





Published Monthly by the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants

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The CPA Newsletter is the official publication of the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants. The Newsletter invites articles of interest to the profession and gives credit to the author; however, it reserves the right to edit articles for correct spelling, wording and punctuation.

Opinions expressed are not necessarily the official policy of the MSCPA. Advertising is accepted in good faith that the product/services are of value stated.

Welcome New Members

New MSCPA members include John Scott Christian, Nancy A. Dickey, Elizabeth Todd Jones, William Chet Kelly, Clint Gregory King, Jimmie L. Sandifer, and Mary Cathryn Slocum.

Now completing the membership process are:

Deborah H. Davis was born in Cullman, Alabama and received a BS in Education from Auburn University and a Certificate of Accountancy from

Newsletter Schedule Changes in 2009

The MSCPA Newsletter will begin publishing on a ten-issue per year schedule in 2009 combining the January/February issues and the November/December issues.

Deadline for the January/February issue is Friday, Jan. 2 and the publication will be mailed during the third week of January. The Newsletter is posted to the Society website (www.ms-cpa.org) under the Resources tab.

Mississippi College. She is the Director of Finance for the Community Foundation of Calhoun County in Anniston, Alabama.

Joshua Drew Edwards was born in Jackson and received a BS in Business Administration from Mississippi College. He is an Assurance Senior Associate with Horne LLP in Jackson.

James Andrew Galloway was born in Tupelo and attended Northeast Miss. Community College and the University of Mississippi where he earned his Bachelor of Accountancy and Master of Taxation degrees. He is a Staff Accountant with Nail McKinney PA in Tupelo.

Michael Andrew Ross was born in Pascagoula and received his BS in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting from the University of South Alabama. He is Controller for Boomtown Casino Biloxi.

Stephen James Stenmark was born in Jackson and received his Bachelor and Master of Accountancy degrees from the University of Mississippi. He is a Staff Auditor with Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, PA in Ridgeland.

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LISTENING INTENTLY: "Firmly Put On Your Listening Ears"

By Glenn Hunter, MBA, Director of Business Development for The Rainmaker Academy

During a training class for a group of accountants, the students returned from a break as the instructor was wrapping up reading the newspaper. As the students found their seats, the instructor excitedly shared about the new model of truck in the advertisement. The instructor raved about its torque, its towing capacity, its horsepower, its safety features, its mileage. He recited its new tag line. As the class settled in, the instructor folded his newspaper and exhaled that it may finally be time for him to trade in his current truck for this new, must-have, automotive marvel. In opening the next lesson for the class, the instructor asked the class, "Can anyone tell me anything about this new truck?"

The utter silence clearly told the instructor that no one was really listening! Everyone was polite. They had smiled when he grinned about the horsepower.

They nodded when his eyes lit up about its towing capacity. And no one listened. People listen when they care. Likewise, professionals listen when they care. Otherwise, we just fake it in the name of courtesy. As professionals, many of us fake it well.

To avoid being professionals who fake caring, we have to firmly put on our listening ears. According to Dictionary.com, to listen is to "hear with intention... and pay attention". Listening intently is not just hearing words, but it involves purposely receiving communication in all ways. Two other key points to be an effective listener is to realize that listening is not the opposite of talking, nor is listening waiting for your turn to talk. So, we have determined that listening involves hearing with intention, paying attention and understanding beyond what is said. How

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Honor an Outstanding MSCPA Member For Public Service

The membership is invited to nominate a member for consideration as the 2009 Public Service Award winner.

The winner will be recognized during the Annual Business Meeting Saturday, June 27, 2009 at the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort. President Jan Lewis has named members of the 2009 Public Service Award Committee including: Cindy Anderson, Jackson; Bill Kelly, Hattiesburg; and Ben Sayle, Greenville.

Qualifying activities for the award include service clubs, church work, children's programs, economic development and public service. Submit a nominee's name to one of the committee members or to the MSCPA office (mail@mscpa.org) for forwarding to the committee.



News from the

Mississippi State Board of Public Accountancy

2009 ANNUAL REGISTRATION

Registration of your Mississippi *CPA license*, *CPA firm permit to practice public accounting, or CPA (retired) status* is due on or before **January 1, 2009**.

Please remember, if registration is not received at the Board office on or before January 1, 2009, your license, permit or retired status will be in default. Notice of such default will be sent by certified mail to the last known address of record with *automatic cancellation* if registration is not received *within ten days* after notice is given.

Registration received after January 1, 2009, must be accompanied by a \$150 late fee in addition to the normal registration fee.

If you have not received your annual registration form, please contact the Board office as soon as possible.

BOARD MEMBERS

Governor Haley Barbour recently appointed the following members to serve through the year 2012:

Shelly B. Boone, Gulfport Replaced Angela L. Pannell

Jim E. Burkes, Jackson Reappointed

David L. Miller, Tupelo Replaced Diane S. Day

Other current Board members include:

Willie B. Sims, Jr., Hattiesburg, Chair (2004 - 2008) Rick Elam, Oxford, Vice Chair (2005 - 2009) David E. Clarke, Greenville, Secretary (2006 - 2010) Jean T. Shepherd, Philadelphia (2007 - 2011).

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November Ceremony Honors New CPAs

The Mississippi State Board of Public Accountancy honored new CPAs during their annual Fall Ceremony Nov. 15 at the New Capitol. MSCPA President Jan Lewis presented an overview of the MSCPA and member benefits of the professional association. State Auditor Stacey Pickering keynoted the morning ceremony. The new CPAs included Koffi Dodor, Matthew Martin Elkins, Traci Osborne Forrest, Shannon Lacev Johnson, Elizabeth Jo Jones, Clinton Gregory King, Derek William Knepple, Lori Tameka Liddell, Christopher Robert Madison, Adam Edward Milner, Carlin Williams Milner, Melanie Dawn Morrow, Jason Edward Pryor, Michael Andrew Ross, Jessica Renee Short, Mary Cathryn Slocum, Stephen James Stenmark, Elliot Colby Vines, Christopher Glenn Walker, and Jessica L. Williams.



Our Members in the News...

Ellen Dabbs selected as first female president of Mississippi Forestry Association

-Dabbs honored with prestigious 2008 President Citation Award -

Ellen Dabbs, CPA, of Brandon, is poised to begin her 2009 presidency of Mississippi Forestry Association (MFA) as the first female in the 70-year history of the organization. Dabbs has been an active part of the MFA leadership for the past few years serving as first vice-president in 2008.

Dabbs received the Mississippi Forestry Association President's Citation Award at the October MFA Annual Meeting held in Choctaw. The president's citation award is given each year by the MFA president to an individual who has served the association with excellence on a particular project. 2008.

K2's Technology Tips:

Controlling the Number of Days Visible in your Outlook Calendar

When viewing a Calendar in Outlook, users are provided with views for Day, Week, Work-Week, and Month. Fortunately, for those who want to see only a certain number of days – three, for instance – there is an easy solution. While viewing the Calendar, press the ALT key and the number of days that you would like to view and Outlook will display a Calendar for just that number of days.

Selecting Lines, Paragraphs, and an Entire Document in Word

When working in Word, try these shortcuts to select portions of a document:

- Perform an single mouse click in the left margin of a document to select just that line,
- Perform a double mouse click in the left margin of a document to select a paragraph, and
- Perform a triple mouse click in the left margin of a document to select the entire document.

Ease the Transition to Office 2007

Office 2007 offers users many new outstanding features for improved productivity. However, without adequate training, users may struggle with the transition to Office 2007. To ease the transition, download and install the "Get Started Tabs" for Word 2007, Excel 2007, and PowerPoint 2007. Available from www.microsoft.com/downloads, the Get Started Tabs provide access to resources to get Office 2007 users up to speed as quickly as possible.

Display all Formulas in an Excel Worksheet

Need to see all of the formulas in an Excel worksheet? Turn the worksheet into Formula View. To do so, press CTRL+`. This displays all formulas in the worksheet; to restore the worksheet to its normal view, press CTRL+` again. Note that this functionality can also be enabled under the Advanced section of Excel Options.

"Ellen has been invaluable this year both in her work as first vice president and as a sounding board during my presidency," said MFA President Harold Gordon.

Dabbs was featured in *Tree Talk* magazine as a part of the *Women in Forestry* issue and has a long history of community involvement. Dabbs has tree farms in two states and has served as the Rankin County Forestry Association president. She currently serves on the MFA board of directors and is active on many committees including governmental affairs, membership, and strategic planning.

"MFA is one of the most effective forestry organizations in the South. I look forward to helping Mississippi landowners work on taxes, best management practices, and new markets such as biofuels and carbon credits," said Dabbs.

Dabbs has a Bachelor of Science in accounting and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi. She currently manages two development companies, a construction company, as well as overseeing her family tree farms and part time accounting.

Mississippi Forestry Association's vision is to serve as *The Voice of Forestry* in Mississippi. In 1938 MFA was formed to guard and grow Mississippi's forests and that is still the mission today.

LISTENING INTENTLY

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does this insight improve my skill as an accountant?

Let's start with clients. Considering that clients pay us to do what they ask, it is usually a good idea to listen to what they say. We want to get the order right. For example, a client calls her accountant to request an appointment about tax planning. The accountant that clearly hears the request will check his calendar, agree to a mutually convenient date and schedule the appointment. At a minimum the accountant will ask, if a certain time and date is OK with the client. But, what if the

accountant added a simple question, like "what has changed in your finances from last year that I can prepare for?" By listening intently, the accountant may learn that a new child has been born, the client received an inheritance, or a significant real estate purchase recently closed. With this one question the accountant has given the client permission to either share a tremendous event in their lives or lament about some crisis that requires her accountant's expertise. Either way, the simple act of listening validates the client's decision to hire her accountant. In short, by listening intently to the client needs, you become more than a resource but that client's "most trusted business advisor".

However, establishing this trusted bond begins at the prospect level. A prospect is just a future client. Prospects may seek a new accountant because "my current provider does not understand me". Conversely, they may seek a new accountant because "my current provider does understand me". In the first case. questioning and listening will reveal critical information that leads to you convincing the prospect you will better serve their needs.

By listening intently and representing key factors that the prospect values in their accounting relationship, perhaps technical expertise, partner attention, or timely responses, the result is a bond yielding a

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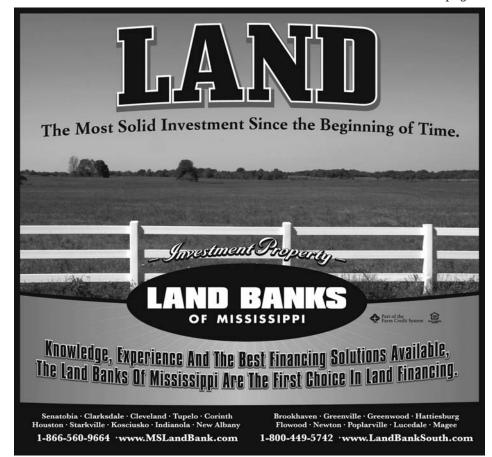
The Mississippi Society of CPAs is pleased to announce our partnership with LeapFILE, Inc., the leading provider of on-demand enterprise file exchange solutions. What this means for you, as one of our valued members, is that you will be able to take advantage of a new program benefit for all MSCPA members called MSCPA SecureSend powered by LeapFILE as well as discounted pricing plans for multiuser firms.

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LISTENING INTENTLY

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coveted client relationship.

In the second case, the same questioning and listening exercises may reveal that the client has needs that are beyond your firm's risk tolerance. Are you likely to catch this possible pitfall if you do not firmly put on your listening ears? By listening intently you may have avoided a relationship that could be potentially costly to the firm and its reputation.

In order to connect with a prospect, accountants must demonstrate the ability to solve problems. Then, to understand the problem that an accountant will solve, he must ask questions. Examples of questions may feature prospect's financial condition, longterm goals, and risk tolerance. No matter how skilled an accountant may be, prospect needs are individualized. In order to effectively solve the problem, an accountant must listen intently to understand the individual needs and desires of prospects. It is not only the masterful accounting skills that win the client in this scenario, but rather the correct application of the masterful accounting skills. The correct application can only be used after listening intently to gain the confidence of the prospect, and then understanding the

needs and wants that they value most.

Finally, listening is a skill and tools exist that will improve the listening ability of professionals. First, you have to want to listen. Professionals who are distracted during an interaction, too busy to hear what others have to say, or too intelligent to hear the entire story because they already know the solution, will be poor listeners. Second, you must embrace the silence. As stated earlier, listening is not waiting for your turn to talk. When someone else speaks allow a few seconds to pass before responding. During that brief moment mentally revisit what you just heard. The speaker will often clarify their point further because they fail to embrace the silence. As a general rule, the more they talk, the smarter they remember you to be. Third, realize that repeating is understanding. When you repeat what you just heard, it reinforces the listening and understanding experience. Furthermore, it provides the speaker the chance to immediately correct any misunderstandings. Finally, know your speaker and know yourself. For speakers who enjoy talking, allow them to talk until you understand their point completely. For more reluctant speakers, be prepared with thoughtful openended questions that focus on their intelligence and emotional desires.

As a listener, recognize when you are losing interest or getting the urge to

interrupt with your contribution. In those cases focus more intently on listening to the speaker's message and remembering your own point. It will likely still be brilliant in a few seconds when the speaker completes his thought, as well as being much better received. To get the maximum benefit from this interaction, you must firmly put your listening ears on and be ready to respond with care. By using these tools, you will be rewarded with more information and success concerning meeting the needs of your clients and prospects.

MSCPA ANNUAL CONVENTION DATES FOR 2009 & 2010

(Definite)

June 25-28, 2009 June 24-27, 2010 Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort Destin, Florida

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Relief from Email Addiction

L. Gary Boomer, CPA.CITP, CEO

Ten years ago not many would believe that e-mail would eventually become a mission critical application. Today it has taken over many work lives and is gaining even a firmer grip as PDAs, BlackBerry phones and other mobile devices become widespread. Sadly, most users have little if any training how to effectively organize and follow through with the mass of messages they receive each day. Little or no planning goes into personal implementation.

IT typically roles out a new application with a few tips and says, "It's intuitive". Right—but! The following questions offer an indication of how much e-mail has taken control of your life.

- 1.) How many hours per day do you spend handling e-mail?
- 2.) Do you have 100+ messages in your Inbox?
- 3.) Do you print e-mails and stack them, so you don't forget a task or important information? (If you have over 1,000 sitting on your

- desk, your system is out of control.)
- 4.) Have you had at least four hours of training about how to manage email?
- 5.) Do you pride yourself on instantly responding to e-mail—even from your PDA?
- 6.) Do most of your firm's meetings involve people who read and respond to e-mails during the meeting?
- 7.) Do you spend evenings and weekends catching up on e-mails?

These questions bring to light just a few of the issues in today's ever-connected world, and most partners and staff in accounting firms are doing a poor job of managing e-mail, tasks, documents and their calendars. This reality stems from a lack of training and a trusted system. The solution is a workflow process that increases confidence by clearing the mind and eliminating worry about work and personal commitments.

I must admit I have experienced many

of the issues indicated above—along with the worries and frustrations. Like many of you, I would simply drag e-mail from my Inbox to the appropriate folder. I even printed some e-mails in PDF format before storing them. While this process reduced the size of my Inbox, it did not address action items or due dates and did not provide a suitable solution for filing

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Do We Have Your Email Address?

Visit the Members Section of the Society website (top right main page at www.ms-cpa.org) to review your member information and make updates. Or, email your preferred email address to mail@ms-cpa.org and we'll do the update for you.

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EMAIL ADDICTION

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documents and content in a searchable format. I worried regularly about potentially missing a task or due date and failing to respond appropriately. I researched many ways to improve my existing system and am happy to share with you the results.

If this sounds similar to your experience, know that you *can* get control and reduce stress related to e-mail with just a little time spent planning, visioning, brainstorming, organizing and processing. You can design your system to focus on both personal and firm objectives—areas where thinking and planning pay big dividends. (I have learned the hard way that planning is crucial, but most prefer action rather than thinking. The One-Page Strategic Plan and a personal 90-Day Game plan can provide the necessary focus and reduce distractions.)

Our firm uses Microsoft Exchange 2007 and Office 2007, so we've always had the tools—we just were not using them correctly. We didn't know what we didn't know, because we were knowledgeable about parts but not the whole. After some planning, reading and research, I am now able to clear my Inbox in the morning and evening with confidence. I am also getting better at responding to e-mail on my own terms.

Here's how to get started in Outlook:

- Set your view in Calendar to show a week rather than a month and include the To Do Bar at right with Tasks below. Tasks do not clutter your calendar but appear below it based upon due or assigned dates. This alone is helpful and reassuring.
- 2.) Turn off the **E-mail Reminder**. It is a continual distraction.
- 3.) Use the following terms to categorize tasks. (You can expand upon these, but this is enough to get you started.)
 - 1. None (Where all tasks start.)
 - 2. 1:1 Name (One to One with the person's name use as many as you need, but start with 3-4 primary contacts.)
 - 3. Clients
 - 4. Telephone calls
 - 5. Personal
 - Someday/Maybe (For tasks you want to do but are not critical e.g., a skiing trip during tax season.)

- 4.) Use drag and drop from your Inbox. For example, say you need to compose a response but don't have the time right now. Drag the message to Tasks and assign a due date. This will remind you in the Tasks window rather than put it on your calendar.
- 5.) Use Microsoft Office OneNote, a powerful program that sets up notebooks with folders and tabs. All notebooks are searchable, and you can transfer documents there to file later (or never). I started with three notebooks and now have five. Notebooks can be shared over the network, among machines or just on one machine. Documents, sections or entire notebooks can be password protected if desired. The first three notebooks I created:
 - BCI (company information).
 Includes meetings, conferences, research and travel.
 - 2. Clients (client information). Includes my current projects.
 - 3. Personal. Includes my reading list, medical and legal documents, etc.
- 6.) Compile tasks you can identify into the **None** category (with or without

- dates). Transfer them later to other categories if you wish. I find it useful to compile tasks before I speak to individuals, so I use the 1:1 categories often. I also review the list each week and submit my weekly planner for our team meeting on Monday.
- 7.) Start processing e-mails by deleting, dragging and dropping into **Tasks** or **Calendar**. Use the OneNote button to transfer documents and e-mails for later reference.

Once this setup is complete, you will feel relieved and confident with a trustworthy system. (Note that this also works on a Mac.)

If you do not have OneNote, create client file folders. OneNote is a worthwhile investment, however, so I recommend you give it consideration. I am certain you will find it to be powerful, helpful and easy to use.

I realize this is a high level response to a complex problem faced by most accountants and knowledge workers. Nevertheless, the steps outlined here will help you begin to devise a simple process that can significantly boost your personal productivity and organization. Take back control of your life!



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