



CHOOSING A CPA

CPA's are more than just individuals who do your yearly taxes. They can advise you a long list of other services, which may include advice on your accounting system, financial, retirement, estate and tax planning. CPA's are part of a business owner's professional team along with a Banker and Lawyer.

Ask for recommendations. Your local Chamber of Commerce will tell you the names of CPAs who are members. When you attend any type of meeting, or meet other business owner's, ask for CPA recommendations.

Use the 60% rule. If you're a business owner, pick a CPA who has 60% of their business coming from business owners like you! They're more apt to keep up with the laws regarding clients they deal with most often. If you're a corporation, make sure that the person specializes in business accounting, including financial statements, compilations, reviews, audits, etc.

Interview CPAs! Ask what type of services they do for their clients, how long they've been in business full time, and for referrals, etc. Don't forget to ask to see their license. Ask them about the benefits of choosing them over another CPA.

Rates Ask about their rates and what those rates include. If they have a rate chart, all the better! Also, ask what their hourly rate is and what the cost would be to answer questions during the year. Try to negotiate a fixed fee arrangement.

Ask Them About Record Keeping Ask what computer program they prefer you use for your record keeping and why they prefer that program. Many times, if you use the program they suggest, it can save you some money because they can use your data files. Some even have programs they'll set up especially for you!

Bring Your Records To The Interview Bring a copy of at least one year's tax return when you interview a CPA. This way your prospective CPA can give you educated "guesstimates" as to what their services will cost you.

How To File If you want to save some money, ask how they want your paper files.... If you bring your files to them in shoeboxes (hey, many folks do), you will pay to have all that deciphered! You can save money if you separate the information the way the CPA suggests.

Corporation vs. Individual Are you interested in hiring a firm of CPAs or a CPA that has their own business? If you opt for the firm, find out if you'll be dealing with one particular person, or will it be whoever answers the phone when you call. It's best to have one person to build a relationship with!

When do they work? What are their hours of operation? Make sure that you can call them at hours that are convenient for you.

Making a Decision Interview at least 3 CPAs. Don't rush this decision. Make sure you have the best CPA and bookkeeper for you and your business!