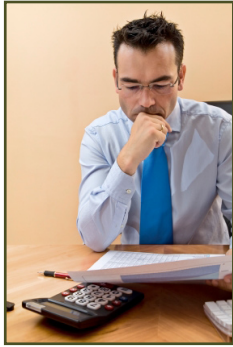




BOOST YOUR ACCOUNTING CAREER



Today's Dream Job? CPA Profession Has Become the Cadillac of Job Sectors

[By Carina Zaragoza]

Accounting professionals, in particular certified public accountants, are in demand according to industry analysts. A growing number of companies are in need of CPAs due to various factors. Thus, more and more employers are hiring certified public accountants.

Whoever thought working as a certified public accountant would be anyone's "dream" job? Most people I know are trying to break into professions that are a little more glamorous. Living in Los Angeles, I know plenty of aspiring actors, directors, models, singers, and even chefs. Even trying to break into advertising or public relations is considered hip.

But becoming a CPA? Why? Well, with CPA salaries rising sharply and a growing need, why not? Nowadays, accounting is the place to be.

Tougher Federal Regulations Mean High Demand for CPAs

Accounting failures at Enron, Tyco, and WorldCom led to the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which imposed tougher financial reporting regulations. Since its passage in 2002, accounting budgets have increased by 50% or more, says Georgia Fisher. Fisher is the director of the undergraduate business program at the University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business. The result has been growing demand for certified public accountants.

But the Sarbanes-Oxley Act is not the only reason for the CPA need. Accounting as an industry and business practice waned in the 1990s; thus, many qualified and experienced certified public accountants moved into other fields. But with a switch in companies' priorities, and relatively few CPAs to go around, more and more employers are looking to hire and are willing to pay handsomely for the accounting professionals they need.

As the Baby Boom Generation of Accounting Professionals Retires, Generation Y Is Set to Pounce and Enter the Accounting Professional Workforce

Industry analysts anticipate that many accountants, the majority of whom are Baby Boomers, are about to retire or have already done so. This means a large segment of CPA professionals will leave the job market and thus create a vacuum. This is creating the perfect environment for the next generation, Generation Y, to take over. In fact, large accounting firms, and even private and public companies, are recruiting at campuses in large numbers.

What Exactly Does a CPA Do?

The certified public accountant field has changed from traditional accounting duties. CPAs now need to understand financial trends in the market, apply a variety of financial controls, and root out possible causes of accounting disasters like Enron.

Certified public accountants fall into two major categories. Accountants analyze financial information and prepare financial reports to track the financial activities of an organization. Tax preparers prepare tax returns for individuals or businesses but may not necessarily be accredited.

CPA Jobs Are Easily \$100,000-Plus Jobs

Accountants' careers are among the fastest-growing careers, and in-house accountants are among the best paid. Salaries for senior CPAs can be as high as \$110,000, a more than 5% increase from just a year ago.

Obviously, all CPAs will not be hired as senior accountants the day after graduation. Still, the salaries for entry-level CPAs and accountants are competitive. An entry-level CPA can earn upwards of \$60,000. Not bad for a 22-year-old college graduate.



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Certified Public Accounting — Today's Hot Career

With the growing demand for certified public accountants and legislation enacted to ensure businesses are accountable for their

financial activities, accounting may just be the next hot career.

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