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Gail Cole • Feb. 06, 2018



Accountants are often described as capable, trustworthy, and good with figures, and they are. But they are also much, much, more.

Over the centuries, accountants have been fashionistas, inventors, and spies. They fight crime, write books, and uphold the law. The more one learns about accountants, the more surprises one uncovers. Secret lives, indeed.

When Leonardo da Vinci painted The Last Supper, mathematician and accountant

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his career — as head accountant for one of the most prestigious banking families in 16th century Germany.

Today, accountants include among their ranks [rock stars](#), actors, politicians, and reporters. Both Robert Plant and Mick Jagger briefly studied accounting before taking the stage; Gibby Haynes was named Accounting Student of the Year and worked as an auditor before fronting the Butthole Surfers; and that smooth saxophonist Kenny G? He graduated magna cum laude in accounting.

But the study of accountancy is not just a stepping stone to rock-and-roll fame — accountants are also entrepreneurs and inventors. It was an accountant (Phil Knight) who founded Nike, and an accountant who founded The Home Depot. And that bubble gum you loved to chew in your youth? You can thank an accountant for it.

Had it not been for “the complexity and lunacy” of the tax law he studied, author John Grisham might today be writing suspenseful tales of tax accountants, not trial lawyers. Were it not for the small army of accountants who tally the ballots, we’d never have an Oscar winner. And think of the crimes that would go unsolved without the [special agent accountants](#) who constitute approximately 15% of the FBI force.

No dreary bean counters, these.

Even before there was a numeric system, accountants were hard at work keeping track of our stuff. They were there at the beginning of commerce, as evidenced by Egyptian bone shard labels (5,300 B.C.) tracking inventory, and they’ve been at it ever since. Knowing our inputs, what we have, and our outputs seems to be as essential to human nature as breathing and eating. Without that knowledge, we’d be lost. Without accountants, that knowledge would be lost — or even worse, disorganized and wrong.

So seek out an accountant today. Shake his or her hand. And as you do, imagine the

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- Do I store my products in state? _____
- Are my products distributed from a distribution center in this state? _____
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- Do I work with a drop shipper located in this state? _____

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have sales tax nexus in that state.

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