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From the January 2009 Issue

David Primes would probably be among the first to tell you that he's not normal — at least not a normal accountant. No disrespect is meant by this, of course. But in many areas of his life, professional and private, his differing perspectives are evident.

The Los Angeles CPA is a shareholder in the firm of Sobul, Primes & Schenkel, CPAs, APC (www.spscpa.com), which specializes in providing accounting and business management services to the entertainment industry, high net-worth individuals and professional services firms, while also supporting clients in other industries. Due to confidentiality issues, we can't cite their names here, but the firm's clients include notable TV, film and music stars, as well as prestigious law firms and one of the largest talent agencies in L.A.

David manages the second largest book of business at the 32-person practice, handling client relationships and providing guidance on audit and tax issues. His real passion, though, at least professionally, is exploring business technologies and helping clients and the firm implement solutions that can help them achieve greater workflow efficiency and productivity. David holds the AICPA's CITP credential, which signifies his expertise in the area; and, as the firm's technology partner, he has helped shape its IT strategy.

FIRM SNAPSHOT

David Primes, CPA.CITP

Shareholder: Sobul,
Primes & Schenkel, CPAs,
APC

Productivity Score: 423

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technology is his firm's size. "Many of the most productivity-enhancing tools like document management systems are either geared for very small firms or very large ones, so we sometimes have to follow a technology for a few years until it becomes better suited to mid-sized practices."

Technology has always been a guiding force in David's life. While at California State University Northridge, his original major was in engineering, and he did some computer programming on the side. But mid-way through his sophomore year, he changed his mind. "I usually tell people it was a combination of girls, calculus and bridge that drove me from engineering, so I looked for something that would allow a little more free time for those pursuits."

For his new major, he narrowed the options down to psychology or accounting and, since he "didn't want to write a lot of papers," he chose the latter. In 1974, he started as an intern with the firm that would later become Sobul, Primes & Schenkel (after a split in 1981). Of course, having strong math and computer skills in the mid-1970s made him a perfect fit for the role of the "percenter."

For those not seasoned enough to know the term, a percenter was in charge of running all of the math for financial statements and tax returns through a firm's one large calculator. It may be hard to imagine now, but desktop calculators were not widely available in the mid-1970s, so the expertise at running the large computer-sized calculator was highly valued. Likewise, desktop computers were nearly a decade away, which meant that practices were completely run with pencils, pens and lots of paper.

Within just a few years, however, the technology revolution would be in full force, and the practice had made a wise hire in David, who could understand many of the potentials it would bring and help the firm and its clients benefit from it. One very tangible example of this is the firm's adaptation of technologies that streamline workflow. The result: Few staff members routinely work more than 40 hours per

week, including the principals. Staff also enjoy a fairly casual environment and are

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state-of-the-art, immersive environment with a new dome, star projector, full-motion digital laser projectors and sound system.

David was also formerly the chairman of the [National Kidney Foundation of Southern California](#), to which he gives credit for nurturing his volunteer ethic. "Giving back is an obligation I don't take lightly. Accounting has been very, very good to me and helped me take care of my family and achieve a comfortable lifestyle." He also serves in various roles with the [California Society of CPAs](#) and is a nationally recognized speaker on information technology in business.

As for entertainment, L.A. certainly has a lot to offer. Growing up in Southern California in the 1960s and 1970s, David frequently attended UCLA games with his dad and brothers in the days when future NBA legends Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (then Lew Alcindor) and Bill Walton dominated the NCAA hardwood. He eventually took over his family's UCLA tickets and also holds season seats for the Dodgers.

Away from sports, he and wife Joyce are dedicated attendees of the L.A. Bowl's annual concert series. The two are also members of the Porter Valley Country Club, which is near their home in Northridge, where they experienced the 1994 earthquake first-hand.

The couple has shared a life-long love of all things Disney (they even own a few original movie animation cells), and Joyce, formerly a microbiologist, now works at a Disney store. When daughters Amanda and Victoria were a bit younger, the family's annual Passport to the famous theme park saw a bit more use, but it's certainly not going unused. While David says he visits only about five times per year, that's compared with about 15 for Joyce. They've even had the privilege to join the exclusive [Club 33](#), a limited membership private club within Disneyland that offers exclusive dining, special access rights and other perks like behind-the-scenes tours and holiday events. It took the Primes about two years to join, but as a result of

growing popularity, the waiting list for membership in Club 33 has reportedly grown

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from Harlan Ellison, "The two most abundant things in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity."

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