



What to Look for in an Accountant

When hiring an accountant, you will want to apply the same standards that you use when hiring an employee. There are certain attributes that set one accountant apart from the other. Good accounting is a business about people.

Here are some guiding considerations:

- **Is approachable, easy to talk to and, most importantly, easy to understand.**
- **Asks a lot of questions and takes an interest in your business.** Your accountant should take the time to get to know you and everything important to you. Only then will you receive the guidance necessary for the successful growth of your business
- **Possesses excellent customer service skills, including accessibility when needed.** You should receive not only answers to your questions, but proactive suggestions to challenge you to improve your business and maximize your opportunities.
- **Offers both experience and skills working with businesses in your particular field or circumstance.** The accountant you choose should be someone who:
 - Understands and relates to you and your business.
 - Builds your confidence so that you want to seek assistance whenever you are contemplating an important financial or business decision.
 - Runs “what if” scenarios if your business does not have a controller or senior level accountant on staff.
 - Is savvy in a broad range of areas not mutually exclusive to numbers, including an end-to-end understanding of your business beyond your tax return and bookkeeping.
 - Contributes 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.
- **Is discerning about the clients served, and does not take anyone or everything that comes along.**
- **Works with other professionals for back-up and support.**

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.