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Let's start here: I am *not* a tax professional. I understand very little about taxes beyond the W-somethings I fill out at work. Fortunately, I don't need to be an expert. That's what my CPA, Dorothy, is for. And she's been an incredible asset to me these last several years, helping me move states, change jobs, tally up deductions, and more.

But here's what I didn't know about Dorothy until recently: She is a wealth of knowledge! It's not just that Dorothy can do my taxes once a year—she can advise me *before* I make certain decisions so I can act as insightfully as possible. She doesn't just know how my decisions over the last year will impact my taxes this year, but she can predict how my decisions *this year* will play out on my taxes *next year*. It turns out CPAs aren't just tax-time professionals—they're invaluable resources for any life-changing decision, and *more people need to know it*.

Recently, I had a chat with Dawn Brolin, CPA and CEO of Powerful Accounting, LLC.

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becoming even more of an asset to those who will refer and come back, year after year. Here are eight ways you can advise your clients and add value to your work once the tax season dust has settled.

1. Buying or selling a home

No one is more conveniently positioned to advise people on a home sale or purchase than a CPA. But why is that?

First, there's timing. Summer is peak homebuying or selling season, traditionally the CPA's "offseason." But if you can put off any major trips until after August, you may be able to help your clients through a challenging time.

Second is positioning. If you've ever bought or sold a house, you know everyone wants a piece of the pie: realtors, lenders, brokers, etc. In many ways, getting into a new home can feel like taking the cage down into an ocean of sharks.

But accountants are different. They're on the side of the customer. As a CPA, your job is to help your clients understand how buying or selling a home might impact their income, their taxes, and more. You know what their finances were like in past years and how this decision might affect those finances and financial strategies in the future.

2. Renting out a space

It takes fewer than 30 minutes to put a room on Airbnb. Nowadays, renting out space is simple. There are tons of online resources that can help individuals rent out everything from houses to parking spaces. The downside to these easy-to-use income sources is that people often mistake "easy" for "no consequences." But when it comes to those year-end taxes, that's not always the case.

“Number one, there are serious rules about rooms and occupancy tax for people who

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After you’ve made your congratulations to the happy parents, don’t forget to let your clients know that you have knowledge to offer. For instance, your clients may not know that having a child could impact their taxes or tax return. Additionally, if they’re planning to hire a nanny, they may be entering into an employer-employee contract, wherein they’re obligated to pay things like Social Security or Medicare.

Adoptions—whether a domestic, foreign, or special needs adoption—come with their own list of tax implications. But most parents aren’t aware that adopting a child may qualify them for certain tax credits or exemptions. And how could they be? They’re preoccupied with all the moving parts of an adoption. Be sure to let your clients know about the IRS’s adoption credit and adoption assistance programs.

4. Getting married or divorced

Similar to adding a new child to the family, marriage and divorce might seem like very personal events. But as you know, Uncle Sam is more involved than most couples realize.

If you have clients who normally file as unmarried single, consider letting them know that when or if they decide to tie the knot, they should give you a call. Depending on the income of a future spouse, they might be in a different tax bracket, and they’ll want to adjust their withholding at work.

Conversely, if a client mentions that they’re separating from a spouse, it makes sense to offer the same advice. When one of Brolin’s clients gets divorced, particularly when they have children, she talks to them about things like alimony, deductions, and more.

“Getting divorced, alimony no longer counts as income to the recipient,” she says. Likewise, the parent who pays alimony is no longer able to deduct that amount on their taxes. That's just one of the tips a soon-to-be-divorced person may want to

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"Say [a client] wants to sell stock because they want to buy a camper," says Brolin. "They need to call their accountant. … Is there a capital gain situation? Maybe they bought each share for a dollar, and they have 500 shares. Now each share is worth $100, and they've got $50,000. They've got quite a gain there, and they need to consider that."

Educating your clients about their investments and what they can do with them in the future is one role CPAs can take. More than anyone, accountants know what repercussions can result when a client sells or moves mutual funds, stocks, 401(k)s, etc. Helping your clients decide where to get the money for a large purchase is one way you can strategize with them and strengthen that relationship, so they turn to you more frequently in the future.

6. Home remodeling

Similar to making a big purchase, as an accountant, you'll want to talk to your clients about where they're getting the funds for a home remodel. But additionally, it's your opportunity to remind them to keep all those receipts for the coming year's deductions.

"I don't need to know if they've replaced the hose outside," she laughs. "That's going to be 70 bucks. But major home improvements should be tracked on a spreadsheet or wherever they keep their permanent files." Brolin also makes sure to remind her clients to always include copies of contractor receipts. It's one expense many people don't think to report.

Often, people are so busy planning their remodel, taking care of supplies, and either hiring people to do the job or doing the job themselves, the last thing on their mind is taxes. And all those little receipts for paint, fixtures, and molding can get lost in the clutter. If your clients only knew how much they could save by putting those receipts aside, they might be more careful—and more thankful to you for the advice.

7. Starting a business

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From there, Brolin can recommend how her clients should register their new business, be it a single-member LLC, an S Corp, or a C Corp.

Besides advising them on what entity structure they should be, accountants can use this opportunity to advise clients on budgets. If you know a client is starting their own business, ask if they want to schedule quarterly check-ins. It's a great opportunity to go over operations, P&Ls, balance sheets, and recommend any software tools you like that could help them manage their business better.

8. Switching jobs

Like many CPAs, Brolin wishes her clients would tell her ahead of time when they plan on switching jobs. "They should be saying, 'Hey, I'm leaving this job and starting this job, how should I fill out my payroll paperwork for the new company?' Because that's really critical," she says. "At the end of the year, they may owe tax money."

But withholdings aside, encouraging clients to give you a call when they start a new job isn't just about saving them from any unintended mistakes. It's about saving them money as well.

You're in a position to let them know about deductions they couldn't take before. Maybe they should be tracking their mileage so they can write it off. Maybe they're taking some classes as part of their new position and can write off that investment too. Your clients aren't experts on deductions or exemptions, but you are, and that expertise gives you license to offer help where you can.

Be the resource your clients never knew they needed

It's easy to get pigeon-holed as someone your clients only need to talk to between January and April. But as you know, taxes aren't the result of a single event. They're not mysterious or impossible to plan. They're a formula, and you're the specialist

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