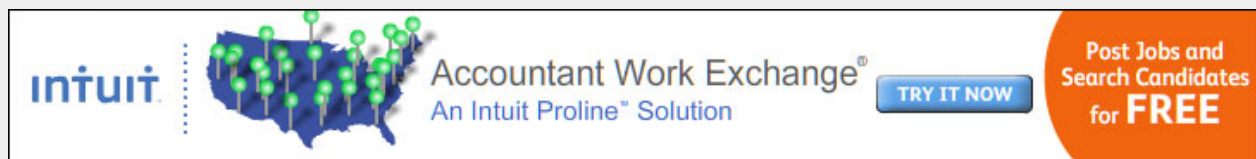



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## Accountants share success stories on new Web site

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"We're mad as hell and not going to take it anymore! We want the world to know we are not just standing by, waiting for the economy to jump-start itself."

This is the battle cry of a community of accountants who are passionate about helping their clients not just survive, but thrive during the best and the worst of times. A new Web site, [www.thepassionateaccountant.com](http://www.thepassionateaccountant.com), is a place for these specially certified, non-traditional practitioners to tell their story.

While many accountants are sitting idly by, waiting to keep score of their clients' descending revenue trends, this group of accountants has been preparing for years to help their clients address this sort of problem. They have learned to look beyond the financial statements to the underlying issues that create the numbers on the page. They have been teaching employees to understand and apply financial concepts, training managers to create and monitor non-financial measures, and helping entire organizations work toward a common goal.

"We have been on the front lines with our clients doing business stress tests to help them find missed opportunities," said **Craig Underhill**, CPA, CSPM at Napa Valley, CA-based **Brotemarkle, Davis and Co. LLP**.

"We have been fighting rising unemployment by helping our clients build leaner, more efficient operations rather than cutting their staff. We also are working with clients to improve cash flow and retain profits while lenders are still sitting on their hands," Underhill said. "In short, passionate accountants are not standing around waiting for things to get better; we are making our economy stronger one business at a time."

The Web site is the brainchild of Edi Osborne, CEO at Carmel Valley, CA-based training and consulting firm **Mentor Plus**, who was inspired after reading the book *Crush It!: Why Now Is the Time to Cash in on Your Passion* by Gary Vaynerchuk. The book brought together two topics of interest to Osborne – passion and social media.

"Gary's argument for jumping into social media as a means of promoting your message is quite compelling. He reminds us that, as a society, we love a good story," Osborne said. "Accountants have gotten a bad rap in mainstream press for years; everything from being characterized as boring and stodgy to being poor business people. I decided it was time to tap into the new media outlets as a means of helping great accountants tell their story."

Mentor Plus has orchestrated a full-court press to overcome the old stereotypes and introduce the business community to the next generation of the accounting profession, she said.

Vaynerchuk makes it clear that creating a solid presence in cyberspace can be done very inexpensively, thereby lowering the barrier to entry for anyone with a great story to tell. The Passionate Accountant Web site is a perfect example of this with its use of free or low-cost resources to get the site launched. He pointed out that a site with valuable content that can drive traffic will attract advertisers to monetize the site. Following Vaynerchuk's recipe for success, The Passionate Accountant is already attracting advertisers and investor who want to align with the uniqueness of the message.

As a recognized leader in teaching the profession about performance measures, Osborne stressed the importance of submitting quantifiable success stories that have real numbers behind them.

"As we move forward, case studies/success stories submitted by members of the community will be vetted with the highlighted business owner," Osborne said. "This isn't meant to be a feel-good site where accountants just pat each other on the back; it's meant to attract business owners by offering real-life great ideas and strategies that apply to all types of businesses."

At a time when many firms have either turned their back on social media or put very tight restrictions on its use, members of The Passionate Accountant community are taking full advantage of networking and promotional sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

"Our hope is that we can change perceptions about the profession and, in doing so, connect business owners with accountants who can deliver the kinds of services that really change the way they do business," Osborne said.

These services do not just help business owners – they also help the firm that delivers them.

“As it turns out, developing non-traditional, client-centric skills not only helps clients succeed, it also serves to attract and retain great talent to our firm. From a personal standpoint, it’s a heck of a lot more fun to be so closely aligned with our client’s success than just doing traditional compliance work,” said **Garth Busch**, regional managing partner at Canada-based tax firm **Meyers Norris Penny (MNP)**.

Accountants wishing to join the community must go through an application process and be approved before they can post to the site and be listed in the directory. Business owners also can submit a request that their accountant be sent a *wake-up call* about joining the community.

“There are sites for business owners and there are sites for accountants. This is the first that introduces the best of the best to each other,” Osborne said.

For more information, visit [www.thepassionateaccountant.com](http://www.thepassionateaccountant.com) or [www.mentorplus.com](http://www.mentorplus.com). *Edi Osborne* can be reached at [edi@mentorplus.com](mailto:edi@mentorplus.com).

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