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The Practicing CPA

JUNE 1994

Published for All Local Firms by the AICPA Private Companies Practice Section

GETTING ON THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

A new highway system is being built in this country. In fact, much of it is up and running. Known as the Information Superhighway, its economic impact will, in many ways, exceed that of the interstate highway system begun after World War II.

Prior to construction of the interstate system in the 1950s, much of the U.S. economy was localized—local manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers—because of geographical and distance factors. The national highway system changed that by providing easier access to remote markets for manufacturers and merchants situated in other parts of the country. Local businesses now had access to national markets.

Similar changes are at work today with the building of the Information Superhighway. Already, small, local businesses that use the system have the same access to information, markets, and customers anywhere in the U.S. that the largest companies have.

Currently, over 15 million people, with modem-equipped computers, have access to the Internet system of information data bases and communication services via the telephone lines. Products and services are provided by corporations, universities, libraries, federal government agencies, and numerous other suppliers. Over 100 million users are expected to be on-line by the end of 1998. Here's a brief rundown of the various systems and services available.

The Internet. Created by the federal government in the 1960s to link defense department researchers at universities across the country, the Internet, still subsidized and maintained by the government, is the backbone of the entire Information Superhighway system. Local and national service firms provide "gateways" that connect users with the Internet, for a fee, through local telephone

exchanges. Time spent on the Internet is usually free, but access fees may be charged by the firms which supply the gateway services.

While research facilities and the federal government are still the main users of the Internet, new applications aimed particularly at businesses are appearing as more users join the system. At the end of last year, there were over 13,000 networks on the system, providing both free and fee-based access to information on myriad subjects.

On-line systems. Commercially available through the phone system, these have their roots in the privately owned bulletin boards which have now evolved into a structured industry. Three commercial services account for four million users: America On-line, Inc.; CompuServe, Inc.; and Prodigy Services Co. In addition, several major corporations such as Mead Data (*Lexis, Nexis*) and General Electric (*Genie*) make their computer databases

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directly available, giving small businesses the benefits of their research.

Now, through these on-line services, users can obtain items such as photocopies and stock quotes, and access to various databases. Messaging features include electronic mail (E-Mail), document delivery, bulletin board services, FAX services, customer summary reports, and billing services. Fees can be as little as 50 cents for a three-page document. Commercially marketed on-line databases charge an average of between \$1 to \$5 for an hour of on-line time, depending on what you use and when you use it.

Other on-line services available include credit bureau information on businesses and individuals, and check verification and banking services. Future services will likely include employment verification and histories, and public and criminal records.

Communication and long-distance telephone companies. These organizations offer a variety of services for small businesses, including E-Mail, broadcast FAX, voice mail, phone-order processing and mail services. Broadcast FAX, for example, enables a company to announce new products, price changes, technical information, etc. for about 7 cents a FAX—less than a third of traditional mailing costs.

One on-line service will accept customer address lists by electronic communication and generate mass mailings via the postal center nearest each customer, assuring two-day delivery for less than 85 cents including envelope, printed material and postage. This is considerably less than what it might cost a company that uses traditional methods.

Bulletin boards and special interest groups (SIGS). These provide a way for people with shared interests to become acquainted. Database services provide access to printed media, such as newspapers, professional journals, and research sources, including the Library of Congress.

Finding what you want

Because of the amount of information available, it can take time to find what you want even if you have an idea of where to look. Internet has powerful

on-line computer programs that provide a direct link to directories on its system. They search for key words, data, and other information to locate what you want.

The federal government is the largest researcher, accumulator, and maintainer of information on the Internet system. Examples include maps, census information, business statistics, Securities and Exchange Commission filings, listings, and requests for proposals. In the past, this information has been accessed by repackagers and then re-formulated so that small businesses could better use it. Soon, individual users of the Information Superhighway will be able to directly connect and download information at little or no cost. Following are some ways you and your clients can use the available data.

Ways to apply the Information Superhighway Marketing. Bulletin boards that focus on particular industries can keep you abreast of the latest trends, while those focused on target markets can keep clients abreast of what their customers want. Bulletin boards introduce subscribers to new prospects and allow one to throw out new ideas and provide information to an interested group. Eventually, CPA firms will likely maintain their own bulletin boards to enable clients and prospects to obtain information, ask questions, and share ideas.

Research. In the future, the preparation of management letters and the offering of strategic planning and many other consulting services will require CPAs to have sources of information and scientific basis for their suggestions. Such sources as the Library of Congress and other major libraries are already accessible by computer. Large corporate and scientific databases are also available. All you have to do is type in a few key words and you have access to a wealth of information worldwide.

Product development. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the defense department, and many U.S. research laboratories now make the results of their endeavors available for commercial uses. In addition, the research departments at many universities are doing likewise in order to generate new sources of income. Perusing through these files

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may suggest unusual product opportunities for clients. Verifying potential product or business concepts by reviewing what is already known or developed is a valuable use of on-line capabilities.

Employment. Finding potentially good employees and then verifying that they are who they say they are is becoming more difficult because of stringent rules governing what previous employers can disclose. This can create hidden risks for CPAs who help clients locate financial executives. The personal information void is being filled on-line by companies that provide work, credit, and criminal histories. Also available on-line, through various bulletin boards, are employment needs announcements.

Export/Import. It is a global economy, but, for many small companies, becoming involved in the global market is daunting, indeed. The Information Superhighway offers a low-cost way to come in contact with companies and markets around the world. Although lagging the pace in the U.S., many entities in Europe and South America are joining the on-line bandwagon. The basic communication is in English, although knowledge of the local language will still be helpful in many instances. Through the network, you can assist clients in locating vendors and local representatives for their products, and in identifying products that can be sold in the U.S.

The future. Data transmission applications, such as wide-area networks, E-mail, and video conferencing, will become faster, more reliable, and less expensive because of the evolving Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), a functionally integrated system carried over fiber optics networks. Currently, most electronic information is carried over existing analog telephone lines which require a modem to convert the signal to digital code. This limits transfer speeds. When the ISDN is fully in place at the end of the decade, costs will drop further and speeds will increase substantially.

Taking advantage of the Information Superhighway does not require great skill or arcane knowledge. If you can run Windows or master the basic databases on your computer and the system is connected to a telephone, opportunity is literally only a few keystrokes away. I urge you to take advantage of it. ☑

—by **Timothy J. Beauchemin, CPA**, *Enterprise 2000, 1500 Smith, Suite 4900, Houston, Texas 77002, tel. (713) 951-7300, FAX (713) 951-7299*

Editor's note: The above article is adapted from Mr. Beauchemin's forthcoming book, Avoiding the Random Walk: Managing Your Firm in the 21st Century (Houston: Network Press, August 1994).

AICPA National Practice Management and Firm Administration Conference

Designed for managing partners, partners, and firm administrators from larger local and regional firms, the AICPA National Practice Management and Firm Administration Conference will be held on July 25–27 at the Loews Coronado Bay Resort in San Diego, California.

The conference offers practical information and discussions on topics such as cost containment strategies, risk management, marketing, staff evaluation, disaster planning, strategic planning, and financial graphics.

Other features include a bonus evening session on practice opportunities provided by the North American Free Trade Agreement, an optional four-hour practice management discussion, and up to four hours of tax and two hours of accounting and auditing CPE credit.

Conference registrants can also participate in an extensive AICPA and *Accounting Office Management and Administration Report* practice management survey. (Survey results will be distributed to registrants.)

The registration fee is \$495 before June 20, \$595 after June 20, and \$450 for each additional member of a firm. For more information, contact the AICPA practice management division, (212) 596-6138.

National Accounting and Auditing Advanced Technical Symposium

The AICPA will hold its seventh annual National Accounting and Auditing Advanced Technical Symposium (NAAATS) on June 27–28 at the Ritz Carlton Buckhead, Atlanta, Georgia, and on July 28–29 at the Desert Inn, Las Vegas, Nevada. With the strong involvement of former and current members of the private companies practice section technical issues committee (TIC), the symposium is firmly focused on providing training and advice on advanced accounting and auditing issues to the partners and managers of local and regional firms.

NAAATS participants can interact with standard setters from the Financial Accounting Standards Board and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board; discuss recent accounting and auditing pronouncements at a TIC roundtable; and attend sessions on current issues affecting compilation and reviews, employee benefit and plan auditing, audit efficiency, trends in litigation, governmental and HUD audits, SEC considerations, activity-based cost management, and environmental issues.

To register, fee \$595 (\$545 for PCPS members), call the AICPA meetings and travel department, (201) 938-3232.

Communication and Successful Practice Management

To be successful in today's competitive environment, practitioners realize there is a need to go beyond their technical expertise and acquire skills that will help

- Develop staff.
- Foster better client relationships.
- Provide quality service as the client defines it.

To accomplish all three tasks successfully requires considerable expertise in selling, marketing, and communicating.

According to an article in the April 1991 *Practice Development Institute Report*, what clients want most from their CPA includes

- Responsiveness and availability.
- Periodic progress reports and no surprises.
- Follow-up after the service is completed.
- Clear and understandable bills.
- Timeliness in delivering work.
- Interest in and understanding of client's business.
- Aid in identifying and solving client's problems.

Note how many items on this list require communication skills.

Because much of our personal and professional success depends on effective communication, imagine the competitive advantage that could be gained by improving our communication skills. By improving our communication skills, I mean increasing our understanding of others and enhancing our credibility with them. This is particularly important when dealing with clients to whom we wish to provide services, and with those individuals who contribute to the profitability of our firms—our staff.

To begin the process of improvement, reflect for a moment on your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator. Think about the communication skills you believe contributed to your greatest success with a client or colleague. Then, think about the communication skills you wish you had—skills that could have helped you avoid a major problem or misunderstanding with a client or colleague. List those skills you would like to develop.

Consider going beyond the more obvious skills needed to become good at public speaking and at writing for business purposes. What about listening skills? According to some reports, managers spend about half of every working day listening to other

people talk. But how many of us can say that when someone is speaking

- We always listen carefully and don't let our minds wander?
- We never engage in selective listening, that is, we do hear information that does not necessarily support our position?
- We always try to listen just as carefully for what is *not* said as we do to what *is* said.
- We always pay more attention to what is really being said than we do to devising our response.

Few of us can say that we listen this carefully. Unfortunately, our bad habits undermine the effectiveness of good communication. Developing good listening habits is the first step to becoming a better communicator. With practice, this can improve our interpersonal skills and human relations capabilities, and enhance our personal and professional lives.

To become a more persuasive communicator, you need to go beyond analytical deduction and incorporate a measure of intuition into your thinking. You will find this is helpful in new business development and client retention.

After you have assessed your communication skills, consider participating in workshops and taking CPE courses to improve those areas where you are weak. Some of the lessons you can simply practice on your own, once you have identified what is needed.

To instill the importance of communication into the culture of your firm, incorporate a communication skills component into the performance evaluations of partners and staff. In addition, you can devise a method to solicit feedback regularly from clients to assess their level of satisfaction with the firm. It is far better to find out that clients are unhappy with some aspect of your services while they are still clients. Just think how many clients have been lost, over the years, but you were never certain why.

Perhaps the most effective ingredient in the communication process is trust. This must be an area in which two parties can reassure each other of credibility and trustworthiness.

Good communication is a two-way process. It means that not only should a CPA firm notify clients and prospects of its capabilities and services, but also that its personnel should become aware of clients' actual and perceived needs. Good communication builds relationships, and these relationships are essential to remaining competitive in the years ahead.

—by **Susan Brock**, *Coopers & Lybrand*, 333 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94105, tel. (415) 957-3264

Your Voice in Washington

Pension Bill Due—Pay Now, or Later, AICPA Tells Congress

In written testimony about the funding status of certain pension plans, Harvey Coustan, who chairs the AICPA tax executive committee, told Congress that we will pay now or we will pay later. Mr. Coustan made the statement in reference to the fact that removing certain disincentives to fully funding defined contribution plans may result in decreased tax revenues. Testifying at a hearing by the House Ways and Means Committee on H.R. 3396, the Retirement Protection Act of 1993, Mr. Coustan said, "We think there is serious potential for a far greater cost to the American taxpayers if plan funding is not improved in the near term."

The bill, proposed by the Clinton Administration, would reform the federally insured defined-benefit pension system and improve the security of certain pension benefits insured by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).

The AICPA endorsed key reforms in the bill to improve plan funding levels, including rules that would encourage more rapid funding, such as elimination of the 10 percent excise tax on certain nondeductible contributions.

Mr. Coustan identified some of the major existing disincentives to adequate long-range funding as:

- The 150 percent full-funding limitation, which disallows deductions for employer contributions that exceed 150 percent of "current liabilities." "Full funding" in this context does not mean the plan has enough funds to pay all benefits when they become due, because full funding is based on an artificial assumption of the plan currently terminating and an arbitrary 150 percent cap.
- The 50 percent reversion penalty, which is a disincentive to fully funding defined benefit plans under certain circumstances. Under current law, these excise taxes are still applicable even if the employer uses any related reversion amounts to enhance the security of other employee benefit programs (for example, retiree health care).

The AICPA opposed the provision in H.R. 3396 that would eliminate the cross-testing method for discrimination testing in qualified plans. (Cross testing is used when plans provide different allocations, as a percentage of compensation, to different employees.) Eliminating cross testing would result in the termination of a "significant number of qualified retirement plans," the AICPA said.

Last year, the AICPA offered some recommendations to increase the amount of information available to participants about the financial status of their plans (see the *Practicing CPA*, July 1993).

Conference Calendar

Achieving a Balance in the Accounting Workplace*

June 13—Sheraton New York, NY
Recommended CPE credit: 7 hours

CPA and the Older Client
June 20-21—Fairmont Hotel,
San Francisco, CA
Recommended CPE credit: 16 hours

MICRO94: The AICPA Microcomputer
Technology Conference

June 26-29—Bally's Casino Resort,
Las Vegas, NV
Recommended CPE credit: 24 hours

National Accounting & Auditing Advanced
Technical Symposium (NAAATS)

June 27-28—Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead,
Atlanta, GA

July 28-29—Desert Inn, Las Vegas, NV
Recommended CPE credit: 16 hours

Not-For-Profit Conference

July 7-8—Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC
Recommended CPE credit: 16 hours

Practice Management/Firm Administration*

July 25-27—Loews Coronado Bay,
San Diego, CA
Recommended CPE credit: Up to 27 hours

Health Care Conference

July 25-26—Bally's Casino Resort,
Las Vegas, NV
Recommended CPE credit: 16 hours

Estate Planning Conference

July 27-29—The Minneapolis Hilton &
Towers, Minneapolis, MN
Recommended CPE credit: 24 hours

National Governmental Accounting and
Auditing Update

August 15-16—The Washington
Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC
Recommended CPE credit: 16 hours

Small Firm Conference*

August 17-19—Sheraton Seattle, Seattle, WA
Recommended CPE credit: 28 hours

To register or for more information, call the
AICPA CPE division, (800) 862-4272.

*For more information, call the AICPA meet-
ings and travel department, (201) 938-3232.

The New Generation of Small Business Software

Not long ago, low-cost accounting systems were considered a throwaway. Many small companies bought the products, but few harbored any notion they were getting anything other than a computer software toy. Times have changed. The low-end packages of 1994 are robust in several respects and offer small businesses not only low cost and easier installation, but even some unique features not found on more expensive, integrated systems. We can make the case for low-cost systems around the following essential issues.

Price. Paying the least cost for a system that will work for the client is an admirable goal. But in order for a system to be implemented properly, clients must be convinced they should also invest in outside help. Many small companies are simply not willing to spend \$500 or more on consulting support when the software only costs a couple of hundred dollars.

Ease of installation and conversion. Minimizing the complexity of installation is critical because the client is likely to spend considerable time installing and learning to use the new system.

The key features to look for in this area are the ability to enter open transactions for customers and vendors (without having to post them), to enter beginning balances to general ledger accounts, and the ability to import customer/vendor records from an existing system. In this respect, some small business systems are every bit as capable as high-end products. All small packages come with predefined financial reports, which makes installing and using the program quicker and easier.

Feature set. Small business packages now offer a fairly complete range of features with respect to the basic functions of accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll. General ledger functions tend to be simple and straightforward, offering general journal, recurring journal entry, and detailed audit entries from subledgers.

One of the nice enhancements we are seeing in financial reporting is "date sensitive" posting. This means that the system handles the posting of all transactions (from any application) by date. Financial reporting is thus date driven, and users do not have to be concerned so much with posting periods, as was the case with older versions. Most systems support "on-the-fly" entry (adding records while in transaction entry) of customers and vendors, and have multiple search criteria for finding customer and vendor records.

Financial reporting. Traditionally, financial reporting has been the prime reason why small companies acquired their own systems. It is still a great benefit today, but is only the beginning of what good,

small business systems can do for clients.

All systems will prepare a set of basic financial statements, and many will prepare some type of cash flow report. Others will do year-to-year comparative reporting, keeping detailed transactions for the full year or longer, and perform basic budgeting. On the minus side, few systems offer financial report customization and departmental reporting. What most small packages do is provide for project accounting where the project code is entered for both revenue and expense transactions. The system will then report a simple P&L based on receipts and expenses by job or project code.

Several low-cost packages support cash basis reporting. Systems such as *CA-Simply Accounting*, *DACEasy for Windows*, *One-Write Plus*, *ProfitWise*, *QuickBooks for Windows*, and *Champion Bookkeeper* can all do cash basis accounting and reporting, capabilities needed by many small businesses.

Report writers. For some systems, custom report writing only amounts to allowing users to select a range of dates or accounts on which to report. Packages such as *Peachtree Complete Accounting*, and *Peachtree Accounting for Windows*, *Champion*, and *ProfitWise* offer full-featured report writers which give access to any of the data in the system, and let you report it in a variety of ways.

Management reporting. Management reporting is an exciting component of newer small business packages. The feature permits the presentation of various financial and sales data in easier to understand formats that highlight what is really going on in the business.

For example, *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* offers Collection Manager which presents aging information in both tabular and graphic format. *ProfitWise* contains a number of reports which, when displayed in a pie chart, show the relationship of sales, cost of sales, expenses, and profit. *CA-Simply Accounting* does not provide much management reporting, but does allow you to export virtually any data in the system in a variety of formats for easy preparation in a spreadsheet.

Windows versus DOS accounting

You may be wondering whether to steer clients in the direction of the newer Windows products or to stay with the more familiar DOS ones. In brief, here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of Windows programs.

Pros. Most Windows packages use a "forms metaphor" which enables users to enter data to forms, similar to writing a check or invoice. (Some DOS packages also offer this.) Windows products are generally easier to learn than DOS programs, and are easier to integrate with spreadsheets, word processors, and data bases for import/export functions.

Cons. Windows products require more horsepower and clients may need to upgrade their hardware. Most products are fairly new and some may have problems (bugs). Windows programs are not as beneficial as DOS versions to business functions which are data entry intensive, such as order entry.

Thumbnail sketch of 10 leading packages

Access to Platinum is upgradable to the complete *Platinum* program. The program is fully integrated and includes General Ledger, Checkbook, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Inventory, Payroll, and Job Cost Time and Billing. *Access to Platinum* is available in a Windows version as well as an OS/2 version. With a graphical user interface (GUI) environment, it allows viewing of multiple forms and reports simultaneously.

Champion Bookkeeper's primary programs include General Ledger/Financial Statements, Accounts Payable and Receivable, Payroll, Report Writer with Redi-Reports, and System Administration. The General Ledger/Financial Statements program includes not only the general ledger but also all cash receipts and disbursement functions, allowing it to stand alone for cash basis accounting.

DacEasy Accounting for Windows is a complete and inexpensive accounting system for small businesses. The system is largely integrated—General Ledger ties together Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Order Entry, Inventory Management, Cash Management, and Payroll. The program accommodates both cash and accrual companies.

One Write Plus allows transactions to be entered on screens that resemble the widely used manual *One-Write* pegboard system, with a form for entering transaction data and a required distribution of the transaction on a pop-up window. This interface is easy to learn and use, especially for people who are familiar with the manual pegboard system. The program offers numerous audit and analysis reports, although, occasionally, the sort and search selections are limited.

Great Plains' Profit and Payroll for Profit's major strength is in pulling management reports from the system, at any time, that highlight visible business indicators, such as the top selling or most profitable items according to various time periods. A cash flow projection incorporates expected inflows and outflows over time periods based on existing receivables and payables. You can write checks against or deposit to any number of accounts. This is an extremely well-designed system.

ProfitWise from Solomon Software, Inc., is an abridged version of *Solomon III*, one of the most popular "high-end" microcomputer accounting systems. It is a sophisticated package offering many of the features of *Solomon III's* many modules. These

include General Ledger, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Inventory, Invoicing, Job Costing, Fixed Assets, and Address. The Report and Graph Designer (report writer) can be purchased for creating custom reports, performing ad hoc queries, and transferring *ProfitWise* data to other software productivity tools such as *Lotus 1-2-3*.

Peachtree Accounting for Windows provides general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, job/project tracking, forms design, bank reconciliation, inventory control, payroll, and import/export functions. The unpost transactions feature is quite exceptional for a small business package. Available only when you use the batch mode of posting, the function takes all transactions from the current period forward and removes them from the general ledger. This is a top-drawer Windows package.

QuickBooks for Windows is the Windows version of the popular Intuit DOS program. Designed for the non-accountant, it is a powerful, small business bookkeeping package with many fine features. The program does not require an understanding of double-entry ledgers because it creates the entries automatically. You can write checks, create invoices, make payments and deposits, and generate reports and graphs. It can be used on a cash or accrual basis.

Real World's Spectrum Accounting is Windows-based and provides Sales/Invoicing, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Inventory, Payroll, Check Reconciliation, and General Ledger. The system is fully integrated, as all transactions will create appropriate journal entries in General Ledger from the subsidiary ledgers. The strongest feature of the series is Sales Invoicing. It interfaces directly with Accounts Receivable, Inventory, and General Ledger.

Peachtree Complete Accounting is the granddaddy of all PC accounting systems. The program represents good value for small enterprises that need a basic but relatively comprehensive system. It has eight modules, including fixed-assets, purchase order, and job cost. Also included is a custom report writer, Peachtree Data Query, which was previously offered at extra cost. It should be noted that a multi-user LAN version is available at a modest additional cost over the single-user version. Two additional modules, also available at extra cost, are Bank Account Manager and Contact & Account Manager. ☑

—by **Sheldon Needle**, CTS, 11708 Ibsen Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20852, tel.(800) 433-8015; in Maryland, (301) 468-4800, FAX (301) 468-2309

Editor's note: CTS recently published Guide to Small Business Accounting Software Priced Under \$500. The book is available for \$95.00, plus \$10.00 shipping and handling from CTS.

Questions for the Speaker (Meeting timesheet and billing deadlines)

Attending AICPA conferences, such as those described on page 3, is a great way to find out how others solve problems and manage their practices. The following question was addressed to a speaker at a national conference. Our editorial advisors respond.

How would you deal with partners and staff who are late turning in timesheets and meeting billing deadlines?

Robert L. Israeloff, a Valley Stream, New York, CPA, believes that compensation is the only true "stick" when dealing with people who are tardy in complying with administrative rules. He suggests that the amount awarded to partners reflect a specific reduction for noncompliance with the rules, and that lower salary increases would be appropriate for noncomplying staff.

Other practitioners agree. W. Thomas Cooper, a Louisville, Kentucky, practitioner, responds that administrative responsibilities are an important objective consideration in the evaluation process. Mr. Cooper thinks failure to meet administrative requirements in a timely manner can be addressed


through monetary means, such as fines or delayed payment of compensation.

Wanda L. Lorenz, who practices in Dallas, Texas, also suggests not releasing paychecks until timesheets are turned in. With regard to meeting billing deadlines, Ms. Lorenz says, "Partners in our firm are fined \$50 for each day a billing is late. The fine is automatically charged to their drawing accounts."

Abram Serotta, an Augusta, Georgia, CPA, thinks firms should establish policies regarding deadlines. Then, if a deadline is not met, direct counseling would be the order of the day. Mr. Serotta says that if a partner cannot turn in timesheets or get bills out on a timely basis, the managing partner should determine the cause of the problem. He believes the managing partner can use past experience to anticipate any tardiness, and remind certain individuals that a deadline is near.

"We turn in timesheets every Monday," he explains. "If certain individuals cannot be in the office Monday morning, we tell them they need to turn in their timesheets late Friday afternoon. We also try to anticipate who will need to turn in timesheets before going on vacation."

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