

How to Find the Right Tax Professional

What to ask Tax professionals before hiring them

Finding the right tax professional or CPA can be a blessing. I'm sure you've heard other business owners talk about how great their CPA is, and how they found "this" many deductions. But have you ever heard of businesses choosing the wrong CPA? Imagine going to work one day only to find that the IRS is closing down your offices. Well as recently as 2013, numerous clients of "[S. Chand Tax & Accounting Service](#)

" were the victims of poor quality tax preparation to the degree that they either did not receive their tax returns or even had their businesses closed down by the IRS.

While you may not encounter tax professionals or CPAs with as low level of ethics as Jordan Belfort, it's still absolutely crucial to do your homework and ask your prospective tax preparer or CPA the right questions.

What to do before you hire a Tax Preparer or CPA

Find your Tax Pro - There are tons of tax professionals and CPAs that you can find in your area. Popular ways of searching for them include using Yelp, Angie's list, Google Search, or Word-of-mouth. It doesn't matter where you find your Tax professional, what matters is how comfortable you are with them and how reputable they are. When you first meet your tax preparers or CPAs do your best to understand their specialty and styles and make sure that they match up with your philosophy.

Verify qualifications - Make sure that your preparer has a Preparer Tax identification Number (PTIN). This is a number that the government requires paid preparers to have. Additionally, you can ask your potential tax preparer about any organizations that he is a part of in order to further validate his qualifications. If this still isn't enough for you, then you can ask for references and inquire into his/her educational background.

Be safe not sorry - Even if you think you've found your tax pro, you need to do a background check or you may be sorry. There have been numerous tax schemes from less than reputable CPAs who were caught altering clients' tax returns without their knowledge to obtain refunds illegally. You can easily avoid this by checking a CPAs background at the Better Business Bureau or state boards of accountancy for any signs of misconduct.

Additional Questions for CPAs or Tax Preparers

Think you've found your CPA or tax preparer? Here are some additional questions that you should ask before hiring them to do your taxes.

1. What size of businesses do you work with the most? Home businesses, small, mid sized, large?
2. What times are you available for me to reach you?
3. What do you charge
4. How do you calculate your fees? One time fee, by the hour, etc?
5. What records and receipts do you need?
6. What other services do you provide?
7. Can I file electronically?
8. If for some reason I'm audited, then what steps will you take to help me with that situation?

Remember, finding your tax pro may seem as easy as a quick search on Google, but remember to take the necessary precautionary steps to ensure that you are comfortable with your tax pro, that they are qualified, and that they have no history of misconduct or derogatory marks.

Have you recently conducted a search for a CPA or just have tips for other people searching? Leave your tips in the comments below.