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WHY GEN Y IS INTO ACCOUNTING

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Issue #10

Magazine
A fun, interactive game that challenges your business savvy.

Tomorrow’s CPAs know accounting is about more than write-offs and audits. Think you can make it? Would you bet on it?

Then Bank On It.

BANKONITGAME.COM
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There’s an App for That

You use apps for everything from enhancing your vacation photos to checking on your horoscope, so why not use apps to get ready for college? These apps are designed to help you make the most of your time in high school so you’re really ready for the next big step. Keep your finances, your study schedule and your future on track with these great apps:

**Plan for Financial Fitness with these Budgeting Apps:**
- Mint.com Personal Finance
- You Need a Budget
- Toshl Finance

**Keep Your Study Schedule on Track with these Apps:**
- AP Exam Prep Calculus
- StudentLife Organizer
- Class Manager
- Math Formulas Reference Guide

FAMILY FEUD & FRIENDS
SUDOKU
PROM360
Graduation is near. Get ready for what's next with these apps:

- Graduation Countdown
- Student Job & Interview Guide

Get prepped for college with these smart apps:

- Majors: University, salary and job search for high school to college students
- Scholly: Scholarship Search
- College Visits
- TextbookMe: The Cheap Textbook Search Engine

You don't know Jack

3500+ Random Fun Facts

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StartHereGoPlaces.com
This is the time in your life when you can’t even go to a birthday party without someone asking “What do you want to be when you grow up?” These days, the variety of professional paths can be a bit overwhelming. Teacher. Doctor. Lawyer. Designer. Realtor. Rock star. What’s a Millennial to do?

First things first — let’s take a moment to recognize why it matters that you’re a Millennial. Yes, we know. Enough with the titles. Gen X this. Gen Y that. But it does matter. Look at Baby Boomers. They wouldn’t dream of leaving a job after only three years. Starting to get itchy just thinking about being stuck at the same job for three years, aren’t you. See? It matters.

Millennials have a totally different way of working, thinking and communicating than previous generations. You’re the next generation of worker bees and you have a totally different set of criteria when deciding what to be, how to get there and what you want out of your job. Everything.

With that in mind, and with so many careers to choose from, it’s kind of cool that Millennials are leaning towards accounting. But why? Traditionally, accounting has had the stigma of being a pretty boring field. Lots of numbers. Lots of working in a cubicle all alone. Lots of pocket-protectors. But there’s more to it than that. An accounting degree can send you down many fulfilling, exciting career paths. Here are a few reasons why the accounting profession appeals to Millennials.

**Millennials like a good challenge**
Millennials have a tendency to push boundaries professionally, ignore the status quo and take on challenges with gusto. Whether working in a big accounting firm or blazing their own trail as an entrepreneur, Millennials tend not to accept roadblocks. They seek solutions and want to work smarter, not harder. Accounting can be a challenging, fast-paced environment in which Millennials can use their multi-tasking superpowers to succeed.

**The catch:** This can-do attitude can actually cause friction in established firms. Confrontations between Boomers and Millennials doing things just because they “have always been done that way” can be frustrating, so you may want to consider a firm that is open to innovative approaches to completing tasks.

**Millennials are tech-savvy**
Why count on your fingers when you can use
an app? Time-saving software, online courses and online job hunting have transformed the profession. Accounting is a very number-centric profession and technological advances have certainly streamlined the process. In minutes, you can organize stacks of papers and keep track of anything with a smart phone.

The catch: Sorry, but technology won’t make up for having a true understanding of numbers. Get a grasp of the basics and use technology as a tool so you don’t have to rely on it as a crutch. Also, get used to interacting with people face-to-face. Millennials get a bad rap for trying to find shortcuts. And relying on email.

Millennials want to be happy
For Millennials, a check just doesn’t cut it. Millennials want to feel like they’re learning something or doing something that makes a difference in the world. Being an accountant is a great way to do that on your own terms. You could be a CPA for your favorite non-profit. Or travel the world for work. Or start your own business. The sky’s the limit.

The catch: Happiness is a journey. You won’t like everybody you work with or enjoy every project. And you may not get the praise you’re used to. But keep at it. Follow your heart and it will all work out. Promise!

Amazon. Disney. Mattel. Apple. Google. Yankee Candle Company. All household names now, but started out as, well, startups. More and more successful startups are launched by Millennials. Adam Horwitz introduced Mobile Monopoly, an online course that teaches people how to earn money generating marketing leads. Juliette Brindak created what is now Miss O and Friends, a popular girl-only site for teens and tweens. Ray Land turned his passion for travel into a business and founded the company, Fabulous Coach. But having a great idea is only the beginning for entrepreneurs just starting out. There are a lot of expenses and considerations to be aware of if you want your startup to start strong.

Keep these five tips in mind when starting a new business venture:

1. Go on the record
Get in the habit of recording everything you spend, everyone you pay, everything you owe, everyone who owes you, etc. It will pay off!

2. Make note of what’s write-off worthy
Starting your own business can cost a lot to start. The silver lining is that there are a lot of things that you get to write off on your taxes later—office supplies, insurance premiums, software, mileage, etc.

3. Go digital
The right accounting software can do wonders for your sanity. QuickBooks. Xero. Whatever. If your team finds software to be helpful, by all means, use it.

4. Watch the freebies
Calculate how much time and energy and discounts and stuff you can give away while building up your customer base. Too many favors can cost you in the long run, so make sure you can afford to do it.

5. Know what you don’t know
If you sell surfboards, sell surfboards. If you aren’t 100% sure about accounting, banking, insurance and legal stuff, ask a pro. Their advice could be the difference between a strong startup and a total flop. Want to be an entrepreneur who’s in the know? Start strong with a degree from one of the top undergrad programs for entrepreneurship. Check them out at www.entrepreneur.com.
Words from the Wise: Finding a Mentor

Ever since you were little, the buddy system has been a brilliant system. With someone by your side, you’re both more likely to get from Point A to Point B safely. You look out for each other and you might even have more fun along the way. The same thing applies to your career.

Whether you’re in high school, college or are already in the working world, there are benefits to having a trusted advisor who has been there and done that—and who cares about your success. You can learn a lot from a mentor, not to mention many successful professionals enjoy having a protégé. It’s a win-win if you find the right person.

Someone who knows a thing or two about snagging a great mentor is recent Master of Accounting graduate, Rebecca Hu. She earned her undergraduate degree in sociology at University of California at Berkeley only to realize that she didn’t really want a life of researching and teaching, so Rebecca had to figure out what she really wanted to do. Fast. Luckily, she had mentors who were willing to help her find her way.

Here Are a Few Things to Look For in a Good Mentor:

Find a mentor now.

It’s never too early to find a mentor. Or even a few mentors. Teachers, friends of the family, summer job bosses—all make great mentors. Even in high school, Rebecca had mentors. She was highly involved in the local YMCA and had informal mentors whom she was able to talk to about her hopes and dreams for the future. “As a high schooler, it’s good to have someone help you figure out how to accomplish your dreams,” she says.

Choose someone you admire.

When you look around, who do you look up to? Whose job do you want some day? Who strikes you as having everything together? Maybe it’s the president of an accounting club. Maybe it’s a professor who works with non-profits on the side. Maybe it’s a friend of the family who started her own business. It can be anybody. Rebecca says, “If you find someone whom you respect or admire and who is willing to listen, then that provides a strong foundation for a mentoring relationship. And this way you have someone you will listen to, too.”
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Make sure your mentor has the time.

As much as your coveted mentor might want to help you, he or she might be too busy. Don’t take it personally if the mentor declines, but also don’t wait around by the phone for a mentor who is already spread too thin.

An ideal mentor is someone you can interact with face-to-face. Emails and phone calls can be convenient, but are too impersonal. You want someone who will sit down for a latte or a slushy while you pick his or her brain. Or better yet, someone who would let you job shadow them every now and then. Plus, meeting face-to-face lets the mentor get to know you and your goals better.

Pick someone who has the interest.

Finding a mentor who is somewhat already invested in you is important. “It helps to have someone with an objective point of view,” Rebecca explains. “They can have an interest in you but can still be objective.” Professors are already invested in your success, so they make great mentors. Someone you work for during an internship would make a great mentor, especially if you suspect they may want to hire you after graduation.

Learn from everybody.

“Talk to as many people you know in accounting to figure out where you want to go. Explore. There are a lot of exciting things in this field, and it will help you find out what you will find exciting. You really can’t get that from accounting classes,” Rebecca advises. And in her case, talking to people really paid off. While interning at a tech company in the accounting department, she made a life-changing connection with her supervisor.

“I was really fortunate to have a supervisor who wanted me to understand why we were doing what we were doing,” Rebecca says. “Why are we doing this step? Why is this person doing this role? As a result I really developed this appreciation for the whole accounting process.”

After that internship, Rebecca decided to take some financial accounting classes and pursue an accounting degree.

Work your network.

Once Rebecca decided to pursue accounting, she decided to find someone in the accounting field to help guide her. “I looked at my network to see who I could potentially talk to. I found someone who happened to be a partner at one of the Big Four in audit,” Rebecca explains. She says that being able to have conversations with him about pursuing a masters program and considering which courses to take were a big help. She kept in touch and gave him updates on her progress and now he’s going to be her boss!

Be gracious.

While mentoring can be beneficial to both parties, it is very time-consuming, so be professional, respectful and gracious of their time. Rebecca says, “Not showing your appreciation when your mentor is willing to make time for you would be a big mistake. Send thank you notes. Follow up. You’re asking a lot from your mentor.”

Rebecca Hu earned her Master of Accounting degree from the Leventhal School of Accounting at the University of Southern California in May 2013. She recently took the CPA Exam and is crossing her fingers that she passed!
You’ve mastered the art of the word problem. You’re doing math problems in your sleep. You have even looked online for tips and tricks for getting a higher score on the SAT or ACT. Are you ready? TBD. Is all the stress even worth it? Does standardized testing even really matter? In short, absolutely.

Mike Tiller, chair of the Graduate Accounting Programs Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, definitely agrees. He adds that students may not fully realize how heavily GPA and SAT scores are used as an initial screening tool to filter student applicants. Though it’s not a perfect screening tool, colleges definitely use these metrics to help narrow the pool of applicants.

Mark Higgins echoes the importance of standardized testing. As the dean of the College of Business Administration at the University of Rhode Island, he knows a thing or two about testing. He tells us that while grades, coursework and extracurricular activities look good on your application, they can’t always save you from a bad SAT or ACT score.

So since standardized tests do indeed matter, here are some things to keep in mind while prepping for the SAT or ACT.

1 YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Each year millions of students take them, and trust us, these tests freak everyone out. Even the best test-takers. And with good reason—the SAT and ACT are intended to assess a student's readiness for college. Your score can be the difference between getting into the school of your dreams, being waitlisted, or even, gasp flat-out rejected. Yikes!

2 IT’S ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW.

The bad news is, some people just “don’t test well.” The good news is, the point of the test is to see what you already know. And there are ways to prepare for the pressure so your scores don’t suffer. The SAT and ACT are designed to test the reading, writing and math skills you have already learned in school and show colleges how well you analyze and solve problems—something you will certainly need to be able to do in college.

3 STANDARDIZED TESTS PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.

There are a lot of different types of secondary schools that have to be accounted for—schools in neighboring counties can have vastly different funding, curricula, grading and difficulty. Throw private schools and home schooling into the mix, and that’s a lot to keep track of. One college can get applications from 2,000 different schools, so SAT scores can supplement secondary school records and help admission officers put local data—such as course work, grades, and class rank—in a national perspective.
4 Grades Aren’t Everything.

School can be an extreme sport for a lot of people. There are study junkies who excel at everything, ace every test and take mostly AP classes. That’s tough to compete with. But it can be done. Grades are only one measure. Test scores are another. Maybe you got a B in calculus but got a 700 on the math section of the SAT. That tells colleges that must have been a pretty tough class because clearly you’re a math whiz. Or maybe you get a 400 in the math section, but your writing scores are super high. Everybody’s score tells a different story, so don’t worry. Just do your best.

5 The Big Picture.

Colleges will take a look at the average test scores in your high school. If you’re one of the top scorers in your high school, that makes a difference. If you’re in a high school with limited resources and test preparation, your ability to defy the odds also stands out. In addition to grades and test scores, colleges will also consider your extracurricular activities, community involvement and more. Why? They want to be sure you will be a good fit on their campus and have the skills and capabilities to thrive.

6 There’s Something In It For You.

It may seem like a giant hassle, but you do actually have something to gain from taking standardized tests, too. Taking the SAT or ACT can help you find scholarship opportunities, place out of certain college courses and learn more about your academic strengths. Plus, many schools publish the range of scores reported by the students they admit and that info can help you determine which schools may be the best fit for you.

7 So, You Wanna Be An Accountant?

The reality is, if you want to be an accountant, standardized test scores matter. Six of the top ten accounting schools admit high-caliber students to their business programs directly as freshman, while the rest require a separate admissions process after freshman or sophomore year. According to a recent survey by BusinessWeek, of those six schools, the average SAT score for admitted accounting majors was 1380 in Critical Reading and Mathematics.

8 The SAT and ACT Are Only The Beginning.

Working in the accounting realm means the SAT and ACT won’t be your last standardized tests. This profession is all about numbers and analytical skills, so get used to proving your skills on a daily basis as well as periodically to maintain your professional licensing. Ever heard of the CPA Exam? Embrace test-taking now and you’ll not only be fine, you’ll be an amazing accountant. Plus, if you want to go to grad school, your SAT and ACT scores can still help or hurt you.

| Mike’s Test Taking Tips | 1 Studies show that physical routine increases the brain’s potential, so eat, exercise and go to sleep and wake up at the same time for several weeks before the test. | 2 Change your perspective. Get excited about using the test as an opportunity to show what you know and to highlight your strengths. | 3 Look good on test taking day. If you feel good it will boost your overall self-confidence. |

Whether it’s the ACT, the SAT or the CPA Exam, keep these test-taking tips in mind:

What Are Your Favorite SAT Resources? Tweet @StartHereGoPlcs and let us know! StartHereGoPlaces.com
WES BENTLEY

"American Beauty" and "Hunger Games" actor Wes Bentley was said to owe as much as $204,000 in delinquent and federal taxes, so the IRS filed liens against Bentley and his estranged wife, Jennifer Quanz. But that’s not all. He was also sued by American Express after allegedly failing to pay off $92,738 in credit card charges.

LAURYN HILL

The Grammy-winning singer pleaded guilty to three counts of failing to file tax returns on more than $2 million in earnings during a five-year period. In 2013, Hill was sentenced to three months in prison to be followed by three months of home confinement with electronic monitoring, a year of supervised release and must also pay a $60,000 fine in addition to paying her tax debt to the IRS.

WILLIE NELSON

After receiving a $16 million bill for back taxes in 1990, Willie did what he did best—recorded an album! The album, The IRS Tapes: Who’ll Buy My Memories?, did so well that he was able to pay off his debt and then go on to even sue his accountant! He settled for enough money to totally clear his IRS record within three years.

WESLEY SNIPES

In 2008, the actor was given three years in prison for willfully failing to file $17 million in back taxes. He tried to buy his way out of trouble by offering a $5 million "down payment" on his debt prior to the conviction, but both the judge and prosecutors refused to accept the checks.

For those who have sacrificed their privacy for fame and fortune, managing that fortune can be a job in itself. Just in case you, or a celebrity you love, need a little advice managing all that moolah, here’s what we would recommend:

★ Don’t spend it all in one place.

Pay off some bills, but don’t lose your mind. Want a sports car? Cool. Want 7 sports cars? Pump the brakes. Earn fast. Spend slow. Reduce your debt first, buy a gift for yourself and then save the rest. Invest wisely now and it will pay off in the long-term.

★ Save yourself.

Bank money in IRAs, 401Ks, stocks, bonds, etc. You can’t spend it all that way, and it will reduce how much you owe on your taxes. Plus, who knows how long you’ll be in the limelight? Save for a rainy day—even if it’s 30 years down the road.

★ Be charitable.

Build up your good karma while reducing your taxable income. Save the Sea Turtles. Contribute to The Water Project. Keep in mind, however, that paying off your little brother’s tuition bills is nice, but not tax deductible.

★ Pay your taxes.

It seems obvious, but being a celebrity does not absolve you from paying income taxes. And making buckets of money is no excuse for not being able to keep track of how much you earn. Hire a CPA you trust so you don’t end up doing time for tax evasion.

★ Protect your brand.

You’re a celebrity now. Companies will want to use your name to make money, so be careful. If you’re famous for being on a show about dancing, does it makes sense for you to be the face of roofing materials? Probably not. Look for long-term endorsement opportunities and watch the paychecks keep coming in.

★ Be realistic.

Being a reality star is unlikely to last forever. Sorry, kid. If you quit your job to be a star, try to remain on good terms with your old company and co-workers. If you’re really an accountant by trade, keep your skills up in your free time. You never know when you’ll have to go back to being one of the little people.
There are plenty of reasons to consider ditching your dorm and possibly making the world your classroom. Jet-setter Sydney Nelson, who is graduating with her Master’s in Accounting in 2014, is living proof. She made her dreams of traveling the world a reality through study abroad courses and internships in Mexico, Ghana, England, Ireland, Brazil and even China! Sydney took the road less traveled and so can you. Here’s why it’s totally worth it:

**IT GETS YOU OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE.**
Being exposed to new ideas and new people can be life changing. Sydney took the Nike approach to travel. “Just do it.” She says, “Throw away all your fears and live for the moment.” It will pay off. Learning firsthand about other cultures can give you a totally different perspective on the world. You can try new foods. Learn a new language. Make new friends. Send your friends back home envy-inducing postcards.

**IT’S GOOD FOR THE FUTURE YOU.**
Other than adding stamps to your passport, studying abroad can do wonders for your personal growth. Students who studied abroad reported that doing so boosted their self-confidence, served as a catalyst for maturity and had a lasting impact on their worldview. Sydney told us, “When I returned from my first study abroad trip (Ghana), I felt as if a little piece of me was unlocked. From that point on, I felt a greater connection with the world outside the US. Making decisions going forward, I began to think about how those decisions affected Nathan in England, Chiemi in Japan, Sally in Australia, or Yanyk in Senegal. This allowed me to see the situation from various perspectives so I make the best choice for everyone.”

**IT GIVES YOUR RÉSUMÉ A BOOST.**
Studying in a land far, far away can really help you stand out in the professional world. “Studying abroad is a wonderful experience to have. It looks good on a résumé and also does wonders for your personal being. Not only did I intern with PricewaterhouseCoopers in the United States, but also during my time in Mexico,” Sydney explains. Studying abroad can especially pay off if you’re up for a job that requires international travel. It shows that you are cultured, adventurous, adaptable, independent and probably have more interesting stories to tell than the other three guys who are up for the same job.

**SO, WHERE WILL YOU GO?**
What it’s like working at the corner of Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues.

You never know where a summer job will lead. For Becky Price, scooping ice cream at Hersheypark one summer was just the beginning of a rewarding 14-year career. So, where is she now? CFO of Ice Cream World? Not far off.

While spending hot summers cooling off amusement park goers, Becky had visions of being a lawyer and was considering pre-law at Elizabethtown College. But something about it didn’t really speak to her, and by the next summer she knew she was more interested in business. So, instead of scooping ice cream again she applied for an internship in the Hersheypark Finance office. There, she found her calling—accounting!

The next summer she returned as an intern in the Finance office and then interviewed with accounting firms as a senior in college. With a solid interest in accounting and her business administration degree in hand, she landed a job at what is now PricewaterhouseCoopers. And as Becky says, “I’ve never looked back!”

Though her first job out of college wasn’t with Hershey Entertainment & Resorts (HE&R), Becky stayed in touch with the Director of Finance with whom she interned as she progressed within the accounting profession. “Keep in contact with people you meet along the way. You never know what opportunities might arise down the road,” Becky says. And she should know. That same contact from her summers at HE&R is now the CFO and Becky is the Corporate Controller & Budget Director for the company.

Years ago, Becky worked for The Hershey Company, auditing chocolate factories. Now, she spends her days overseeing the financial aspects of HE&R’s operating units. She’s responsible for the
monthly financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting for Hersheypark amusement park, The Hotel Hershey (home of the Chocolate Spa), Hershey Lodge, Hersheypark Camping Resort, indoor and outdoor entertainment venues, golf courses and even the Hershey Bears, the longest continuously operating member club in the American Hockey League. And she does it all with the smell of chocolate wafting through the air.

Becky cites building relationships with co-workers as one of the most rewarding aspects of her job. Her working environment is collaborative, team-oriented and requires great people skills. “Be really aware of relationships and how important they are,” she says. “This job is as much about people as it is about numbers. You can accomplish more with others than you can on your own.”

Aside from being around chocolate all day, Becky is proud of the company’s mission of providing value to the Milton Hershey School (MHS). Founded in 1909, MHS is the world’s largest residential school for children in social and financial need. HE&R is privately owned by Hershey Trust Company, Trustee for MHS, as the sole shareholder. “Our net profit goes towards operating the school.” Serving more than 1,800 children, Becky interacts with MHS students and gets to see what a positive impact their hard work has on the community.

The most challenging part of her job is finding enough time to get everything done. “I’m constantly prioritizing,” Becky says. But it’s all worth it because, as an accountant, she says, she’s in a unique position to see the many facets of a business you wouldn’t necessarily see in another role. It’s this view on accounting that makes Becky say that if she could go back in time she probably would have selected accounting earlier. “Although accounting wasn’t my intended career path when I started school, I’ve found it more rewarding than I could have imagined,” she explains.

All Hands On Deck!
Collaboration is key at HE&R, especially during “August Crunch.” That’s what the organization calls the last two weeks of August—it’s the busiest time of the year at Hersheypark, but that’s also when many seasonal employees return to school. So, everybody has to pitch in. Becky works at both the front gate and rides, and even the president of HE&R helps. She actually enjoys working at the front gate because she says, “I’m able to understand the numbers from Point A to Point Z. From the moment we sell a ticket, I see the process all the way through to our financial statements.”
Just because you’re in accounting doesn’t mean you need a wardrobe filled with boring black suits. You can dress like a grown-up and still be comfortable and show off your personality. But there are a few rules. Whether it’s for an interview, your first job or your first day on the job at a new company, there are a few fashion faux pas everyone needs to know about. Avoid these surprisingly common mistakes and you’ll always be dressed for success.

**Look Natural**
But not too natural. The just rolled out of bed look will not go over well, but also don’t overdo it. Ladies, go easy on the make-up and the perfume. Guys, don’t take a cologne bath and stay clean-shaven. Cover tattoos and be realistic about piercings. Your friends might love your eyebrow piercing, but at work it will only raise eyebrows about your professionalism.

**Pull Yourself Together**
You don’t have to spend an arm and a leg to look great, but you do have to get an iron. And maybe even find a dry cleaner. Definitely polish your shoes. Get one of those stain pens for emergencies. Get Fluffy’s fur off your pants. Even if you start out as just an intern, dress for the job you want.

**Incorporate Color**
Even if you work in a conservative setting, you can put your own spin on the standard corporate gear. A yellow blouse or a purple tie can really add that pop of color you’re looking for. Accessories can really make a difference.

**Get A Mani**
Guys, this is for you too! You’re going to be shaking hands and talking with your hands and signing documents all day. Make a good impression by making sure your nails are trim and clean.

**Cover Up**
Show too much skin and your boss could want to show you the door. Leave the sheer materials, low-cut tops, flip-flops and itty-bitty anything at home. Anything suggestive could make your co-workers uncomfortable and even worse, they may think twice about introducing you to clients.
What to Wear to Work

Worse, they may think twice about introducing you to clients. Anything suggestive could make your co-workers uncomfortable and even show too much skin and your boss could want to show you the door. Leave cover up your hands and signing documents all day. Make a good impression by getting a manicure. You can find that pop of color you're looking for. Accessories can really make a difference.

Guys, this is for you too! You're going to be shaking hands and talking with guys. Be realistic about piercings. Your friends might love your eyebrow piercing, but at work it will only raise eyebrows about your professionalism. Guys, don't take a cologne bath and stay clean-shaven. Cover tattoos and get an iron. And maybe even find a dry cleaner. Definitely polish your shoes. You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to look great, but you do have to be realistic about piercings. Your friends might love your eyebrow piercing, but at work it will only raise eyebrows about your professionalism. Guys, don't take a cologne bath and stay clean-shaven. Cover tattoos and get an iron. And maybe even find a dry cleaner. Definitely polish your shoes. You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to look great, but you do have to get an iron. And maybe even find a dry cleaner. Definitely polish your shoes. You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to look great, but you do have to get an iron. And maybe even find a dry cleaner. Definitely polish your shoes.

Pull Yourself Together

Whether it's for an interview, your first job or your first day on the job at a new company, there are a few fashion faux pas everyone needs to know about. Avoid these surprisingly common mistakes and you'll always be dressed for success.

The Jobs

Chicago is home to countless accounting firms, including the Big Four, so you can sleep easy knowing your first job here won't be your last. Make the most of this city's natural professional resources and start networking ASAP. There are dozens of accredited accounting programs in Chicago, so seek out alums. Join a local accounting chapter, scour your LinkedIn contacts and stay connected to Chicago's finest.

The Sights

Wrigley Field. The Art Institute of Chicago. Millennium Park. Navy Pier. Michigan Ave. Lincoln Park Zoo. Buckingham Fountain. You almost have to live here to see everything. Whether you have a long weekend or a long lunch, there are plenty of iconic sights to see. “The city offers so many other things to do that it's your fault if you don't get out to enjoy everything Chicago has to offer,” Mark insists.

The Sounds

Nat King Cole. Muddy Waters. Liz Phair. Chaka Khan. The Smashing Pumpkins. Kanye West. Wilco. Chicago breeds musicians. You could be in the audience of the next breakout artist if you play your cards right. Plus, this city knows how to do music festivals. From Lollapalooza to the SquareRoots festival in Lincoln Square, countless genres are represented.

The Shopping

Hide your credit cards. Hide your 401K. The Magnificent Mile is calling. 13 blocks. 460+ stores. 275 restaurants. 60 hotels. Insanity. Not into the tourist trap shopping experience? Head to the Bucktown/Wicker Park area. This up and coming shopping haven is studded with locally owned gems featuring everything from designer clothing to home furnishings.

The Food

Deep-dish pizza. Chicago style hot dogs. Tater tots. Classics. Want to try more but can’t make it to the annual Taste Of Chicago Festival? No worries. All the restaurants featured at this insanely amazing foodie mecca are scattered throughout the city. Expand your horizons. In this town, you never have to taste the same thing twice. Unless you want to. Mark tells us that an office building he used to work in had so many lunch spots inside that he and his colleagues had to force themselves to try new places! “We decided to take part in the Tour de 225, modeled after the stages in the Tour de France bicycle race. We graded the restaurants based on food quality, atmosphere, and value. We ended up going to over 30 places but we made it through over the summer and prepared a list of our favorite spots in the building for the new hires when they started.”

Where to be a CPA in Chicago

Centro LLC
Microsoft Corp.
Tasty Catering Inc.
NetApp Inc.
McTigue Financial Group
Robert W. Baird & Co.
Assurance Agency Ltd.
Skender Construction Co.
Chubb Corp.
Plante Moran PLLC
Digitas
Deloitte LLP
Optimus
BDO USA LLP
Transwestern
SWC Technology Partners
FactSet Research Systems Inc.
Coyote Logistics LLC
Grand Thornton LLP
Rightpoint Consulting LLC

City Profile: Chicago Spotlight

Considering making the Windy City your home base? You're not alone. Each year, thousands of young professionals brave the cold and live in (and love) Chicago. This city of neighborhoods is culturally diverse and while the cold could make you bitter, the brief yet gorgeous summers will melt away all your winter blues. With a somewhat exorbitant cost of living, this city is best for those who fancy themselves long-term apartment dwellers. Oh, and don't bring your car. The traffic will test your sanity and the parking tickets will drain your bank account. But fear not, public transportation in Chi-town is primo.

When Mark Wolfgram, CPA, moved to Chicago from Wisconsin, he figured it was such a big city that he would never see anyone he knew. He was pleasantly surprised how accountants in Chicago are such a tight-knit community. “I’m constantly seeing people I’ve worked with or contacts that I have made in my time here,” he says. “That’s really a comfort for those thinking about making a move to a place like Chicago.”

Here are a few more reasonable reasons to make Oprah your neighbor.

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StartHereGoPlaces.com
There is no “I” in “TEAM.” Together. Everyone. Achieves. More. Two heads are better than one. You’ve heard all the cliché rallies for teamwork, but still, sometimes the thought of working as part of a team can make you cringe. Relying on other people to pull their weight, managing personality conflicts, coordinating schedules, finding a way to make sure you shine. It’s enough to make you want to outlaw group projects altogether. But that’s not the real world.

Danica Olson, accounting director for the NBA team the Milwaukee Bucks, knows how important teamwork is. She says that everyone needs teamwork. Even if it’s not as obvious as it is on the basketball court. Danica, a former gymnast, cites the 2012 Olympic games as a great example of teamwork. Individual performance was only part of what helped them bring home the gold. They also had to train together and then cheer each other on even while competing against each other, listen to their coaches amongst the roar of the crowds and be flexible without losing focus.

Danica tells us that even in her accounting career now, teamwork is important. And even though she’s not on the court with the players, she is definitely part of a team. Her entire accounting department consists of three people who all work very closely together to make sure things add up—especially those players’ salaries! “Good communication is important to get all the bills paid,” she explains. Outside of her immediate team, Danica also works with a lot of different departments and even works closely with the players’ trainers since she also handles workers’ comp paperwork. How does she do it? Well, teamwork, of course. “The more you can be accommodating and work with other people, the more successful you’ll be,” Danica advises.

Still doubt that teamwork can work? Think about all the lessons sports teams teach us about how to get ahead—personally and professionally:

**HOW TO PLAY NICE**

Even if you have some kind of personal drama with another teammate, learn to cooperate. You have to be willing to put differences aside for the greater good of the team. Imagine if your favorite team was playing in the Super Bowl and the quarterback and the tight end refused to cooperate with each other? They would totally blow the play for everyone, and the other team
would be dancing in the end zone. In your career, you will also need to be able set aside your personal feelings towards teammates to work more effectively as a team.

**COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

Say you’re a freshman in college and you’re making your parents proud by spending tons of hours in the library. That’s great, but you still need to get out a little. Tell them you need to work on your social skills. So you join the crew team. For anyone who’s ever played sports, the importance of communication on a team can’t be understated. Let’s take crew for example. When you’re out there row, row, rowing that boat, you will quickly realize how important communication is. You all have to work together, and if the lead oarsman gives unclear directions, everybody just ends up going around in circles. Communication skills like listening, following directions and speaking clearly will definitely serve you well in accounting, especially if you’re leading a project.

**CONFIDENCE COUNTS**

Being part of a sports team can really go to your head—in a good way. Even if you aren’t the star, it never hurts to hear people cheering for you. Research has even shown that teenage girls who participate in sports are more likely to have a positive self-image than those who do not play sports. There’s no doubt that you will be a more effective accountant if you are confident. Projecting a sense of authority will help your colleagues and your clients trust your recommendations.

**EITHER YOU’RE PART OF THE PROBLEM OR PART OF THE SOLUTION**

Throughout your life, you’ll have to keep your eye on the ball. Especially in sports. If you’re playing baseball and you’re not looking at the pitcher when he throws you the ball or staring off into space when you should be running bases, your teammates will hold you accountable. They will expect you to accept responsibility for what went wrong instead of blaming it on a teammate or finding another excuse. Conversely, if you hustled when you were supposed to and you win big, your teammates will be carrying you around the field on their shoulders. Accounting is all about accountability, so do your part.

**IT’S GOOD TO BE AN MVP**

The Chicago Bulls were a great team. But Michael Jordan was clearly the star. Whether it’s a class project or a major work presentation, there is always someone who goes above and beyond to lift up the entire team. And guess what? If you’re that guy or gal, you’ll be invited to every meeting and accounting firms will be fighting to get you on their side.

**YOU WIN SOME. YOU LOSE SOME**

A little dose of humility will actually serve you well. Despite your team’s greatest efforts, sometimes you won’t meet your goal. It happens. At tournament time, the pressure is really on. It may seem like the whole world is watching and even if your team comes in 2nd place you have to hold your head up and move on. When the pressure is on you in your career, remember to do your best and you’ll have nothing to worry about.

Danica Olson is the accounting director for the Milwaukee Bucks. She earned her accounting degree from Marquette University and if she weren’t working as a team player for the Bucks, she says she would be teaching accounting.

*Photo Credit: John Nienhuis*
When most people hear the word “forensic,” they think of CSI. But no, forensic accountant Marc Filer doesn’t deal with dead people.

So what does a forensic accountant do? Usually they work on cases that involve bankruptcy, computer forensic analysis, valuation, fraud prevention and detection, economic damages, compliance and investigations.

Though not all forensic accountants have to travel, Marc has traveled to over 30 countries for work in the past five years!

So, where’s he been? What’s he seen? Take a look:

Marc Filer

# of passport stamps = Way too many to count!

Passports x 2
» Marc had to get a second passport to obtain a visa while traveling internationally for work. He says, “It felt really cool to have two passports...I felt like a spy or secret agent — except I’m an accountant.”

#1 rule for business travel: Be comfortable.

Biggest misconception people have about business travel: It’s all work and no fun.
Marc’s top 3 pros of business travel:
1. Expanding your horizons on how business is conducted in other countries
2. Seeing some of the most amazing sights in the world
3. Always having something to talk about at a party

And the top 3 cons:
1. Jetlag
2. Not knowing the language. Just learn a few key phrases and you’ll be fine.
3. Coming back from a trip and having to do piles of laundry

Most memorable trip: A 4-week trip to Germany, Japan, Italy and India.

Stuff Marc has checked off his bucket list:
• Walked the ruins in Pompeii
• Hiked Mount Vesuvius
• Had a drink in Gangnam District of South Korea! That’s Gangnam style!
• Ran around Lake Como in Switzerland
• Had dinner overlooking Shanghai
• Walked through Red Square in Moscow

So, where to next? A long-term project in Bora-Bora would be ideal, but Marc says, “I love the experience of traveling to new cities or countries, so just having this amazing opportunity to travel and experience the world works with me.”

Marc Filer is a forensic accountant for Price-waterhouseCoopers and lives in Washington, DC. He earned his BBA in business from Ohio University and is currently attending Georgetown University for an Executive MBA. He is a CPA and has also pursued and obtained his Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, and also the Accredited in Business Valuation (ABV) and Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF) from the AICPA.
Q&A With an ETSY Accounting Guru
How does an accountant by trade get sucked into the creative, crafty world of Etsy.com? We asked CPA Jason Malinak. He answered.

Jason Malinak
He calls himself a “creative accountant.”

What made you want to go into accounting?
It was the most challenging program in the business school that provided me the most options of where to work. Accountants are not limited by the industry they work in and that opens many doors of opportunities.

What exactly IS a “creative accountant”?
I had been playing music in bands and didn’t fit the typical “accounting stereotype,” so I was called a “creative accountant.” Then I started helping Etsy sellers (a very creative bunch of people) and the title fit even better. Accounting really is a field where you can think outside of the box and use your creative side to communicate effectively, innovate, and look for improvements.

What tips do you give Etsy shop owners that all entrepreneurs should know?
Perform bookkeeping from the start of your business. File taxes and don’t fall behind. Make sure you are not losing money when you price your products. Make a business plan. Don’t spend too much at the beginning—learn the basics first and try to make a small profit before growing your business. All Etsy sellers need a firm business foundation. My site, Etsy-preneurship.com, is a place to start. It has lots of videos and downloads to help anyone get started.

If you weren’t an accountant, what job would you be doing right now?
Geologist.

What do you wish you had known about accounting before you got into it?
Don’t worry about memorizing the tax code ... it’s written down for a reason!

What were you doing before Etsy?
I’ve worked as an international accountant, general ledger accounting manager, and treasury professional at a publicly traded company and a non-profit.

Do shop owners need their own accountant or can they manage it all on their own?
I believe with the right knowledge, most Etsy sellers could handle their own accounting but many prefer to hire an accountant to do it on their behalf.

What made you start working with Etsy?
My wife started selling baby-related sewing products on Etsy in 2007. I started helping her with the bookkeeping, taxes and legal side of her business. Then, I had my aha moment—if my wife needed help with these topics, other Etsy sellers did, too. My Etsy shop, JJMFinance, was born and I’ve been helping Etsy sellers with their businesses since.

Outside of your Etsy business, what other accounting activities or associations are you involved with?
I am a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and CTP (Certified Treasury Professional). I am an AFP (Association for Financial Professionals) member and attend local accounting and treasury related events. I currently oversee the treasury function at Compassion International, a Christian child advocacy non-profit.

What advice would you give aspiring accountants about this field?
Study hard and be passionate about what you do. Most likely, you are passionate about a hobby, a political cause, a social issue, a business. Pair that with your passion for accounting and you can change the world. The world doesn’t need another bean counter. It needs passionate accountants.

What do you wish you had known about accounting before you got into it?
Don’t worry about memorizing the tax code ... it’s written down for a reason!

Jason Malinak
He calls himself a “creative accountant.”

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Jason earned his Master of Accountancy from Baylor University. You can learn more about him and take advantage of his Etsy.com accounting tools at Etsy-preneurship.com.
WANT TO BOOST YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS?

We’ll make you look good.

It’s quick, it’s free and it’ll make you look even better on your college applications. Join the AICPA as a Student Affiliate Member and you’ll get career advice, access to professional resources and tons of other perks. And did we mention it’s free?

Register at StartHereGoPlaces.com/StudentMember