language.

H4: An accountant is more than a Bookkeeper

H5: It is necessary to have IT skills

2. The journey to become an accountant

Juridical persons in Romania have a legal obligation to organize and manage accounts, according to Accounting Law No 82/1991. Accounting assist in recording transactions for an entity, processing and

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¹ Vincent Huck, *Accountancy world survey results: the big are getting bigger*, 2017, available at <http://www.theaccountant-online.com/news/accountancy-world-survey-results-the-big-are-getting-bigger-5755089/>.

² Nick Longden-Sage, *Why the accountant partnership is the most important success factor for small businesses in the online age*, 2014, available at <http://www.accountingweb.co.uk/community/blogs/nicklongdensage/why-the-accountant-partnership-is-the-most-important-success-factor>.

³ Tracey Bird, *The changing role of the accountant*, available at <https://sage-exchange.co.uk/news/industry-news/the-changing-role-of-the-accountant>.

⁴ *The Sage Pulse Survey 2013*, available at <https://2020group.wordpress.com/tag/sage-pulse-survey-2013/>.

⁵ ACCA, *Closing the value gap: understanding the accountancy profession in the 21st century*, 2012, available at <http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/PDF-technical/other-PDFs/tech-tp-ctvg.pdf>.

publishing information related to the financial position and performance of the entity, information with importance for the decision-making process of various types of internal and external users⁶.

Accounting can be organized and managed within the entity (through separate department) or outside (with service contract)⁷. In both cases, higher economic studies are required for the person concerned. In addition, in case of outsourcing of accounting, legal or natural person must be authorized, a member of C.E.C.C.A.R (Body of Expert and Licensed Accountants of Romania).

The economic director or chief accountant or authorized person is responsible for the improper application of accounting regulations⁸.

To become a chartered accountant member of CECCAR someone must have high economic studies and must go through three stages: maintaining an entrance exam, a probation period of 3 years, supporting an aptitude test on completion of their training⁹.

This confirms the hypothesis 1 formulated at the beginning of the approach: *H1: An accountant needs economic studies.*

For an accounting the liability is high, there must exist economic training and additional training (in case of outsourcing of accounting). Moreover, the legislative changes (with a frequency high enough in Romania) require periodic updating of knowledge.

Human capital is the only component of a company that may undermine its future development from within¹⁰. It is said that an accountant you climb or you descend the ladder of success.

For a smaller business, an accountant collects data and generates report, but for a larger sized company, an accountant can help as an adviser and financial interpreter¹¹.

Assisting with corporate strategy, providing advice and helping to reduce costs, improving their top line and mitigating risks, a competent professional accountant is an invaluable asset to the company¹².

Given the changing role of the accountant, the education should incorporate broader managerial capabilities and skills¹³.

3. The competencies of an accountant

The accountant can be divided into two categories: *bookkeeper* and *accountant*. A *bookkeeper* is just someone who presents some results after introduce some data in an accounting software. His role is passive. An *accountant* is much more than it.

A good accountant needs to have a lot of competencies, as follows:

- Accuracy
- Solving tasks before deadlines for help others to respect their own deadline
- Be a good manager of time
- Keeping their managers informed, especially during month-end and year-end closes¹⁴
- Communication skills to make accounting understandable language
- Professional integrity, accompanied by trust; an accountant without integrity is like a sailor without a compass¹⁵.
- Continuous personal improvement
- Pay attention to details
- IT skills: work is more easier by using a computer, especially using an accounting software and Excel
- Flexibility, especially to legislative changes
- Overview of business
- Proactive attitude by offering efficient solutions as soon as an opportunity arises or a deficiency is found
- Legislative support, differentiated according to business needs¹⁶.

In Romania is hard not to find a bookkeeper. The challenge for an entrepreneur is to find an accountant, and not a bookkeeper¹⁷, someone who is involved in obtaining business success, who identifies potential problems and provides solutions.

4. The Romanian accountant

For conducting the study the starting point was the recruitment website www.ejobs.ro. The motivation of this election is that the study undertaken in November 2015 and published in February 2016 by

⁶ Article 2 of Law No. 82/1991 of accounting.

⁷ Article 10, paragraphs 2 and 3 of Law No. 82/1991 of accounting.

⁸ Article 10, paragraph 4 of Law No. 82/1991 of accounting.

⁹ Article 3 of Ordinance No. 65/1994 republished on the organization of accounting expertise activity and of certified accountants.

¹⁰ Nicolae Simona, *The Knowledge Based Society – Myth or Reality for Romania?*, 2010, IBIMA Publishing Communications of the IBIMA, Vol. 2010, <http://www.ibimapublishing.com/journals/CIBIMA/cibima.html> Article ID 216312.

¹¹ Susan Davis, *What role does an accountant play in business operations?*, available at <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/role-accountant-play-business-operations-411.html>.

¹² Len Jui and Jessie Wong, *Roles and importance of professional accountants in business*, China Accounting Journal, 2013, available at <https://www.ifac.org/news-events/2013-10/roles-and-importance-professional-accountants-business>.

¹³ IFAC, *The accountancy profession and employers can do more to prepare accountants for finance leadership*, 2013, available at <https://www.ifac.org/news-events/2013-10/accountancy-profession-and-employers-can-do-more-prepare-accountants-finance-lea>.

¹⁴ Gary Hohbein, *10 competencies of top staff accountants*, Journal of Accountancy, 2017, available at <http://www.journalofaccountancy.com/newsletters/2017/feb/10-competencies-top-staff-accountants.html>.

¹⁵ Andrei Badiu, *Ce inseamna un 'bun' contabil?*, 2012, available at <http://www.3bexpertaudit.ro/Fisiere/Ce%20Inseamna%20un%20Bun%20Contabil-Studiu%20de%20caz-Andrei%20Badiu.pdf>.

¹⁶ *Profilul contabilului modern*, 2015, available at <https://www.expert-contabila.ro/profilul-contabilului-modern/>.

¹⁷ *Business IMM: Cum arata un contabil bun? 5 afaceri, 1 specialist si 2 mari categorii de contabili*, 2015, available at <http://www.startupcafe.ro/stiri-howto-20385964-business-imm-cum-arata-contabil-bun-5-afaceri-1-specialist-2-mari-categorii-contabili.htm>.

Gemius Romania placed this website on the first place in the top depending on the number of visitors¹⁸.

Like reference range, it was selected the period 01 – 31 December 2016. Collecting information for the study was conducted for the jobs referred to “accountant” or “accounting”. The period taken into account can be considered poor in terms of interest in the search for a job given that December is a month of religious holidays and days off. Yet, considering that there is a period of time since the launch of the recruitment advertisement until the final candidate election, placing curriculum vitae in this period takes effect at the beginning of the next year.

The research work involved searching the archive of the recruitment site. From the database were extracted 210 advertisements for jobs in the field under review.

a) Job location:

3 jobs were external application, 10 jobs advertisements (representing 4.76% of all) provided several cities and the rest provide one of others 34 cities in the country.

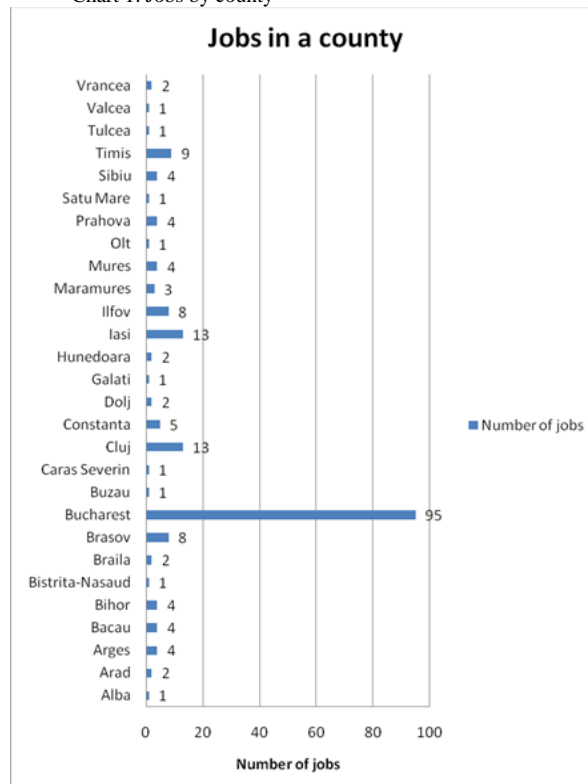
Given the distribution of jobs by cities, most jobs (95, representing 45.23%) were offered for the capital of the country. This was expected, considering that Bucharest is a great city that offers most opportunities for career development. This confirms the hypothesis 2 formulated at the beginning of the approach: *H2: There are more chances of employment in the capital of the country.*

In the ranking are situated other major cities of the country. In second place is situated Iasi, with 13 advertisements (6.19%) followed by Cluj, with 12 advertisements (representing 5.71%), Timisoara with 9 advertisements and Brasov with 8 advertisements.

For 14 cities there is one single advertisement. For all other 15 cities there are between 2 and 4 advertisements.

The distribution of the advertisements by county is represented in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Jobs by county



Source: Author's projections

b) Types of job:

The types of jobs mentioned in the advertisements are centralized in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of jobs

Title of job	Number of jobs
Accountant	115
Junior Accountant	24
Primary Accountant	20
Chief Accountant	20
Senior Accountant	15
Expert Accountant	6
Accounting Assistant	4
Financial Accountant	3
Accountant Manager	3
Total	210

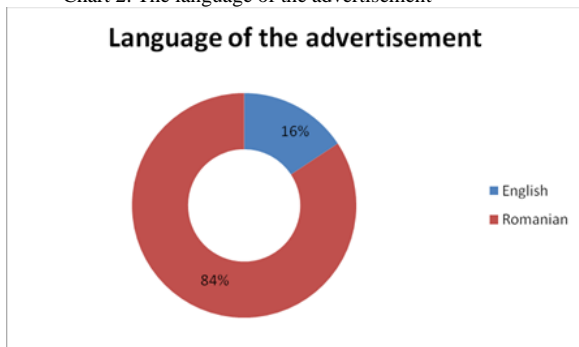
Source: Author's projections

c) The used Language

33 advertisements, representing 15.71% of all, are formulated in English, the rest are formulated in Romanian (Chart 2). 9 advertisements formulated in English are mentioned in locations outside Bucharest.

¹⁸ Gemius Romania, *Unde isi cauta romanii de munca. Cele mai accesate site-uri de joburi*, 2016 available at <http://www.gemius.ro/685/unde-isi-cauta-romanii-de-munca-cele-mai-accesate-site-uri-de-joburi.html>.

Chart 2. The language of the advertisement



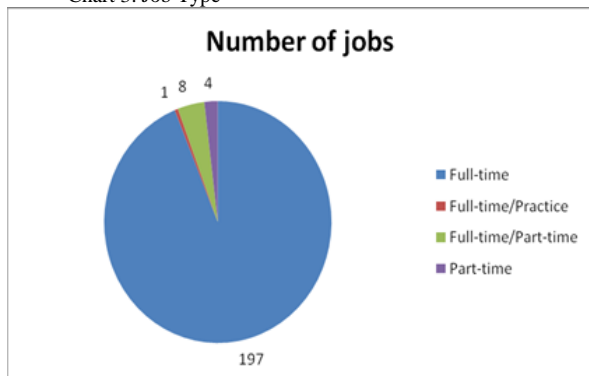
Source: Author's projections

d) Job type

Full-time jobs are the most numerous (197 advertisement, representing 93.80% of all), 4 jobs are part-time, 8 jobs allows full time or part time and just one mention full-time or practice (Chart 3).

Two advertisements were for a job for a determined period.

Chart 3. Job Type



Source: Author's projections

e) Career level

Most advertisements require a middle level for experience (86). Just once does not require experience. For 7 advertisements the career level is undefined (Table 2).

Table 2. Career level

Career level	Number of jobs
Mid-level	86
Different levels	69
Entry level	40
Management	7
Undefined	7
Unskilled	1

Source: Author's projections

f) The foreign languages

136 advertisements, which represent 64.76% of all, mention the necessity of knowing a foreign language. As expected, the most requested foreign language is English. This confirms the hypothesis 3

formulated at the beginning of the approach: *H3: English is the most requested foreign language.*

Other foreign languages often requested are: French, German, and Italian (Table 3).

Table 3. Foreign languages required

Foreign languages	Numbers of advertisements
English	111
French	7
English; German	4
English; French	3
Italian	3
English; Italian	2
German; Polish; English; French	2
Spanish	2
English; Portuguese	1
German; Polish; Hungarian; Ukrainian	1

Source: Author's projections

g) The salary

No one advertisement mentions the salary, but it was expected. The wage is confidential. For 14 advertisements the salary was framed in one of the preset ranges. Surprisingly, the two advertisements with the salary framed in the best ranges were not for Bucharest (Table 4).

Table 4. The ranges of salary

Salary	Number of advertisements
200-300 euro	2
300-400 euro	2
400-500 euro	3
500-1000 euro	6
1000-1500 euro	1
>1500 euro	1

Source: Author's projections

h) Soft skills

An accountant must know to operate with accounting software. In 84 advertisements the software required are as follows:

Table 5. Software Required

Software	Number of Jobs
ERP (SAP; ORACLE)	36
WINMENTOR	19
SAGA	18
NAV	2
NAVISION	2

NEXUS	2
SUN	2
CLASS	1
MICROS	1
WIZCOUNT	1

Source: Author's projections

There are 36 requirements for business-management software (Enterprise resource planning ERP). The most required accounting software are WINMENTOR and SAGA.

These results confirm the hypothesis 5 formulated at the beginning of the approach: *H5: It is necessary to have IT skills.*

i) Other requirements

For 19 advertisements, category B driving license was required.

Just two advertisements mention that the candidate's knowledge will be tested through written tests. One of them was a job in a state company, for a management level of experience.

In none of advertisements is not referred to the gender of the candidate.

A study undertaken in 2016 by AFECA¹⁹ has revealed that women are well represented in Romanian profession (77%), along with countries like Poland and Hungary, in contradistinction to France, Dutch and Swiss (15-25%)²⁰. These large differences seen on the same continent are closely related to the political and cultural history of Europe. Central and Eastern European countries guarantee legal equality for women²¹.

An advertisement requires that the CV contain a photo of the candidate.

The candidate must be a member of C.E.C.C.A.R this means a chartered accountant (required in 8 advertisements).

Master's Degree in accounting is a requirement for 4 advertisements.

Knowledge of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) is a mandatory requirement for 8 advertisements.

One advertisement has the mention about the age of the candidate (between 30 and 40 years).

j) Most requested characteristics

Analyzing the requirements of employers expressed in employment ads analyzed, Romanian accountant must have the following characteristics:

- Higher economic education (142 requirements)
- Communication skills (90 requirements)
- Good knowledge of accounting and fiscal legislation (53 requirements)
- Attention to details (51 requirements)
- Responsibility (50 requirements)
- Analytical skills (43 requirements)
- Respecting deadlines (32 requirements)
- Seriousness (26 requirements)
- Stress resistance (18 requirements)
- Flexibility (16 requirements)
- Results oriented (14 requirements)
- Honesty (14 requirements)
- Team player (10 requirements)
- Rigor (10 requirements)
- Working under pressure (8 requirements)
- Organizational skills (8 requirements)
- Positive attitude (8 requirements)

These characteristics confirm the hypothesis 4 formulated at the beginning of the approach: *H4: An accountant is more than a Bookkeeper.*

5. Conclusions

The role of an accountant was changed over time, today is not enough just entering data into a computer, but rather providing a support for the management of the company. The accountant becomes a strategic adviser who has the ability to lead the business to success together with the manager. To achieve this goal, are necessary economic knowledge and a continuous improvement of knowledge, especially because in Romania legislation is modified with a great frequency.

According to the requirements mentioned in the job advertisements, the Romanian accountant must know English and have higher education. It's easier to find a job if the experience is middle level. The knowledge of business management software is important. It is possible to earn a good salary, not necessarily in the capital of the country, although the chances are low.

Features based on the analysis of requirements mentioned in employment advertisements show that an accountant should be a trustworthy person. This person must be able to work under pressure, to resist stress and respect all the deadlines.

Moreover, the accountant should have positive attitude and find the best solutions for business. Accountant must manage their time well, since you have to identify potential business problems, to find solutions for them and also update their knowledge all the time. A good accountant is an invaluable asset to the company, but it is a stressful job. It could not be

¹⁹ Association des Femmes diplômées d'Expertise Comptable Administrateurs.

²⁰ AFECA, *Gender diversity in the European accountancy profession*, 2016, available at http://www.femmes-experts-comptables.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/UK_Benchmark-Afec-a-web.pdf.

²¹ Hilde Blomme, *International Women's Day: Gender diversity in the European accountancy profession*, International Accounting Bulletin, 2017, available at <http://www.internationalaccountingbulletin.com/features/international-womens-day-gender-diversity-in-the-european-accountancy-profession-5761382/>.

determined by the study undertaken if stress is mentioned (for few advertisements the salary was compensated by salary because the salary was not framed within a predetermined value range).

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