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How to Choose the Best Accountant for Your Business

Are you a small business owner who has begun the journey of looking for an accountant? Maybe your business has grown, and you feel like it's time to stop guessing at your accounting and tax issues and finally hire a professional. Maybe you're starting a new business and don't want to think about figuring it out.

Or you may already have an accountant, but you just don't feel cared for. He or she doesn't respond to your questions on time, doesn't use technology the way you currently do, and you have this nagging doubt that there has to be a better way to work with an accountant. You feel guilty about "adjustments" to the current relationship, but this is your business after all.

It's time to understand that there is a new breed of accountants. These new accountants work radically different with their customers than the old school accountants of the past. It begins with tools and using the cloud, but really, it's the technology that facilitates a new transparent, more hands-on relationship with the advisor.

And let me tell you, it's way cool for all of those involved.

The Old School Accountant

There are still accountants who are living in the past; they are paper-driven and are still managing their practice like they did 30 years ago. Back then, to work with them, you had to be located close to their neighborhood, and had to physically go to their office with documents. They would come to your location to work on your QuickBooks file. The

accountant would “fix” your QuickBooks file, make accounting time journal entries for depreciation and give you some financial reports.

Maybe you looked at those financial reports and understood them, gave them to the bank or just threw them in a file cabinet. They charged you by the hour and phone calls were few and far between because you didn’t want to get billed for a “dumb” question.

Part of the reason for this way of working was accountants didn’t have today’s technology to operate efficiently and effectively. They spent so much time on data entry and making sure the financial reports were correct that it was hard for them to add value.

The New School Accountant

Then in comes the cloud, bringing new ways of working in real-time with your accounting professional. For some, the cloud was an incremental footnote to otherwise tech savvy people that already use it to do online banking or work with a third-party supplier. But for your new school accountant who understands the power of this technology, it changes everything.

The cloud makes it seamless to gather all your records, update and create real-time financial statements and offer you more advisory help that you have always known you needed but didn’t think you could afford. And it gets better: many of these new firms are offering it at a fixed monthly cost to you.

No more fear about calling your accountant and being charged for it. No more driving across town in traffic to head to your accountant to get your tax return filed on time. Accountants on the cloud want to work virtually with you. All year round. And they are actually excited about it!

What Can a Cloud-Connected Accountant Do for You?

The accountant working in this new way can offer you proactive insight into your small business data. You now have someone to share your

financials with who will give you the critical real-time information you need to make impactful business decisions about your daily operations. You'll also have someone who understands the way you do business.

I encourage you to do your research before signing on with a new accountant. If you are moving towards a new school firm, search online for accounting firms who are associated with the terms “cloud,” “fixed fee” and “advisory.” Consider asking the following questions:

1. How do you typically interact with your cloud customers?
2. Do you have a particular niche market that you serve?
3. What type of online accounting technology will we be using?
4. What do your current customers say about working in the cloud with you?
5. What question should I be asking you?

We're living in a new world, and everyone has to change. When it comes to your small business, you deserve the best. Think about your values, think about who you want to work with on a daily basis and find someone who reflects your needs both personally and in business. Whether you prefer old school or new school, we are out there.