

## Counting on professionals

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When it comes to running a business, there's no end to the number of tasks an owner and operator has to perform on a daily basis. Ensuring the goods and/or services provided are the best they can be, keeping clients happy, taking care of staffing issues and paying the electric bill are just a few of the things to keep on top of.

Fortunately, however, they often do have help by way of their accountant. These valuable team members have gone from being the 'bean counters' in the corner to playing a front and centre role, weighing in on important matters that affect all areas of the business, not just the bottom line.

"The trend is very much changing," says Don Connor, executive director of CGA Nova Scotia. "There are a number of issues involved and, frankly, accountants are better trained now in a more global sense within the business, not just on the financial side, but with what makes a successful company."

It used to be that bookkeeping was the major role of an accountant, but now it seems that's hardly on their docket anymore. With the ease of programs and data entry systems it seems the accountant's time is now better spent exercising some of their business skills.

"Accountants don't want to have to organize and post and put things together," says Helen Bush of HB Professional Bookkeeping. "Their needs and roles are changing and they don't have time to focus on what the bookkeepers are doing."



The growing role of an accountant comes down to the difference between having data and having information. With one you can take care of a company's finances and with the other you can contribute to other day-to-day aspects of the business. Gone are the days of conflict between the head office and the bottom line.

The accountant – out of the narrow world of the quiet office at the end of the hall – no longer looks simply at the cost of running a business; he or she has a broader picture of the overall operations, as well.

"The role is inevitably going to be the difference between thriving and surviving," says Connor. "If an accountant understands how the decisions made will have a financial impact, rather than just the impact they will have on the bottom line, he or she will be better able to contribute to the strength of a business."