

Fall 2023

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Introducing Albertans to the CPA Profession

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**BONUS
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GUIDE**

the **CRASH** COURSE ISSUE

PROFESSIONALS EXPLAIN
SOME OF **THE BASICS** OF **BEING A CPA**
AND JOINING THE BUSINESS WORLD

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TOGETHER

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 **BONUS: Flip whole magazine over for Welcome to the world of recruitment**



capitalize

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Capitalize is a semi-annual magazine that introduces students and others to the accounting profession in Alberta. Published by CPA Alberta, the magazine is distributed to more than 4,500 readers, including university, college, and high school students, as well as career counsellors and other student-oriented service providers.

Visit capitalize.cpaalberta.ca for even more *Capitalize*!

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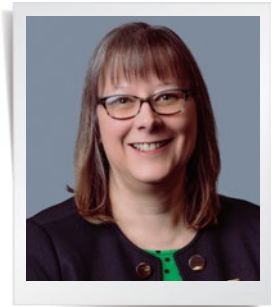
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Message from Rachel Miller, CEO, CPA Alberta

Dear Alberta students:

Welcome back to another school year! Whether you're just beginning post-secondary or this is your last fall term for the foreseeable future (never say never!), I hope this Fall 2023 issue of *Capitalize* can help you on your Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) journey.

As this issue is a crash course on the basics of becoming a CPA, let me tell you about my own journey into the profession. I earned my designation in 1999 and worked in a large public accounting firm in central Canada before coming to Alberta. Along with many other Alberta CPAs and staff at CPA Alberta, I helped lead the evolution of the profession from three designations (CA, CMA, CGA) to one designation (CPA) in 2015. Now, as you might have guessed from the title of this page, I am the CEO of CPA Alberta.

One of my greatest honours as CEO is welcoming new CPAs into the profession every year.

If you'd like to be one of those new CPAs in the near future—and I hope you do!—it's important to remember that fall is also an exhilarating time for recruitment and the beginning of the recruitment season.

Did you know there is a season for networking and finding a co-op or a job to help fulfill practical experience requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program? Flip this whole magazine over for *Welcome to the world of recruitment*, a recruitment season breakdown that will help guide you from your first year of post-secondary to your last and beyond.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Capitalize*, and I and CPA Alberta look forward to supporting your student experience and CPA journey.

Rachel Miller FCPA, FCA
CEO, CPA Alberta

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CPA Alberta and *Capitalize* acknowledge the land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land, and their histories and culture influence our community to this day.

Spanning generations, acknowledgment of the land is a traditional custom of Indigenous peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation and building respectful relationships, we recognize our offices are situated on the following traditional territories:

Amiskwaciwâskahikan, or Edmonton, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux people.

Moh'kins'tis, or Calgary, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 7 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Stoney Nakoda First Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), Tsuut'ina, Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation Region 3.

We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. CPA Alberta is committed to building a profession where Indigenous peoples and their voices and experiences are heard, valued, respected, and celebrated.



EVENTS CALENDAR

CPA Alberta events



Meet Your Employer

Meet Your Employer is a career fair-style event to connect prospective CPAs with their future employer! CPA Alberta holds this event annually in the fall, bringing together thousands of students and key employer partners in Alberta. Learn more at cpaalberta.ca/MeetYourEmployer.



Calgary

Friday, September 15

Calgary Telus Convention Centre
Macleod Hall
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Edmonton

Tuesday, September 19

Edmonton Convention Centre
Hall C
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Lethbridge

Thursday, September 21

University of Lethbridge
Markin Hall Atrium
3 p.m. – 6 p.m.



The PRO Dinner

The PRO Dinner connects future CPAs with current CPAs from a variety of industries who work in different roles. This is an opportunity to connect, enjoy a delicious dinner, and learn from the pros.

Tuesday, November 7

The Westin Edmonton
5 p.m.



Campus events

CPA Alberta partners with student clubs at post-secondary institutions across Alberta to sponsor events throughout the year and also appears at various career fairs and open houses.

**Learn more about these events
and many, many more at
capitalize.cpaalberta.ca/events**

**It Starts
Here.**

MNP

MNPcareers.ca

MEET YOUR 2023/24 CAMPUS AMBASSADORS

The 2023/24 Campus Ambassador team is here to assist you on the path towards the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation. The following ambassadors will be the primary point of contact for students to get information about important events and activities, as well as answers to their questions about the CPA Professional Education Program and the CPA designation.

Rylan Nivon Concordia University

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I am looking forward to attending the great events CPA Alberta hosts and meeting new people with similar interests.



How do you think technology will impact the future of accounting?

I believe technology will have a positive impact on accounting. As technology improves, accountants will have to adapt their practices to take advantage of the advancements. The accountants that are best able to harness the new technology will have the advantage of providing better, more accurate insights.

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

I am an animal lover, so my dream business would be one that helps connect wannabe pet owners with rescued animals that need a home.

Emily Fung University of Alberta

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I am looking forward to engaging with my peers and spreading awareness about the benefits of pursuing a CPA designation. I'm excited to organize events that will provide valuable insight into the world of accounting and foster a sense of camaraderie among students who are interested in this field.

How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

Given the rise of automation, data analytics, and AI, I anticipate accountants will need to become more versatile, taking on roles as strategic advisors and decision makers. Continuous learning and adaptability will be key to thriving in this changing environment.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I absolutely adore collecting cute notepads and tissues for on the go! I find that those are the two things in my bag I have to bring everywhere. They give me so much joy to use on the daily.



Josh Kayne University of Alberta

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

The flexibility of accounting drew me to the career. There are a lot of possibilities that can be pursued with a career in accounting.

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

It is a lot more focused on people and working with clients than people expect.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I have been a certified scuba diver since I was 14 years old!

Chevy Halvorson MacEwan University

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

Becoming the CPA Campus Ambassador provides me with an excellent opportunity to network with current CPAs while also providing information and guidance to those who wish to learn more about the CPA program.

How do you think technology will impact the future of accounting?

I think technology will be used to complement current accounting practices. I can see how access to data and metrics would be more accessible with better technology; however, technology could never replace an accountant's analytical skills and knowledge.

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

I would like to create and merchandise my own line of healthy soda and candy. I would then like to bring back drive-in theatres across Alberta and use my merchandise to stock the concession and drink stations.

Evan Eng MacEwan University

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

Promoting the networking events! I like meeting new people, and I had a lot of fun at last year's Network-Wing Wednesday. It's a great way to practice my soft skills and build my professional reputation.

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

Although stereotypes portray accountants as dull and socially awkward people who focus on numbers, in reality many of them have excellent interpersonal skills and are quite outgoing. They also often need to apply creative problem-solving skills and have a strong understanding of overall businesses.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I'm open to trying anything once, even if it's out of my comfort zone.

Jingyuan Zhang • NAIT

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

Accounting is a flexible career choice. People will have a variety of roles to choose from in accounting. Also, I like balancing and dealing with figures.

How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

Advancements in technologies have led to big changes to the skills required by accounting professionals. It is important for accountants to develop skills in digital technologies including data analytics, automation, and coding which can help them work more effectively.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I like planting vegetables in my free time, especially snow peas. ▸





Brooklyn Truong
Mount Royal University

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I was interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador with the hope that I can bring CPA Alberta closer to accounting students at MRU.

How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

I think the accounting profession will face significant changes in the next 10 years, due to the implementation of data analytics, AI, and blockchain.

What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?

Any song from Imagine Dragons

Jacqueline Rodriguez
SAIT

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

I wanted to pursue financial services, but I thought that lacked diversity in the applicability after graduating. Accounting can be used in various fields and companies, which is why I decided to take this route. My goal with my accounting degree is to help immigrants do their taxes. As an immigrant to this country, I understand the struggle families can go through and I know tax is an area I can help with.



How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

I think like most things, it will automate and auto populate. There will be an impact of artificial intelligence on simple tasks, but the human element of problem solving and human interactions will still be there. I think accounting will move further into storytelling and being able to communicate the information to others in a captivating way.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I have been to 35 countries across North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. My goal is more than 60 countries and all seven continents.



Rica Clark • SAIT

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

As a driven and dedicated accounting student, what I look forward to most is inspiring and supporting my fellow students. My goal is to help them understand the different paths they can take to obtain the CPA designation and help them make informed decisions. I hope to empower my peers with valuable insights, resources, and mentorship.

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

That there is more to accounting than just being good at math.

What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?

“Uptown Funk” by Bruno Mars

Faraz Zarghami-Jam
University of Calgary

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I wanted to establish meaningful connections with both accounting and non-accounting students at the University of Calgary—helping showcase the numerous benefits of the CPA designation while actively breaking down the misconception that accounting is a monotonous and uninspiring field.



How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

I think there will be a greater emphasis on communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills. Additionally, we may see a whole new sector emerge with the introduction of blockchain and cryptocurrency.

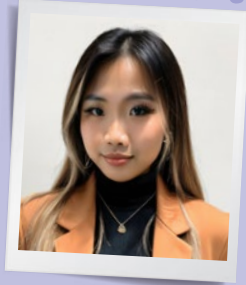
What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?

“My Way” by Frank Sinatra

Vivian Mai
University of Lethbridge,
Calgary Campus

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I'm most excited about connecting with other ambitious individuals who share a common interest in accounting. Connecting and collaborating with like-minded students and professionals will foster a strong network and promote growth both personally and professionally.



What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

Accounting is a language of business. It extends far beyond just number crunching. It plays a pivotal role in communicating and shaping the financial success of organizations, driving innovation, and creating a sustainable future.

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

A social enterprise promoting financial literacy among underprivileged communities. I believe empowering individuals with financial knowledge can have a transformative impact on their lives and lead to greater economic equality.

Resheila Padilla
University of Lethbridge,
Calgary Campus

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

I aspired to be a doctor. I did not get any spot for STEM in senior high, and accounting was the second-favoured program after medicine. I never thought I'd be interested in accounting until one day when I was excited to go to class because I'd be attending accounting classes all day and during breaks, I'd plan out firms I would apply to for internships and where I would study for my CPA designation. One day, I realized I wanted the three letters after my name and to work in the accounting field.



What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

I wish people realized it was more than just numbers and a calculator. Accounting taught me one of the most important lessons in life: Never assume unless otherwise stated. Accounting requires a lot of understanding and analyzing; it is about connecting with clients and understanding what the numbers mean in their business, what should be added or withdrawn, and what needs to be done to help the business succeed.

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

I have always wanted to own both a café and a clothing store. I love coffee and fashion. I used to sew clothes back home and had a little thrift business named Just Flaunt it.

Toluwalase Awoderu
University of Lethbridge,
Lethbridge Campus

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I would take any opportunity to develop leadership qualities and to build meaningful relationships in my life. I enjoy learning and serving people around me, and this position helps me fulfill all of that and more.



What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

I wish people knew that there is more to accounting than just the numbers. There is a whole theory behind it!

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

It would be a non-conventional educational service for children ages three to 12 that supports their all-around foundational development. It will be a household name for many generations to come. 🌱

SOFT HUMAN VS. TECHNICAL

What are human skills and why should we care?

BY KIMBERLEY DART

For 10 years, I worked in the staffing industry. The majority of my placements were accounting-related, everything from accounts payable and receivable clerks to corporate controllers. I met with hundreds, if not thousands, of hiring managers across all industries to learn more about the skills and traits needed to fit their role and organization. The one constant that stood out was they always listed what were then known as “soft skills” (now known as human skills) as their top priority. Surprisingly, technical skills were an afterthought.

Human skills include communication, problem solving, leadership, professionalism, interpersonal skills, lifelong learning, innovation, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Whether or not some of these come naturally to you, the good news is, like any type of skill, they can be developed over time.

Developing your human skills happens in many ways: purposeful learning, mentorship, and most importantly, self-reflection. Ask your peers and leaders for feedback on the skills you should be developing. Seek books, podcasts, courses, and volunteer opportunities, and be purposeful about immersing yourself in these spaces. Say yes to opportunities that will stretch your abilities; trying new things may help you to uncover new skills. Surround yourself with others who embody the skills you want to hone and do as they do.

Why are human skills important? While many things can be automated, one thing that cannot be is the human touch. Imagine you had an ultrasound (or other type of medical imaging), and behind the scenes, your scans were read by artificial intelligence (AI), which was then able to diagnose you. Would you rather get those results via email or in person from your medical professional? A computer may be better at diagnosing, but it cannot show empathy.

ALGORITHMS CANNOT REPLACE THE NEED FOR CERTAIN SKILLS, SUCH AS PROBLEM SOLVING, ADAPTABILITY, COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, AND TEAMWORK.





KIMBERLEY DART completed her BA at the University of Saskatchewan then packed up, moved west, and never looked back! Since moving to Calgary, she has built her career with roles in staffing and recruitment, career development, leadership, and workforce strategy. She completed her M.Ed at the University of Calgary in 2020.

Thanks to advancing technology, the nature of work is changing. More actions are being automated, some jobs are being made redundant, and new jobs are emerging. Computers and algorithms cannot replace the need for certain skills, such as problem solving, adaptability, communication, relationship building, and teamwork. The use of AI could even place a greater importance on innovation, creativity, and leadership. We will see a shift in job postings in the next two years to list more human skills and fewer technical skills.

What's next? First, can we all agree to never use the term "soft skills" again? After that, take stock of your human skills: ask yourself, your mentor, your partner, and your colleagues which skills you excel at and which need a bit of work. Thirdly, make a promise to yourself to continuously develop your human skills. Be purposeful, and be committed. 🧠



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Thank you to our models for this article: Jay Park and Emily Parker, future CPAs



the CRASH COURSE issue

?!

PROFESSIONALS EXPLAIN SOME OF **THE BASICS** OF **BEING A CPA** AND JOINING THE BUSINESS WORLD



Source: "CPA Alberta Five-year Labour Market Study"

Did you know that there is a demand for approximately 1,000 new Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) in Alberta each year? A need to replace retired CPAs, projected population and economic growth, existing unmet demand, and other environmental factors mean the job opportunities for CPAs are only going to continue to grow.

If you're intrigued by this prospect and the CPA designation, look no further than this handy guide! We asked Alberta CPAs and other business professionals to help demystify the designation and the business world.

Read on for quick primers on the various accounting specialities, how to find the right employer for you, the ins and outs of total compensation, tips for avoiding burnout, business writing advice, and more. ▸

CPA 104: INTRODUCTION TO ACCOUNTING SPECIALTIES

Many prospective students will ask, “Why should I become a professional accountant?” My answer always starts with a discussion of the flexibility and versatility provided by a career in accounting. A professional accounting education provides one of the most diverse and adaptable pathways for an individual, and it will allow you to explore many different areas of interest and find a rewarding role that is right for you.



By Glenn Arnold CPA, CA
Accounting Chair,
JR Shaw School of Business, NAIT



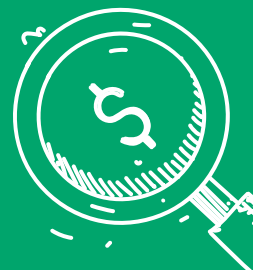
WHAT IS AN ACCOUNTANT?

An accountant is an analyzer and a communicator. Accountants use their analytical skills to solve business problems and communicate results. Communication is essential as business decisions require an input of clear, relevant, and understandable information.

WHAT TYPES OF ROLES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ACCOUNTANTS?


Accountants possess a broad range of skills that are transferable to many different types of occupations. The types of roles accountants can fulfill include:

- Assurance and audit
- Corporate finance
- Financial reporting
- Managerial accounting
- Entrepreneurship
- Forensic accounting
- Corporate treasury
- Internal audit
- Risk management
- Taxation
- Accounting information systems
- Fiduciary (trust) accounting
- Government accounting
- Not-for-profit accounting
- Performance measurement
- Sustainability reporting
- Business valuation
- Education




WHERE DO ACCOUNTANTS WORK?

Everywhere! Any organization—whether it is profit-oriented, not-for-profit, or government—needs information to make decisions. Accountants are part of the team that provides this information, and they play a key role in the decision-making process. Accountants hold a highly transferable skill set that allows them to work in any type of organization anywhere in the world.




Accountants hold a highly transferable skill set that allows them to work in any type of organization anywhere in the world.

HOW CAN I DECIDE WHAT PATH IS RIGHT FOR ME?




There is no need to choose a focus area immediately. The journey to becoming a CPA starts with an undergraduate degree from an approved post-secondary institution (PSI). If you earn a business degree with an accounting emphasis, you will have the foundational knowledge upon which a specialized career can be built. The required work experience component will expose you to many different aspects of the professional accountant's role. Curiosity and an open mind will allow you to explore multiple pathways to find the one that is right for you.



Some students will have a clear idea of their intended path early in their journey, while others may require several years of work experience to discover their calling. The portability of the CPA designation allows you to change your focus throughout your career. Some of the most rewarding career experiences can start with the question "Why don't I try *that*?"

The CPA designation will give you the confidence and skills to make that decision.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?



Reach out to a PSI to explore the program that is suitable for you. CPA Alberta provides a **Transfer Credit Guide** that identifies the options available in Alberta. The journey to a successful career begins with a commitment to learn and grow, and CPA Alberta's PSI partners are the perfect places to start that journey. ▸



CPA 117: HOW TO SCREEN AN EMPLOYER FOR FIT

Employees often wonder how they can screen an employer before applying for a role. As a Career Advisor, one of my goals is to help avoid “buyer’s remorse.” You want to do everything you can to ensure a role is going to be a good, long-term fit, but how do you do that?



By Javier Vinsome
Career Advisor, CPA Alberta

DO THE RESEARCH

One of the first things you can do is look at what the current hiring situation of an organization is. Have they recently undergone a merger or significant change impacting headcount? Have they downsized staff recently? Do a lot of people appear to be leaving the organization? These may be red flags.

Then look at independent review sites, such as Glassdoor, Indeed, and Google Reviews, to get a feel for what staff have to say about the employer. Take some of these reviews with a grain of salt—no employer has no negative reviews—and look at the reviews as a whole. Are they trending higher or lower than average? Are you seeing repeated concerning phrases—such as “poor management,” “overworked staff,” “long hours,” and “no advancement opportunities”—or complaints about compensation? Those may be significant red flags to consider.

CONSIDER YOUR WANTS AND NEEDS

This starts with a personal inventory of your likes and dislikes and what type of work environment is good for you. As we know, not all employers are the same. Have you done a personal assessment of what you like and don’t like about work, management styles, and organizations?

This can help you really begin to understand if you will sink or thrive in certain work environments. For example, some love government roles, others may find it stifling to their creativity, and that’s OK and good to know so you can find the right fit.



* If you felt the interviewer was being disingenuous or not forthcoming in their responses, there's probably something they're not telling you. *

LEVERAGE THE INTERVIEW

The interview will be your main opportunity to screen for fit as well as red flags!

So what should you ask?

Screening questions you could ask in an interview

Why did the last person leave this role?

Allows you to gauge their honesty.

What are the most difficult challenges you face at work?

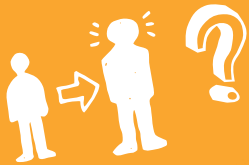
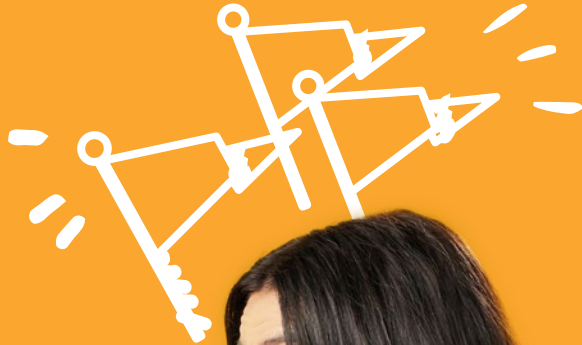
Allows you to gain insight into if the interviewer acknowledges there are issues or difficulties to overcome and what steps they're taking to correct that.

What is your management style?

Shows how the manager perceives themselves and what it might be like to report to them.

Can you walk me through a typical work day in this role?

Shows if they know the role and deliverables.



TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Usually your first reaction to an organization is correct.

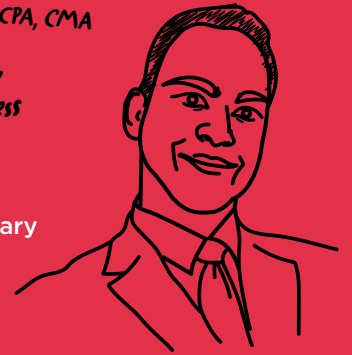
If you felt the interviewer was being disingenuous or not forthcoming in their responses, there's probably something they're not telling you. Screening is about relationships, and if you feel this person is not trustworthy from the start, are they a manager or organization you'd like to work for?

Conversely, if you felt the interviewer was friendly and honest and answered your questions satisfactorily with good examples, then you are probably seeing a true picture of that workplace.

As a final step, conduct a debrief of your interview and write down what you liked, what you didn't like, and any potential red flags. ▸

CPA 130: TOTAL REWARDS FOR BEGINNERS

By Leonard D'Silva MBA, CPA, CMA
Accounting Faculty,
SAIT School of Business



Imagine this: you are a recent graduate, and your hard work has paid off by receiving two job offers. The first offer has a \$5,000 higher annual salary than the second offer. Should the second job offer even be considered?

When starting your career, it may be tempting to select the organization with the highest salary. This decision seems logical because it would allow you to earn thousands more over the course of your career. That notion, however, is based on the idea of remaining at the same job level within your career instead of progressing to more senior and higher-compensated positions. This predicament is where evaluating total compensation is important.

WHAT IS TOTAL COMPENSATION?

Total compensation includes all the monetary benefits a person receives in relation to their role with the organization. Salary is only one component of total compensation, and others may include bonuses, health and wellness benefits, paid time off (vacation days, sick days, etc.), company-matched retirement plans, company vehicles allowed for personal use, company cell phones allowed for personal use, and education assistance programs, such as paying for a CPA designation.

Another important item to consider in total compensation is hourly rate. A \$60,000 role working 2,400 hours in a year earns \$25 per hour, whereas a \$52,000 role working a standard 2,080 hours also earns \$25 per hour yet works significantly less. Hourly rate is important in determining if you are truly being compensated fairly for your time.





WHAT IS THE VALUE OF BENEFITS OUTSIDE OF A SALARY?

All non-salary benefits should aid you in performing your best in your role both short and long term. Bonuses, for example, should incentivize you to reach your goals and reward you for doing so. Wellness benefits should help you take care of your physical and mental health, increasing your productivity and reducing your absenteeism. Always ask your employer or potential employer for clarification if you do not understand the value of a benefit!



WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT LOOK FOR?

Look at total rewards, which are the non-monetary benefits in addition to total compensation, which encompasses only monetary benefits. Non-monetary benefits can include formal mentoring, training programs, exposure to new projects, corporate culture, organizational reputation, and flexible working arrangements. I'd argue non-monetary benefits are equally as, if not more, important when a person is starting their career due to the potential for higher compensation in the long term. This statement especially holds true for those looking to advance to higher positions later in their career.

Students should seek roles that will provide them the experiences and opportunities needed to advance in their career. For example, a person starting their career articling in a large firm may be exposed to a single industry and size of client, which they might prefer. Someone starting in a small- or medium-sized firm, however, would likely be exposed to multiple industries and client sizes. Before accepting any role, ask yourself, "How does this role fit into my long-term career aspirations?" ▸



CPA 242: AVOIDING BURNOUT



By Angela Bierman CPA, CA
Director, Operations,
ESG Global Advisors Inc.

Tax season deadlines? I thrived in the collaborative energy and repetitive tasks. **Mediation?** I would rather eat grass.

Long hours don't always lead to burnout, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to self-care. Take me, for example.

Reasons I thought people burned out:

- Too much work;
- Unreasonable deadlines;
- Never taking a day off; and
- Bosses who yelled.



Reasons I burned out:

- I hid my authentic self at work, especially my emotions;
- I felt alone and isolated as the only CPA in industry roles;
- My personal values were in conflict with the company's; and
- I didn't actually rest or relax on my days off.

Burnout is complex, and it's different for everyone. Luckily, there are some ways you can avoid it, and as someone who has experienced burnout more than once, here are my tips.



6 CAUSES OF BURNOUT

Did you know there is more than one?

1. Workload
2. Perceived lack of control
3. Reward
4. Community
5. Fairness
6. Values mismatch

Source: "Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout" by Michael Leiter and Christina Maslach

Reflecting on what filled you up and what drained you on a daily or weekly basis dramatically improves your self-awareness and helps you make minor course corrections earlier if you find yourself on the path to burnout.

Exploring your personal values helps you articulate what's important and guides career decisions. Check out James Clear's list (jamesclear.com/core-values) and see what resonates!

Setting boundaries is something I still struggle with sometimes, but it's so important. There are bosses who will take everything you have to give, so you need to advocate for yourself. (Check out *The Book of Boundaries* by Melissa Urban—it even has sample scripts!)

Developing and maintaining your network helps you feel supported by your community. It's so powerful to realize you're not alone.

Finding your balance is key to sustainability. If you decide to push yourself for a deadline, a project, or a job, make sure it has a meaningful reward (like propelling your career forward). Figure out how long you can push yourself, and proactively rest before you break.

Being kind to yourself if you do find yourself burned out is integral to getting better. A large portion of us will experience it at some point in our careers, and beating yourself up will only prolong your suffering. Even if you were "doing everything right," it can still sneak up on you, and that's ok.

Connect with a mental health professional to figure out the kind of support you need. Your employer may offer an Employee Assistance Program that can help get you started, your school may have support on campus, or you can check out your **local resources**. ▾



7 TYPES OF REST

Rest is about more than just sleep.

1. Physical
2. Mental
3. Sensory
4. Creative
5. Emotional
6. Social
7. Spiritual

Source: "The 7 types of rest that every person needs" by Sandra Dalton-Smith

CPA 310: A BUSINESS WRITING PRIMER

Communication in the workplace is crucial, and effective business writing is one integral key to successful communication. But it can also be intimidating to shift from academic writing to writing in the workplace.

One easy place to start is with the three Cs: clear, concise, consistent.



By Sarah Maludzinski
Communications Officer,
CPA Alberta

CLEAR

Get to the heart of your idea—quickly. Avoid too much preamble, especially if it's not directly related to the main message; you can fill in more information later if it's necessary, but your audience needs to know what they need to know from the beginning.

Speaking of your audience, spend some time thinking about who you are writing for. What do they already know and where do you need to fill in the gaps? Avoid using too much jargon if your audience won't be familiar with it; on the other hand, don't over-explain concepts if your audience is already in the know.



★ *business*
Utilizing superior writing skills
effective is an integral, indispensable,
and critical component of the CPA skillset
skill for S.



CONCISE

Say the most with the least to avoid being bogged down in unnecessary details. Be stingy with your words, keep your sentences short and simple, and focus on your main message. Inexperienced writers often think using more, longer, or overly elaborate words will make them look smarter or more formal, but it usually just bloats your writing and desaturates its real meaning.



PSST!

Purple prose, a fun and colourful term that goes all the way back to 19BCE, is this but in literature.

A few simple ways to be more concise

Default to simpler words or phrases when possible. Examples:

- **Use** instead of **utilize**;
- **To** instead of **in order to**; and
- **Quickly** instead of **in a timely manner**.

Remove filler words and phrases. Examples: **that, really, and all things considered.**

Use formatting to your advantage. Examples:

- Bullet points to break ideas down into easy-to-digest words, phrases, or sentences;
- Headings to help orient the reader; and
- Bolding to highlight vital information, such as deadlines.

CONSISTENT

Consistency can be tricky when it comes to writing, and it can mean a number of things. Two are: communicate often and, more technically, be consistent in how you write.

To communicate often doesn't necessarily mean to communicate as much as possible. It means to communicate when necessary, or ideally, just before it's necessary. Plan your communications from the beginning. Answer questions before you get them. Follow up when things change or when something needs to be reiterated.

To be consistent in how you write means to have a consistent style. When there is more than one option for how you spell, punctuate, or format something, pick one and stick to it. This might mean choosing a style that is consistent across your organization (i.e., house style), follows a particular style guide you like (e.g., Canadian Press), or is just what you prefer.

Some examples of varying style include:

- How dates are written (e.g., July 10 vs. July 10th);
- How times are written (e.g., 9am vs. 9 A.M.); and
- How lists are punctuated.

Picking a style for these never-ending quandaries not only makes things easier on yourself the next time you're faced with a style dilemma, but it also makes your writing look more polished and professional. **C**

A BUSINESS ACRONYM BREAKDOWN

All organizations have their own acronyms, but here are some common ones you'll find in most!

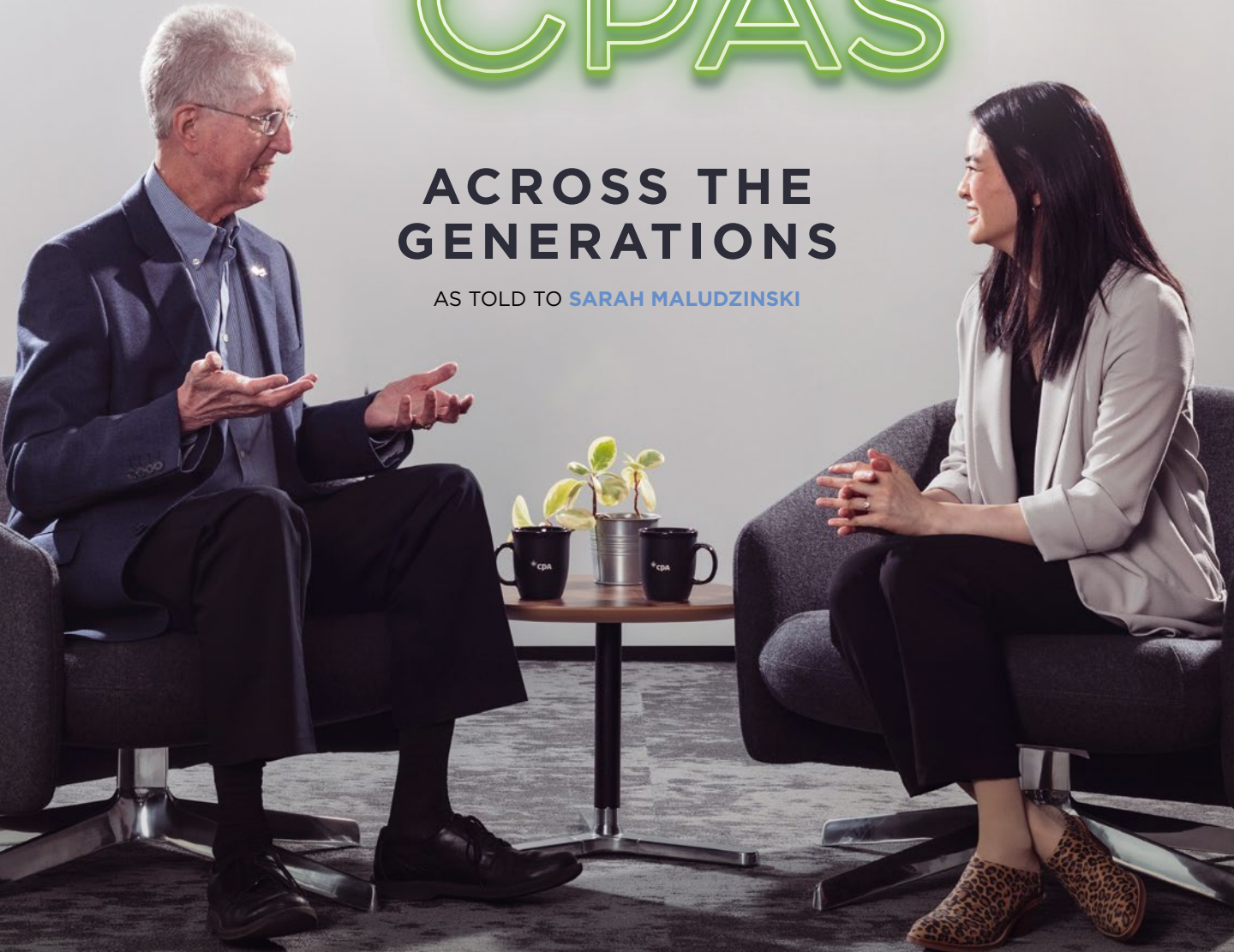
ACCT	ACCOUNT	CPA	CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT	PTO	PAID TIME OFF
AP	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	CTA	CALL TO ACTION	R&D	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
AR	ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	EOD	END OF DAY	ROI	RETURN ON INVESTMENT
B2B	BUSINESS TO BUSINESS	ESG	ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE	SME	SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT
B2C	BUSINESS TO CONSUMER	KPI	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SMB	SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES
CSR	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	OOO	OUT OF OFFICE	YTD	YEAR TO DATE

capitalize PRESENTS

CPAs on CPAs

ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

AS TOLD TO SARAH MALUDZINSKI



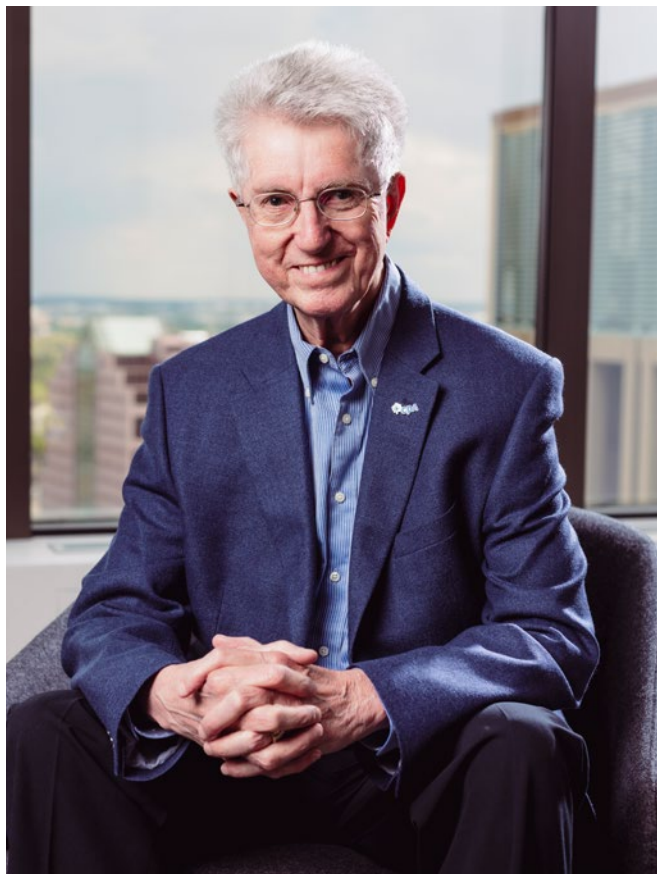
LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY

NATALIE PON CPA, STILL EARLY IN HER CAREER, AND **CALVIN KLONTZ** CPA, CGA, SELF-PROCLAIMED AS SEMI-RETIRED, INTERVIEW EACH OTHER ON HOW THE PROFESSION HAS CHANGED, HOW IT CONTINUES TO APPEAL TO FUTURE GENERATIONS, AND MORE.

Calvin: Nice to meet you, Natalie. My name's Calvin Klontz. I'm a legacy CPA—a CPA, CGA. How about you?

Natalie: I am a CPA. I was in the first graduating class of the new CPA designation, so I wrote the CFE [Common Final Examination] in 2015—the first CFE—and I received my letters in August of 2016.

Calvin: It's a lot of work to achieve that. What made you want to become a CPA?



Calvin Klontz CPA, CGA

Natalie Pon CPA



Natalie: In university, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my career, which I think is really, really common for a lot of business students and even a lot of accounting students. I have two uncles and a cousin who are also CPAs, and they encouraged me to look into pursuing my letters. And, as luck would have it, I was able to get an interview with a Big 4 accounting firm before the normal recruitment cycle and got an offer earlier than expected. I figured this would be a good starting point for my career, and I didn't think I would necessarily still be in public practice 11 years later, but here I am.

But what these letters have allowed me to do is take a risk and try a lot of different types of work that exist within our profession until I found something that spoke to me and that I felt I could do the rest of my career. ▶

Calvin: That's great, and that's what I find as well with the CPA designation—it opens doors for other opportunities.

Natalie: What inspired you to pursue your designation?

Calvin: I was working for a non-profit and doing their finance, and I had taken accounting, but I hadn't pursued a designation. I wanted to upgrade my skills so I could provide better financial information for that organization.

Natalie: Did you find your designation then allowed you to explore other roles in the non-profit sector that otherwise wouldn't have been available to you?


Calvin: Oh, yes. And when I retired, I became an ambassador for the community. I did a bit of consulting and various roles, but I was very active with CPA Alberta and Community Ambassadors. We introduce CPAs to non-profits and help them achieve positive outcomes. I've met so many CPAs who are doing so many different things.

I think that's what I like most about the designation—there are so many things you can do as a CPA. The hard thing is imagining what you want to do next.

Natalie: What have you noticed has changed in the profession over your career?

Calvin: Technology. I remember when to do basic accounting automation you'd have to have a huge room with a huge computer, and the money to pay for it. But now you can do it with your smartphone. There's so much more assistive technology to make it easier to collaborate and communicate and integrate with others.

But also the transition of accounting standards. We have this broad mix of best practices so that you can communicate with others in the same kind of way, and that has been challenging, but it also shows the high value of the profession. We can be trustees of important things.



I THINK THE
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ACTUALLY DO DAY
TO DAY.

Natalie Pon CPA



Natalie: It's also this idea within our profession that there's always room for constant improvement and constant growth, and we see that with every new accounting amendment or every new standard. There's always going to be something that pops up that needs an answer or should be addressed.

I think this ability for our profession to not only be adaptable but also to improve on our own work, our own standards, is something that's really impressive.

Calvin: How do you think the profession can continue to appeal to new generations?

Natalie: I think the most important thing the profession could be doing is outlining the various career paths that exist as a CPA. I think the stereotype still exists—that accountants are stuffy, and they sit in offices, and they only do tax returns—but that's just one part of the profession. It doesn't reflect what a lot of us actually do day to day.

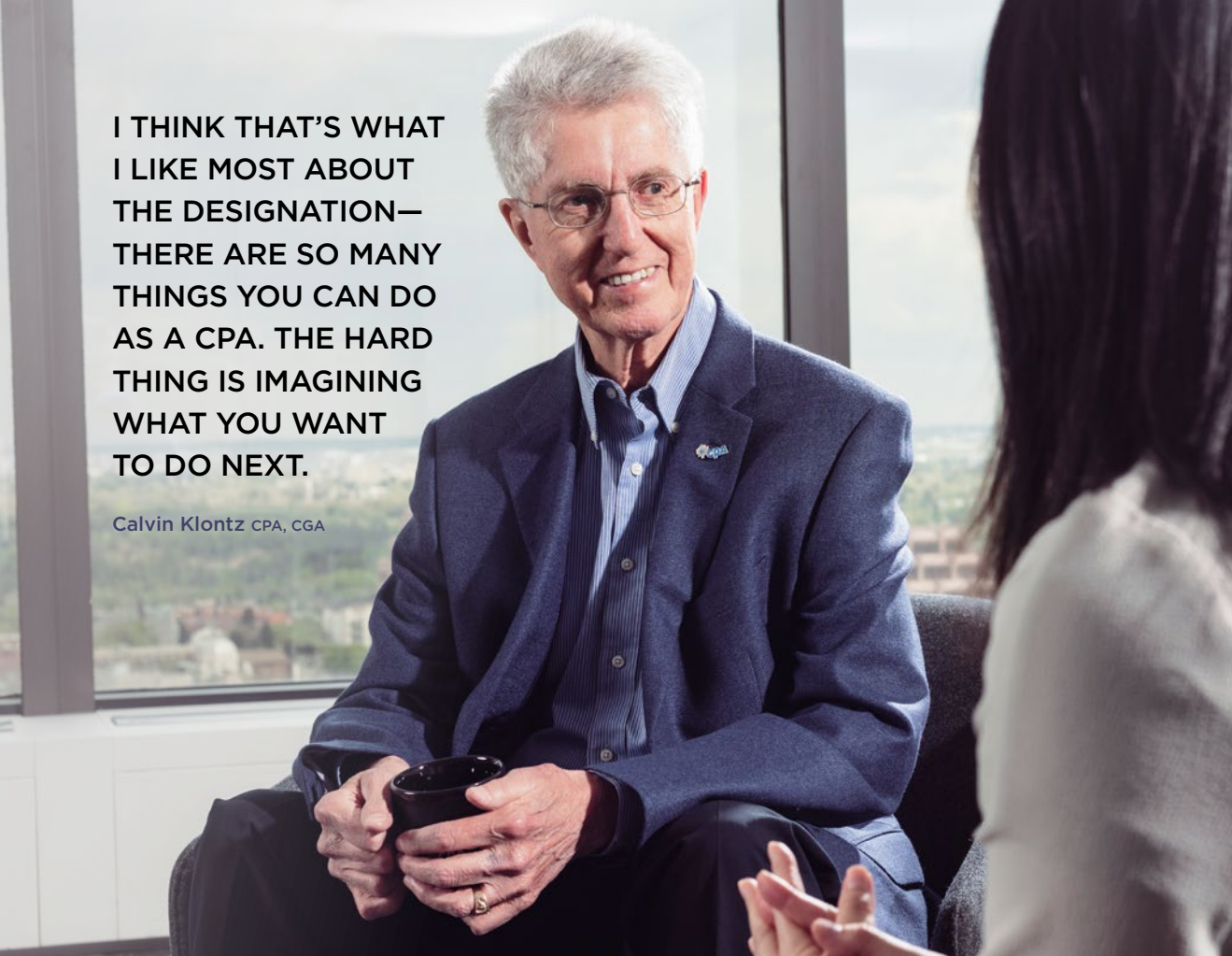
I think highlighting things like being able to jump into business operations or entrepreneurship or management and leadership positions are all really interesting career paths that some people might not associate with having a background in accounting.

Calvin: Yeah, I would say tax or assurance work is maybe 20 per cent of what accountants do, but that's mostly what we see, isn't it?

There are CPAs who are experts in governance. They think and breathe and eat and dream governance. There are CPAs who are trained corporate directors; there's accounting work. CPAs can do anything you can imagine, I think. For example, an organization in the music industry needs a CPA who understands them, so if you have a music background, you might have a big advantage. ▾

I THINK THAT'S WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE DESIGNATION—THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS YOU CAN DO AS A CPA. THE HARD THING IS IMAGINING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO NEXT.

Calvin Klontz CPA, CGA



Natalie: Another example of that is on the CPA Canada Board of Examiners. I recently joined that organization, and it's quite incredible to see just how many different skill sets have been brought to the table. We have to be able to represent all the different competencies tested on the CFE, whether that's financial reporting, assurance, management accounting, tax, or finance. Not one of us holds all of the knowledge in all of those categories. The profession is made up of people who work together and knowledge-share and collaborate.

To switch gears a little: is there a piece of advice you would give to an aspiring CPA?

Calvin: Don't quit. It's not for the faint of heart to become a CPA. To get the designation is a lot of work. It's tough, and some days, you're going to think, "Why am I even here?"

But that's today, and tomorrow's a different day, and in the long run, it will be worth it.

Natalie: The juice is worth the squeeze, so to speak.

I also would tell aspiring CPAs to not be afraid of taking a risk. There are so many things you can do with the designation, with that backbone of knowledge. Don't be afraid to try something new and go outside of your comfort zone. The sky's the limit for whatever you want to do in your life. 🍷

Editor's note: Calvin Klontz CPA, CGA unexpectedly passed before this article could be published. Calvin was beloved by the CPA profession and his community, and he was a strong advocate for not-for-profit organizations, especially Edmonton's Food Bank, Goodwill Industries of Alberta, and Edmonton Circles of Support and Accountability. He will be greatly missed by many.

Insights on leadership from an award-winning CFO

From an enabling environment to giving back, Kola Oladimeji shares how to become an effective leader

BY SHERYAR QAISER

 HARDERLEE PHOTOGRAPHY

With more than three decades of experience collaborating with multinational conglomerates, local governments, and not-for-profits, **Kola Oladimeji CPA, CGA** is a beacon of successful leadership.

Drawing from his wealth of experience, Kola emphasizes that, while technical skills are undoubtedly crucial, they must be coupled with emotional intelligence and human skills for true leadership success. Empathy, understanding, and active listening form the bedrock of effective leadership, regardless of team size.

"Guide your team, but let them make mistakes," says Kola, who is currently the Senior Director of Finance at the McMan Youth, Family, and Community Services Association.

This seemingly counterintuitive advice carries immense significance, according to Kola. He underscores the importance of granting your team the freedom to make mistakes and, more importantly, to learn from them. "Micromanagement stifles growth" says Kola, but providing an "enabling



environment empowers your team to learn, grow, and excel."

Kola champions "two-way transparent engagement." He firmly believes leaders must foster open communication and actively seek insight and advice from their team. In turn, Kola openly shares his plans, solicits valuable input, and fosters a collaborative and transparent work environment.

As a previous CPA Alberta Distinguished Service Award recipient, Kola believes high standards and unwavering integrity are common traits among leaders. "Leaders must embody and inspire their teams to strive for excellence," says Kola.

Kola has three invaluable pieces of advice for aspiring and junior accountants to help them gain insight into their own roles:

- 1. Thoroughly comprehend stakeholders' requirements and actively seek clarification when in doubt;**
- 2. Prioritize workloads to ensure urgent and significant tasks receive prompt attention; and**
- 3. Embrace the concept of teamwork, understanding how individual roles and contributions support each department within the organization, which is pivotal for both career growth and making a lasting impact.**

Beyond his professional achievements, Kola is extremely passionate about ping-pong, a sport that has ignited his enthusiasm since childhood. He even convinced his mother to invest in a ping-pong table, which he then rented out to finance his education. As Kola's skills developed, he competed at the state level while studying at university. Despite his busy schedule, Kola's passion for ping-pong remains steadfast to this day, and he continues to enjoy playing ping-pong recreationally.

Despite his demanding commitments, Kola actively gives back by volunteering as a mentor and coach for junior accountants, sharing his knowledge and expertise to support their professional growth. Kola believes true leadership goes beyond personal achievements. "When you become a successful leader, it is crucial to give back and help others," he emphasizes. "Giving back is a fundamental characteristic of a true leader." **C**

"Leaders must embody and inspire their teams to strive for excellence."



Unique ways to give back

A large, glowing lightbulb with a red heart inside is the central focus. The words "Unique ways to" are written in yellow, bold, sans-serif font along the top curve of the lightbulb, and "give back" is written along the bottom curve. The lightbulb has a blue base and is surrounded by white dashed lines and blue curved lines. Below the lightbulb, a person in a white robe and hat is sitting in a wooden basket, holding a red flashlight. The basket has blue bags hanging from it. There are also several small red hearts scattered around the basket.

Opportunities to give back might not be as far off as we think; they can be found in everyday life ▶

By Quinta Iticka

Giving back to the community can be immensely rewarding, not only for the person or organization receiving the service, but also for the person providing it.

As an accountant at Paul Teoh Chartered Professional Accountants, a seven-person, Calgary-based accounting firm, **Patrick Teoh CPA, CA** is most proud of what his organization has accomplished for their Indigenous clients throughout the Northwest Territories. “We go to these places and immerse ourselves in their history and culture,” says Patrick. “By being there, especially in cultures where presence and oral understanding are so important, we develop an understanding of our clients. Then we adapt our financial reporting frameworks to meet their needs and advocate for them on a standards-setting level.”

Aside from supporting communities on a professional level, Patrick volunteers locally in various capacities. “There are so many holes in society that volunteers fill,” says Patrick.

The Volly App helps fill many of these holes. Volly is a non-profit platform that connects individuals looking for opportunities with organizations looking for volunteers. Patrick, who serves as Treasurer of the organization behind the app, describes it as a match-making service that facilitates micro-volunteering, allowing individuals to complete quick projects with a limited time commitment. “People want to help, but they don’t know how to connect. We want to make it as easy as possible to find opportunities,” says Patrick.



People want to help, but they don’t know how to connect. We want to make it as easy as possible to find opportunities.

PATRICK TEOH CPA, CA



Volly also supports unrelated ventures, such as the Good Neighbour Community Market, a mutual aid non-profit store where businesses, professionals, and individuals—including CPAs, students, property owners and managers, and donors—can contribute their efforts and resources to support people in need. The idea of the Good Neighbour Community Market is simple: take what you need and donate what you can afford. Proceeds from the market partially fund the Calgary Community Fridge, a 24/7 outdoor pantry that provides free food to anyone who needs it.

Volly offers opportunities to give back, connect with others, and build strong relationships. “As a student, sometimes your friends are people you went to school with. But when you are able to bond over a shared cause, it’s different.... People have started their careers as volunteers. It builds character. You learn how to work in a team and be responsible. Volunteering fills the forgotten holes in society, and that’s why it will always be needed,” says Patrick. ▶





For most of her career in Canada, **Cynthia Chick CPA, CGA** has worked with not-for-profit organizations. “At first, it was because I needed a job,” Cynthia admits.

Then she started working at the Salvation Army and realized their values aligned with hers. Those values included treating people with dignity and respect.

The Salvation Army supports those affected by a lack of affordable housing, such as people experiencing homelessness and those who can’t afford rent in the short term. Although the organization receives funding from the government, it also raises funds through donations, including their Christmas Kettle Campaign. Employees are not obligated to participate in the campaign, but Cynthia saw this as an opportunity to give back. “I believe by standing at the kettle stand, I helped someone,” says Cynthia. “It doesn’t matter how small your contribution is. As an individual, you can make a difference.”

When Cynthia left the Salvation Army, she intentionally sought out other organizations that would allow her to connect directly with the community. Working at Immigrant Services Calgary exposes her to many of these opportunities. Last year, she hosted a family of five from abroad for two weeks and taught them how to use

appliances, look for accommodation, apply for a driver’s license, and catch the bus.

Shortly after, Cynthia hosted another person for a month. “She was single, so I could accommodate her longer,” says Cynthia. “I am an immigrant, so I understand how things that seem simple to us can be overwhelming to someone who is new to the country. You don’t know how those people will impact others here in Canada. You can change a whole community just by impacting one soul.”

From a professional perspective, Cynthia has also helped people file their taxes. Working at an immigrant agency, she regularly encounters internationally educated and trained individuals who are unaware of the CPA designation and its benefits. She believes, as a collective, CPAs and prospective CPAs with knowledge of the designation can tell others about it in formal and informal settings.

Reflecting on the joy Cynthia gets from giving back, she says, “Seeing the appreciation on the people’s faces gives me a sense of peace and happiness. I truly believe there is more happiness in giving than in receiving.” 🌟



**You can
change
a whole
community
just by
impacting
one soul.**

CYNTHIA CHICK CPA, CGA

one CPA's ULTIMATE CAREER journey

Shaheen Kassam shares what it means to be an influencer of change

BY CORALEE MARTIN
 HARDERLEE PHOTOGRAPHY

"It's been an interesting career journey for me," **Shaheen Kassam CPA, CMA** shares. "The business acumen gained from completing my CPA has been the piece that has allowed me to kick off conversations at companies with everyone working on the front lines right up to the CEO."

That business acumen has eventually led Shaheen to establish her own consulting firm where her designation continues to provide value every day.



But what, exactly, do consultants do?


First of all, Shaheen says, it depends on what kind of consultant you are. In today's workforce, consultants are used in a multitude of ways. Typically, they are brought in by an organization to provide a strategic pathway—to answer questions such as, “How do we get where we want to be?”

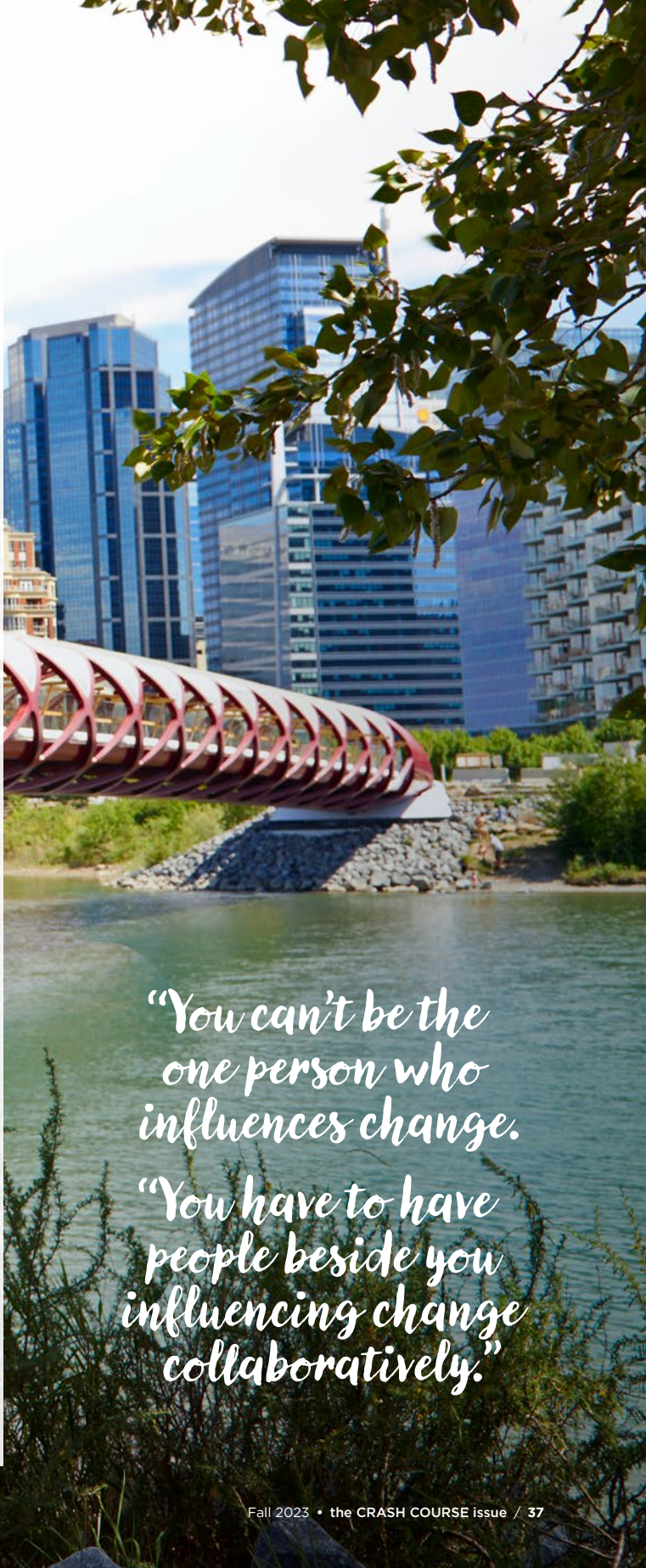
In some cases, consulting means developing a plan for the company to execute themselves, and sometimes it can mean both creating and implementing the plan. Ultimately, what a consultant does depends on the organization that has hired them and what their needs are at that moment.

Through her work in several different business areas, Shaheen has always seemed to find her way back to change management, which has become even more essential in today's ever-changing work world.

Shaheen believes change management is about looking at the people side of change. As a change manager, she sees her role as guiding the people within an organization so they can adopt whatever change is required for the organization to reach the future desired outcome. “You can't be the one person who influences change,” she says. “You have to have people beside you influencing change collaboratively.”

Of course, change management differs depending on the company and their definition of it, and no two companies approach the process of change management in the same way. “You have to understand the nuances that are within each organization to determine how to move them from their current state to where the organization wants to end up,” says Shaheen.

It's no surprise, then, that change has been constant in Shaheen's career as she has been open to the possibility that every new experience offers something she can add to her career toolkit. She has embraced this philosophy of exploration in her career as she recognizes that you never really know where an experience can take you. 



“You can't be the one person who influences change.”

“You have to have people beside you influencing change collaboratively.”

WHAT IS AN ERG



ERGs are a DEIA initiative in many workplaces

BY LEISHA TAYLOR CPA

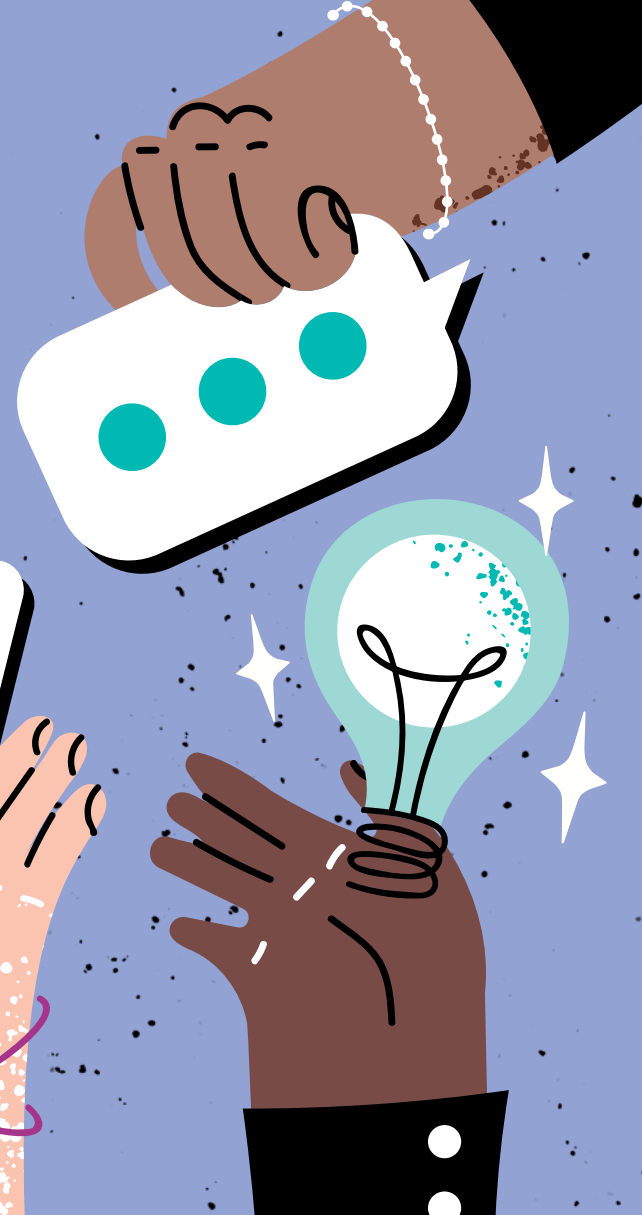
An employer with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives will be a great place to work for anyone. Why? Companies with a diverse workforce allow for diverse thought, meaning more creativity and innovation, optimal solutions to problems, and overall better decision making.

The most common DEIA initiative is Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), also known as Employee Network Groups or Inclusion Networks. ERGs are voluntary, employee-driven, and sometimes market-facing. The primary purpose of an ERG is to provide groups of employees with a formal structure and community within the company to support their unique needs.

A common misconception is that you have to identify as someone with racial, gender, or sexual differences in order to participate in an ERG. Companies who have well-established ERGs and advanced DEIA strategies allow any employee to join an ERG even if they don't identify with that group—often referred to as allyship. It is important to build allyship into

the DEIA strategy because ERGs generally represent a smaller population of the entire organization and require support from a larger group to advocate for change or obtain budgets to create events that give employees opportunities to connect on a common interest, theme, or objective.

COMPANIES WHO HAVE WELL-ESTABLISHED ERGS AND ADVANCED DEIA STRATEGIES ALLOW ANY EMPLOYEE TO JOIN AN ERG EVEN IF THEY DON'T IDENTIFY WITH THAT GROUP—OFTEN REFERRED TO AS ALLYSHIP.



Some ways ERGs advocate for change and create opportunities to connect are:

- Providing feedback on experiences with navigating human resources policies to improve equitability;
- Providing feedback and resources for recruitment campaigns to reduce unconscious bias;
- Providing input on development of targeted leadership programs to build diversity throughout all levels of the organization;
- Creating mentorship programs within the ERG; and


LEISHA TAYLOR CPA

is a Senior Manager at PwC Canada and is currently the National Co-chair of the Black Professionals Inclusion Network (one of more than 14 Inclusion Networks at PwC). Leisha has had the opportunity to take on leadership roles in the Women's Inclusion Network and the Black Professionals Inclusion Network.



- Creating and supporting events, such as local pride parades, International Women's Day, Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, and National Indigenous History Month.

By participating in an ERG, you can create a network within your company. This network may be made of people who can provide you with career advice and development opportunities or who support you through obstacles and conflicts (both personally and professionally). When you are able to connect with others who look like you or think like you, you create this space of belonging that generally leads to higher employee morale.

If you are interviewing or working at a company that hasn't created ERGs, ask why they don't exist and think about how you can help change this. It takes a small group of people to advocate for change, and since ERGs are employee-driven and voluntary, they often do not require formal employee resources from your company. And if you work at a company with ERGs, and you do not currently participate in any of them, why not? It is highly recommended that you take part where you can, depending on your interests, because it can truly change your perception of the company and your career outlook. 

The CPA Certification Program: What students need to know

The CPA Certification Program—which consists of education, practical experience, and a final examination—is designed to provide future Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) with the knowledge and skills to succeed in business.

Degree and prerequisites

An undergraduate degree (in any discipline) from a recognized post-secondary institution is required for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP). In addition to an undergraduate degree, prerequisite courses must be successfully completed.

A transfer credit guide for Alberta post-secondary institutions is available online at cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide.

CPA Professional Education Program

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a graduate-level program delivered part-time over two years. The program includes six modules designed to develop six technical competencies and five enabling competencies. In Alberta, the national CPA PEP is delivered by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB delivers CPA PEP to all candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut who are pursuing their CPA.

Candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant position. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

CPA PEP uses a variety of learning methods to help students develop their skills. The program combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning, and teamwork to help CPA candidates develop the competencies expected of Canada's pre-eminent professional accountants.

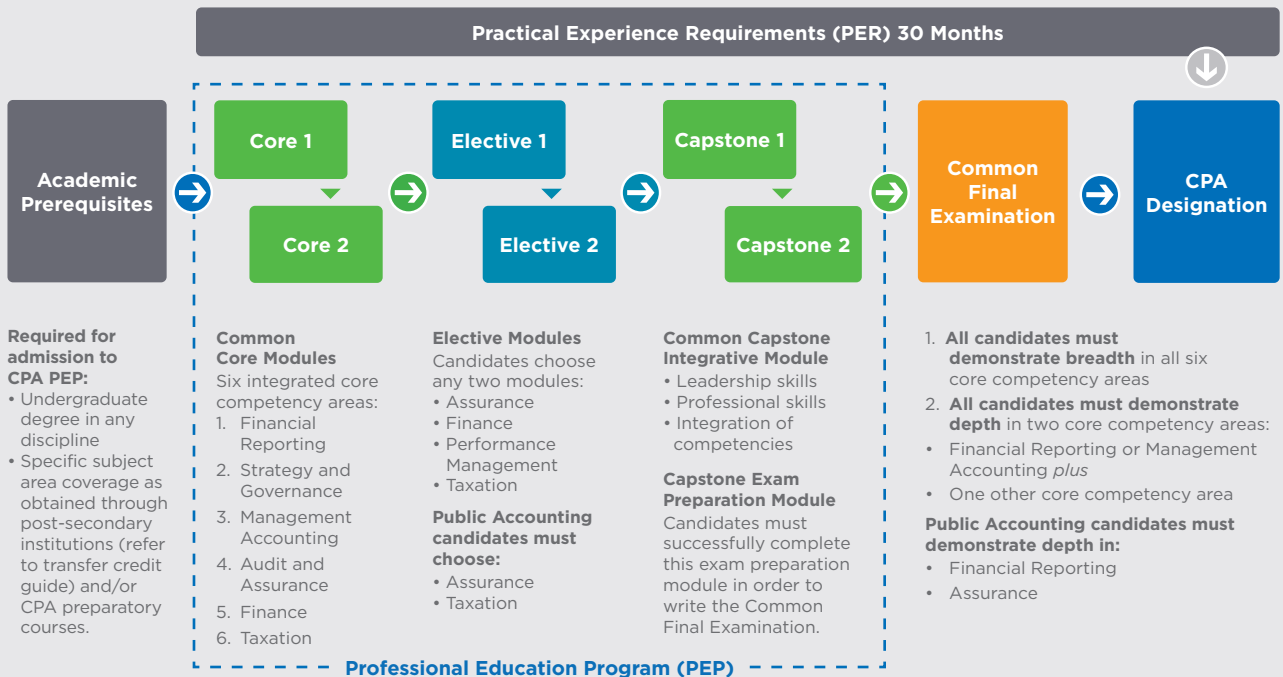
Modules

Six modules comprise CPA PEP. The program begins with two core modules that are common to all CPA candidates, followed by two elective modules (of which there are four options). Upon completion of these four modules, all candidates are required to complete the two “capstone” modules.

The modules are:

- Two common core modules, which all CPA candidates must take, focusing on the development of competencies in management and financial accounting, and the integration of the six core technical competency areas.
- Two elective modules, which allow CPA candidates to develop deeper skills in their areas of career interest. Four electives are offered: assurance, performance management, tax, and finance. All candidates must choose two of the electives; candidates pursuing careers in public accounting must choose assurance and tax.
- A capstone integrative module that focuses on the development of the enabling competencies, such as leadership and professional skills, and the integration of core competencies.
- A capstone examination preparation module, which prepares CPA candidates for the Common Final Examination (CFE).

CPA PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Registration into the CPA Professional Education Program

Students are encouraged to apply for conditional acceptance into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) prior to the completion of their required courses and degree. Registration as a CPA candidate is required prior to registering for specific modules; however, candidates are encouraged to register for modules once they've submitted their application.

Once a student has applied for CPA PEP, there is a registration validation period in which transcript assessment, verification of degree, and verification of prerequisites will occur. After verification, the student may then participate in Core One.

Module registration deadlines are typically six to eight weeks in advance of the module start date. Please refer to the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) website for key module registration deadlines: cpawsb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules.

For more information about becoming a CPA, please visit cpaalberta.ca; call CPA Alberta at 1-844-454-1245 (toll-free); or email recruitment@cpaalberta.ca.

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP and admission support, please visit cpawsb.ca; call CPAWSB at 1-855-306-9390 (toll-free); or email cpaapplication@cpawsb.ca. ▸

Entrance requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program

Bridging into the CPA Professional Education Program

For students who have completed their degrees but have not obtained the necessary prerequisite courses for the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), or for students who do not have a degree,* there are two options:

1. CPA preparatory courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. These courses are available in an accelerated format and are delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require.

Students are eligible for enrolment if they have successfully completed one year (30 credit hours) of post-secondary studies or three years of relevant work experience.

**Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to CPA PEP.*

Please contact CPA Alberta at **1.844.454.1245** or email recruitment@cpaalberta.ca to learn more about preparatory courses.

2. Prerequisites through a post-secondary institution

Students can register for the business and accounting courses they are missing through a post-secondary institution approved by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). A transfer credit guide is available online at cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide. Students will only take the courses they need for entrance into CPA PEP.

Practical experience

In addition to formal education, candidates are required to complete a term of relevant practical experience. The knowledge and competencies

gained through practical experience complement those developed through CPA PEP. To develop as a professional accountant, CPA candidates must gain relevant, paid employment that is progressively challenging. For the period of practical experience to begin, individuals need to be registered with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) as a CPA candidate, be employed in a qualifying position, and have a mentor.

There are two routes to obtain practical experience requirements:

- **The Pre-approved Program Route (PPR)** in which future CPAs gain relevant experience by choosing a position from a wide range of employers pre-approved by the profession.
- **The Experience Verification Route (EVR)** in which future CPAs demonstrate competence and gain relevant experience at a chosen employer.

Future CPAs can gain experience through either route or a combination of both. The profession may accept up to one year of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. The minimum practical experience requirement for both routes is 30 months; this includes an allowance of up to 20 weeks of time away from work (including vacation time).

There are five common elements that support both routes:

1. Candidates gain relevant experience and develop as a professional accountant in a minimum of 30 months.*
2. Candidates' experience must be appropriately supervised.
3. Candidates must record detailed reports at regular intervals.
4. Candidates must meet and discuss their progress at least semi-annually with a CPA mentor.
5. Candidates' experience is assessed by the CPA profession.

Practical experience requirements for public accounting practice and professional accounting practice are recognized separately from practical experience requirements for certification.

CPA Practical Experience Self-Assessment Tool

This tool is intended for individuals who have not yet had their experience assessed by a provincial/regional body but want to understand how their current or prospective position might align with the CPA technical competency requirements for purposes of the experience verification route. To access this self-assessment tool, visit pert.cpa-services.org/student/TrialAssessment.

CPA mentorship

Mentorship is a mandatory component of the CPA Practical Experience Requirements

(PER). The focus of the CPA mentorship program is to help future CPAs achieve their enabling competencies. CPA candidates who work in the Pre-approved Program Route (PPR) will be matched with a CPA mentor by the organization that offers the program. CPA candidates who choose the Experience Verification Route (EVR) are required to seek out their own CPA mentor in order to find a successful fit. Recognition may be given for a total of up to 12 months of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. After that time, the qualifying period of practical experience cannot begin until CPA candidates have a CPA mentor. CPA Canada has developed a number of valuable resources to assist CPA candidates in finding a mentor.

Please visit cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience for more information. 

PREPARE TO MAKE YOUR MARK.

Make your mark with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree or a Business Administration diploma with a major in Accounting. Learn from experienced accounting professionals and graduate ready to enter CPA's Advanced Certificate in Finance and Accounting program (ACAF) or pursue your CPA designation.



At SAIT, we're proud to be recognized as one of three Canadian schools to make the top 100 of CEOWORLD Magazine's Best Business Schools in the World for 2023.

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SPARK YOUR GREAT CAREER

CPA Education Foundation student awards

The CPA Education Foundation is passionate about helping students reach their CPA designation goals and recognizes education is a significant financial investment. That's why the Foundation offers a variety of awards to help ease the financial barriers of higher education for students at all stages of their educational careers, from high school to post-secondary and through to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

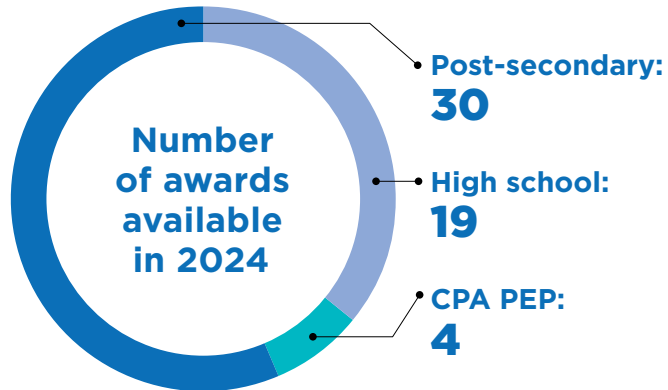
Through the generosity of donors, the Foundation continues to add new awards for students, including six new Michael Burnyeat CPA, CA Sparking Great Careers Awards for High School and Post-Secondary Students introduced this past year. This new award was created to help remove barriers for disadvantaged youth, especially those who may not have any personal ties to the profession.

Post-secondary and CPA PEP awards deadline: **January 31**

High School awards deadline: **May 1**

For more information on any of the CPA Education Foundation scholarships, please visit cpaalberta.ca/scholarships.

Did you know the CPA Education Foundation provided nearly **\$180,000** in funding for student awards, scholarships, and bursaries in the 2022/23 academic year?



Have questions? Connect with us at cpaef@cpaalberta.ca!

The CPA Education Foundation is proud to help ignite the careers of Alberta's future community-builders, philanthropists, academics, and entrepreneurs. Here are some of this year's award recipients.



"Winning this award means that all of my hard work and determination has paid off. Between a neurological condition that required two recent brain surgeries and the pandemic, I have had to overcome several obstacles throughout my CPA journey."

Andrew Brown
Recipient of the 2023
CPA Education Foundation
Perseverance Award



"I'm completing my business degree in accounting, and as I research what I want to do when I am done, all signs point to a CPA. I love problem solving, and I think that is what [being a] CPA is all about."

Rachel Chu
Recipient of the 2023
Michael Burnyeat CPA, CA
Sparking Great Careers
Award



"Choosing to pursue my education was the best decision I have ever made—and the donations made by Alberta CPAs and other contributors have made getting an education a bit easier as the financial help has lowered my stress levels massively."

Kacey Dicristafaro
Recipient of the 2023
Crowe MacKay LLP
No Limits Award



GET TO WORK ON YOUR GREAT CAREER

**CPA Education Foundation
initiative gives youth
a chance to experience
working with CPAs**

BY KEVIN SPILA

Do you ever wonder how some people chose their career? You hear stories about those who knew exactly what they wanted to do since they were kids—like the one who grew up loving horses and became a veterinarian or the kid who built go-carts and is now a Formula 1 driver. But what about those who end up in a totally different career path than what they “knew” they were going to be?



Standing from left to right: Raymond Luu CPA, Darby Skakun, Joe Gagliardi FCPA, FCMA, Snober Bains CPA, CA, and Jason Wong CPA, CMA; sitting: Jann Thai

As the charitable arm of the CPA profession in Alberta, the CPA Education Foundation exists to strengthen the future of the CPA profession in Alberta and believes in providing opportunities for young Albertans to learn more about careers in accounting.

That's where the idea for the Sparking Great Careers Internship program was ignited. This new initiative will help remove barriers for disadvantaged youth while finding ways to introduce high school and post-secondary students to the CPA profession. Accounting may not even be a career path they've considered or are even aware of, in part because they may not have any personal ties to anyone who works as a CPA.

By providing high school and post-secondary students with paid opportunities to preview the profession first-hand and gain valuable workplace skills and job experience, the Foundation hopes more students will envision themselves thriving in the profession. The first round of placements began this past summer, with students working alongside CPAs across the province.


For Jann Thai, a University of Alberta business student, the chance to gain additional skills and experience was

a no-brainer. "I actually learned about Sparking Great Careers about a week before the deadline," she recalls. "And when I got the call, I was ecstatic to learn that I would have the chance to experience such a wonderful opportunity!"

Jann was the first student placed in the 2023 Sparking Great Careers Internship program. "It's been great working with Recruitment Partners!" she says. "The atmosphere is very friendly, and while I was so nervous at first, everyone there made me feel very welcomed as an intern."

And Jann is enjoying the work too: "Despite it only being a few weeks into the internship, I've already learned a lot about what it is like in the workplace as an accountant working on, well, accounting tasks."

"That's the goal of the internship program," says Erin Schwartz CPA, Director of the CPA Education Foundation. "We really wanted this to be a hands-on experience—to have the students working alongside actual CPAs doing actual accounting tasks, not just being coffee-runners!"

"We're thrilled to hear it's been working out for Jann and the team at Recruitment Partners. I know all the employers I've spoken to are equally thrilled to do their part to help spark a great career." 

If you are interested in learning more about the Sparking Great Careers Internships available for high school and post-secondary students in summer 2024, visit our website at cpaalberta.ca/Foundation/Sparking-Great-Careers.

LISTEN UP.



From podcasts to publishing...the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre aims to share the knowledge and experiences of Alberta CPAs

BY KEVIN SPILA

When the late Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA helped create the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre, he had a vision of sharing CPAs' knowledge, expertise, and unique perspectives with all Albertans. Brian was not only a successful business leader but also a self-published author, an engaging storyteller, and a compassionate listener.

One of the Centre's most popular initiatives born of that vision is the podcast *Straight From the CPA's Mouth*. For the past four seasons, CPAs from across the province have been sharing their insights and experiences on many of the accounting and business topics you might expect and some you might not—because accounting isn't just about numbers; it's also about people and relationships.

Some of the topics discussed include deeply personal conversations in the areas of racism; diversity, equity, and inclusion; as well as mental health and wellness. If you haven't tuned in to the podcast yet, you should check it out.

The Centre is also working on other ways to help CPAs share their unique perspectives and vast expertise. There is a lot of knowledge in those big brains just waiting to get out there, and one idea in the works is to develop a series of digital resources on how to get published. And don't worry, while these resources may be geared toward CPAs, they will be available to the public, including future CPAs, as well.

So, who knows, maybe you too can learn how to share your own unique perspectives with the world! Stay tuned for more information. [C](#)

The CPA Education Foundation's Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre was established thanks to a generous gift from Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA (1946–2021), who is remembered as an accomplished Alberta business leader and community builder. The Centre, which was founded in March 2019, is a virtual hub of resources and materials featuring Alberta CPAs sharing their unique perspectives and vast expertise on a wide range of topics and issues.

If you're interested in learning more about the Centre, please visit cpaalberta.ca/Foundation/Hesje-CPA-Knowledge-Centre.



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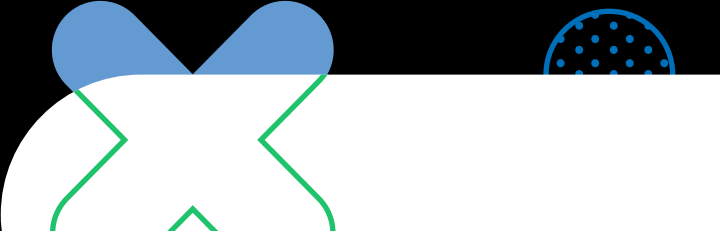


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RECRUITMENT



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Ah, recruitment season.

The best time of the year!

Hold up—there’s a season for recruitment? Yes, there is! And you’ve come to the right place to learn all about it.

First of all, what is recruitment?

Recruitment, in this context, is referring to when accounting and business students are trying to find a co-op or fulfill their practical experience requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program. In turn, employers are looking for post-secondary students to fill a variety of positions. Through researching and networking, students and organizations can each find their perfect match.

But what is a recruitment season?

Recruitment season is when this all happens. Organizations post positions, students and recruiters network at various events, students apply and interview for various positions, and finally, successful candidates show up for their first day in the office.



This all might sound like a lot, and you might not know where to start, but that’s what this publication can help with. And if you have further questions, never hesitate to reach out to one of CPA Alberta’s Recruitment Officers. →



YEAR BY YEAR

First year

- ✓ **Completing introductory courses**
- ✓ **Attending a CPA Alberta information session** (can also do this again in later years!)

Second year

- ✓ **Completing courses**
- ✓ **Networking** (at school events, CPA Alberta events, and more)
- ✓ **Applying for internships and co-ops**

Third year

- ✓ **Completing courses**
- ✓ **Networking** (at school events, CPA Alberta events, and more)

Fourth year

- ✓ **Applying for full-time positions** (early!)
- ✓ **Finishing up your bachelor's degree**
- ✓ **Enrolling in the CPA Professional Education Program** (very end!)

MONTH BY MONTH

August

Positions start being posted

Late September

Interviews

The following year

Jobs start (you read that right: up to a YEAR later!)

September

CPA Alberta's annual career fair, Meet Your Employer

Mid-October

Job acceptances

What is a career fair?

Career fairs are networking events where you can gather information, explore job opportunities, and make connections. The career fair itself is often a large room filled with tables, and the tables are staffed by recruiters and employers ready to talk to you! They may have swag to give away, contests to enter, and more, but the number one goal here is to network.

So how do you make the most out of your time with prospective employers?

Step 1:

Research the organizations attending and create a tiered list: your A-levels (must meet), B-levels (will meet if there's time), and C-levels (will not meet). Tailor questions for your A-levels and B-levels (if you have time), and craft and practice your elevator pitch.

Step 2:

Bring business cards—paper or digital—and copies of your resume—also paper or digital—and dress professionally.

Step 3:

Approach the recruiters and employers, and strike up a conversation. Share your elevator pitch, ask a question or two, and leave a lasting first impression.

Step 4:

Don't forget to engage with other attendees. They could be your coworkers one day!

Five career fair questions you may not have thought of

1. **Can you share any success stories of employees who started in similar positions and have progressed within your organization?**
2. **How does your organization stay ahead of industry trends and adapt to changes in the market?**
3. **How does your organization support candidates working toward their designation?**
4. **How does your organization encourage innovation and creativity among its employees?**
5. **Are there any opportunities for cross-functional collaboration within your organization?**



RESUME

Three tips to make your resume stand out—in a good way

Do the research

Your resume should be tailored to the job you're applying for, which requires a bit of research and analyzing the job description. Try incorporating keywords from the job posting to show you have the right skills and are paying attention and reflecting the organization's values and purpose.

Keep it short and sweet

Your resume should be clear, concise (no more than two pages!), and well-written. Consider asking a coworker, classmate, or friend to provide feedback on your resume.

Format appropriately

Skip the flamboyant fonts and bright pink backgrounds and opt for a standard font like Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri in a standard black on white. You can use some colour and bolding in headings, but make sure it's easily readable.



ELEVATOR PITCH

How to draft an elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is a short, powerful introduction about yourself that should take approximately 30 seconds to recite—or the length of an elevator ride. It's your chance to make a memorable first impression on a future employer.

To craft your own elevator pitch, start by identifying what makes you unique: what are your strengths, experiences, and goals? Then craft a (very) short, engaging story showcasing your achievements and emphasizing what you will bring to an organization. Make sure it's relevant to your field (in this case, accounting)!

Then practice, practice, practice. Recite your pitch to yourself until it feels natural and comfortable, and you're confident you can share it with an employer without stumbling over your words.

Being professional when it's personal

We all know by now that potential employers can—and do—search for candidates on social media before deciding who to hire, so it's crucial you make a good online impression. This doesn't mean you have to delete your social media or even be 100% professional at all times, but it does mean you need to be discerning about what you keep, what you post, and what you allow to be public.



Most importantly, adjust your privacy settings.

This is generally a rule for being safe on the internet, but it's also important when it comes to job-hunting. Your night out with friends may have been just what you needed for your mental health, but it might not come across quite the same way to a future employer. Share those photos and videos with only your most trusted connections on a private profile.

Your night out with friends may have been just what you needed for your mental health, but it might not come across quite the same way to a future employer.

While you're at it, scrub through any profiles you do decide to keep public (LinkedIn, for example) and both delete anything offensive or inappropriate and limit the self-promotion. Remove any posts with offensive language, discriminatory remarks, or controversial content. Cull any posts that are strictly about yourself. It's great to highlight your achievements but avoid coming off as overly boastful. Balance is important!

Finally, use some social media to your advantage and engage, network, and celebrate in professional ways. Follow other professionals and engage with their content, celebrate both your own achievements and your network's, and avoid engaging in negative interactions and heated debates.

Generally, social media isn't rocket science. If you approach it strategically, responsibly, and professionally—and keep anything else behind closed doors—it can even help your employability!

Leveraging LinkedIn

In many ways, LinkedIn is no longer optional in the working world. Every professional and future professional should consider creating a LinkedIn profile and leveraging it to build their network, connect with recruiters and employers, and engage with other professionals.

The value of a well-written, impactful LinkedIn profile cannot be understated. But what does that mean?



DO

- ✓ Create a comprehensive profile, including a professional photo, to help you show up in results.
- ✓ Showcase your skills, including those you've gained volunteering or playing sports, to help recruiters and employers find you when searching for in-demand skills.
- ✓ Be active! Engage with your network's posts, share interesting business-related finds, and check your profile regularly.

DON'T

- ✗ Rely on boring buzzwords. If you can, swap out some of the more popular LinkedIn buzzwords—such as skilled, passionate, and motivated—for words that better tell your individual story.
- ✗ Simply copy-and-paste your resume. You can use it as a foundation, but while a resume is expected to be short and sweet, you can elaborate a little more on LinkedIn.
- ✗ Let imposter syndrome get the better of you. You should join and participate in groups—asking questions, contributing answers, sharing information, and so much more—to help advertise yourself and build your network.

Now you're ready to weather recruitment season!

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to CPA Alberta's Recruitment Officers, who are ready to help guide you through your CPA adventure. →



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