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In a time when many accounting practices are rethinking the services they offer to stay competitive, Scott Price and his staff of 26 professionals have found a very successful niche that puts his firm against competition that many practitioners might be intimidated by. The Florida CPA.CITP (who also holds credentials for CISA and CIA) is co-founder and president of SAS 70 Solutions (www.sas70solutions.com), a Tampa-based auditing firm that is the first to specialize exclusively on providing SAS 70 audit services. Aside from being a unique practice specialty for a midsize accounting firm, this niche places the practice in direct competition with the bulls of the accounting world — the Big 4 firms of Ernst & Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, and KPMG.

A SAS 70 audit is the AICPA's statement on auditing standards for service organizations, providing them with a method of disclosing control activities and processes to their customers and their customers' auditors in a uniform reporting format. A SAS 70 examination signifies that a service organization's internal control objectives and control activities have been examined by an independent accounting and auditing firm, with the formal report including the auditor's opinion in the Service Auditor's Report.

Scott Price & Family President, SAS 70 Solutions

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Although Scott is officially the president of the company and Chris is vice president, the two share overall responsibilities for the company, and Scott admits that his becoming president was probably not an accident. "My dad's attorney helped set up the corporation, and someone had to be president, so...." The arrangement has worked well for the pair: "Chris is the thinker and planner, I'm the talker and sales-oriented guy." Revenue has at least doubled every year they have been in business.

Both of Scott's parents are accountants, too, with his father, also a CPA in practice in Florida, a founding partner of Price Donoghue and Ridenour, a more traditional accounting firm. Scott actually considered a legal career first, but balked at the length of school and opted for an MST and a CPA credential instead, which led him to Andersen and a specialty in SAS 70 audits.

Scott and his partner were right in their assessment of the market, and SAS 70 Solutions has grown rapidly, now with additional offices in New York, Atlanta and Nashville, as well as remotely officed professionals on the West Coast. The company is approximately the sixth largest provider of SAS 70 audits, with more than 125 SAS 70 audits performed last year. The enactment of Sarbanes-Oxley has also been a benefit to the market, as it has emphasized the need for accountability in all organizations.

Technology has played an integral role in the success of SAS 70 Solutions, according to Scott, who noted that advising their clients on technologies is part of a SAS 70 audit. The firm utilizes a virtual workspace designed by Groove Networks (recently acquired by Microsoft), which enables collaboration between staff and provides clients with secure access to their documents. The firm also helps provide recommendations of cost-efficient applications for its clients.

As proof of its dedication to technology, the firm is one of the first in the

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toward improving productivity and efficiency.

“It is essential that we keep on top of developments in several areas, from communications, to security, operations, data warehousing and backups,” Scott said. To do this, he and his staff subscribe to dozens of trade and IT publications, as well as attend AICPA and ISACA training.

Despite running a business that keeps him on the road close to 75 percent of the year, Scott keeps his professional and family life in perspective. He doesn't go to work until about 8:30 most mornings and usually leaves at a sane time, allowing him to share more valuable time with his wife Tina and their two children: two year-old son Brooks and one year-old daughter Adriana. Scott and Tina, a systems programmer and now full-time mom, met while attending Florida State University.

And living in Florida certainly has its advantages when it comes to entertaining young children, with a multitude of theme parks and two coasts to visit. Scott and his family have season passes to a couple of parks, as well as a beach condo. Although only 45 minutes away, Scott relishes the time spent at the condo. “It gives me a chance to leave work behind and just spend time with my family.”

Of course, central Florida is also a great location for sports buffs, and Scott takes advantage of this, as well. He is a rabid FSU Seminoles fan, and his company recently acquired a box at Tropicana Field, home to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. Clients are also occasionally entertained at the renowned Columbia restaurant, which is the oldest in Florida and just happens to be owned by his business partner's in-laws.

As full a schedule as this seems, Scott is also involved in professional and community activities. He was the youngest person selected to the Florida Institute

of CPAs Board of Governors and has served on various committees in the FICPA,

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