

What to Look for in an Accountant

When hiring an accountant you should apply the same standards that you would when hiring an employee.

- Is she approachable, easy to talk to and, **most importantly**, easy to understand?
- Is she inquisitive and energetic? Does she ask a lot of questions and take an interest in your business?
- How are her “customer service” skills? Is she easily accessible when needed?
- Does she work with other professionals for back-up and support?
- Is the accountant discerning as to whom she takes as clients, or does she take anyone or everything that comes along?
- Does she have experience and skill working with businesses in your particular field or circumstance?
- Will she give you an estimate of how quickly the work will be performed?
- Is she established in the community?
- Will she provide value for the amount billed?

As with anything in life there are certain attributes that set one accountant apart from the other. Good accounting is a business about people; your accountant should take the time to get to know you and everything important to you. Only then will she be able to provide you with the guidance necessary for the successful growth of your business.

The accountant whom you choose to work with should be someone who can, first and foremost, understand and relate to you and your business. Your accountant is someone you should want to turn to whenever you are contemplating an important, financial or business decision. If your business does not have a controller or senior level accountant on staff, your accountant should be available to help you run “what if” scenarios.

A good accountant should also be savvy in a broad range of areas not mutually exclusive to numbers. They should have an end-to-end understanding of your business (beyond your tax return and bookkeeping). They should provide not only answers to your questions but be proactive, making suggestions and challenging you to improve your business and maximize your opportunities.

Your accountant should be an important contributor to your return on investment, enhancing it with each critical decision that is made, and always thinking about the bigger picture and how it affects you in the long run.

Shopping for an accountant on cost alone may not serve your best interest. Like anything else, you get what you pay for. The foremost question should be, "What value will my accountant bring to my business and me?" Apply the same principles you would when hiring an employee. The hiring of your accountant is a critical decision for the long haul.

If it feels like your accounting firm is not servicing your needs or merely tolerating you, it's time to make a change.

Accountability Services is a full-service accounting and outsourcing firm that offers an innovative approach to each client's particular needs. Our mission is to provide early-stage and mid-sized companies with high-level financial solutions at an affordable rate. Unlike traditional accounting firms, we take an integrated advisory approach--looking at the *whole system*, not just the accounting basics--offering a coordinated set of services, ranging from traditional accounting to associated business and financial consulting.

 Find out more: contact Accountability Services LLC at 1-206-522-0110 or visit www.accountabilityservices.com