

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

for consumers who want a CPA to do their taxes but don't want to guess at what the cost will be, there are some benefits for up-and-coming CPA firms as well:

Dave McClure • Feb. 12, 2013

From the **Bleeding Edge blog**.

In 1990, I was leading a blissful existence as the chief technical writer for an ad agency out of Cleveland when I was recruited out to join an accounting software firm.

I went from work on the space shuttle to working Superfund environmental sites and writing technical articles to be part of a turn-around management team for a flailing company that was a tiny little division of what is now Thomson Reuters.

It was an interesting assignment, working for CPAids. Because it was a really good software company, and because it was virtually impossible to market products in 1990 that had "aids" in their name.

But it was a great learning experience, and one that led after I left the company to an offer to write "The Bleeding Edge column, now in its 20th year.

Point is, in 1991 I attended the California CPA Show, and on my return to Ohio went to my boss' office. And asked him what business he thought we would be in two years hence. He replied that we would still be in the accounting and tax software business.

I had my doubts, for I had seen two products called QuickBooks and TurboTax. Two years later our company would be gutted and our customer list sold to Intuit.

I have watched both products over the intervening two decades, and while I understand that they are not beloved by CPA firms or tax preparers, their market

share has nonetheless grown. For those who are inclined not to like them, it is about

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

you have to admire their use of the medium.

2. **The pitch is simple.** There are three pricing levels, for simple individual returns, complicated individual returns, and small business returns. The customer knows up front what the return will cost them.
3. **CPAs are validated, so consumers have more confidence.**
4. **Customers can get a \$200 credit for recommending friends.**
5. **CPAs get more customers the more active they are with the system.** Customer ratings can also raise individual CPAs in the ratings, which give them more customers.
6. **CPAs are guaranteed payment.** Here's the real crunch –if the customer balks, refuses to pay, runs from the bill or otherwise creates problems, the CPA firm still gets paid. Intuit pays the bill that agreed upon up front, and handles collection from the customer.

CPAs benefit from customers delivered to them, already qualified, with all of their documents already scanned and ready for tax preparation.

It's hard to know how successful this program will be, but I have the feeling that new firms and those struggling to find new customers will welcome another arrow in their marketing quiver. I could be wrong, but then I wasn't in 1991.

Firm Management • Income Tax • Taxes

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us