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With all the recent talk about the generation-wide gap in the tax and accounting profession, some might come to the conclusion that a monumental change is on the horizon. Add to this the numerous studies that show a different work ethic among many younger Americans (the Gen X and Gen Y types), and it might seem that this revolution is imminent and could be cataclysmic. I wouldn't bet on it.

While the age gap is real, and is the result of stricter education requirements for credentials that were implemented in the late 1980s and 1990s, the profession has seen a rebound of popularity among college graduates over the past decade. Sure, the gap is still there, but this has perhaps proven to be a benefit to individuals and the profession as a whole, as firms have upped benefits and other perks to attract the best and the brightest of the experienced professionals who are out there, as well as those just entering the field. Meanwhile, many of those in the next generation of tax and accounting professionals have a refreshingly nostalgic perspective on their relationships with their employers.

One such young professional is David Staub, a 26 year-old associate with the Boston firm of DiCicco, Gulman & Company, LLP (www.dgccpa.com).

The accounting and business consultancy offers a broad array of services for high net worth individuals and various business entities, but specializes in audit and tax issues for the real estate industry, particularly large developers and architectural and engineering companies. David is on one of the larger real estate-focused audit teams and occasionally also performs reviews of other audit engagements. With many of his clients' management offices located around the country, he also travels quite extensively. In fact, one recent engagement "forced" him to go to St. Thomas. What a job!

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“The practice has done so well because we’ve really focused on providing services to this key market [real estate and development] and because our firm’s senior partners have strategically sought out new partners with significant experience in accounting and taxation issues for these clients,” he said. Having a mother with an engineering and residential development background and his own experience working as a surveyor and with property management while in college certainly has added to his value to the practice, as well. He’s currently preparing for the CPA exam.

David also cites the firm’s adaptation of technology as key to being able to manage large clients with multiple sub-entities. “Efficiency is what we are always striving for, especially because of the complex business structures of our clients.” All workstations have multiple monitors (David has a triple-screen), and full-time IT personnel are on staff. The firm scored a 434 on the Productivity Survey, a free online assessment tool for professional tax and accounting firms. It is located at www.cpatchadviser.com/productivity. David participates in IT planning, and the team recently held an IT summit.

Another likely contributing factor to the success of the practice is in its apparent dedication to the development and job satisfaction of its employees and its attempts to build a collegial atmosphere. For junior staff like David, the firm helps them prepare for their exams by bringing in an instructor from Becker CPA Review three times a week during slower business cycles.

David says that even though it is growing larger, the firm still has a family-like feel, and everyone knows everyone else. But like any accounting and tax practice, DGC is extremely busy during the individual and corporate tax seasons, and there’s

not much down time. But he says the company brings in lunch and dinner two or

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“Yankee country” of Danbury, Connecticut, this was a major thrill. Separately, David is active with the Young Professional’s Network and is a representative of the company’s “Green-Team.”

As busy as his schedule sounds, David does have a life outside the office. He recently bought his first home and is busy “doing all the things you have to do to get a house set up, like buying furniture and painting,” and he and his girlfriend Rebecca Myers will be married this August. She works in the Boston offices of investment banking giant Lehman Brothers as a sales assistant.

They plan on honeymooning in Aruba and then spending their free time traveling for a couple of years before settling down. “We still want to enjoy being kid-free for a little bit, but they are in our future.” David also tries to spend as much time as he can with his family, including taking his two half brothers to baseball games.

As for the future, David says he hopes to be promoted to senior associate soon, and that he will continue working up through the firm. As non-Gen Y as it sounds, he plans on staying with DiCicco, Gulman & Company for awhile because he feels like he owes them that respect. “They’ve given me so much experience and helped me advance professionally and succeed, so I look forward to my future here no matter how long that may be.

“DGC has given me a desire to achieve goals, not just to work, but to think about the quality of the work product because it’s a reflection on me and the practice. The partners want me to succeed just as much as I want to help them succeed.” That’s a refreshingly nostalgic work ethic, indeed.

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