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From the Sept. 2008 Issue

In recent years, technological advancements have made it possible for many companies, even accounting firms, to allow some of their professional staff to work remotely. With a shortage of experienced staff in the profession, it often makes sense to hold onto seasoned workers, even if they move out of the area.

Likewise, many of these same technologies have allowed traditional accounting firms to provide remote accounting and bookkeeping services to their clients, essentially acting as a “virtual CFO,” providing most or all of the posting, closing and reconciliation functions, as well as payroll, financial statement preparation and financial analysis. One accounting professional has found a way to merge the best of both concepts.

Based in Kansas City, RPPC, Inc. (www.RPPC.net) has never had a traditional office during its more than 10 years, opting instead to have its president and staff work from home offices, from the road or from client locations. Pam Newman, who started the consultancy in 1997 and holds CMA and CFM credentials, says this has enabled the firm to keep overhead costs at a minimum while offering competitive services that are based on client needs.

FIRM SNAPSHOT

Pam Newman

President, RPPC, Inc.

Website: www.RPPC.net

Kansas City, Mo.

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RPPC specializes in QuickBooks and its POS offerings, and provides a full range of accounting services that includes bookkeeping and financial analysis, aiding in payroll processes, business consulting, and education of business owners. With some clients, the focus is on helping them perform tasks themselves, while for others, RPPC offers full, in-house accounting services. The firm intentionally

does not prepare taxes, but rather partners with area practitioners to prepare clients for annual reporting. "I try to help a business be more responsible with its finances by better understanding their processes, so my relationship with the business adds value to their relationship with their CPA."

Pam and her office manager both use laptops, and with an obvious reliance upon technology built into the consultancy's business model, RPPC scored a 226 on the Productivity Survey, a free tool at

www.CPATechAdvisor.com/productivity

that helps firms assess their usage of technology.

Education is really the core of Pam's interests, with her goal being to help entrepreneurs truly understand the financial aspects of their small businesses and assist them in developing and implementing strategies to succeed in their market. She is a QuickBooks Pro Advisor, which helps on the technology side, and she also offers a monthly newsletter with practical tips, in addition to training seminars for businesses.

So what led her toward her current path? Pam received her MBA and BS in Accounting

& Management from the University of Nebraska and has experience working in-house for various entities, from a Fortune 500 telecommunications enterprise, to banking, retail and hospitality. She then owned and ran a remodeling company. With a self-proclaimed passion for cost accounting, she quickly realized that

most small business owners simply didn't understand the financial side

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Speakers Bureau and Toastmasters International. She is the author of two books on management accounting: "Out of the Red" and "Boost Your Bottom Line: Financial Tips for Consultants." Her other educational outreach includes audio CDs on business tips and writing articles, including a column for Entrepreneur Magazine. Pam previously hosted her own business-oriented radio talk show and is frequently used as an expert resource by various other media.

This adds up to a pretty busy schedule; but, with a remotely oriented practice, Pam says she is able to provide her clients with most of the services they need from any location. And without the burden of tax preparation services, her business workflow remains fairly steady throughout the year, and she is able to keep a more traditional workday. In other words, no late nights at the office (although she may be working, at least she's not in an office away from home).

Speaking of home, the virtuality of RPPC has also certainly afforded her many personal benefits, particularly when it comes to spending time with her children Paige and Cole. Pam is able to keep up with them and their interests, supporting them in soccer, football, drama, dance and other activities. During the summer, of course, the grandparents get their fair share of time, too. "With all of their hobbies, sports, friends and camp, they are definitely well entertained," says Pam. Then, of course, there's vacation time. Pam's family prefers warm weather locales and recently went to California, where they enjoyed Disneyland, and later travelled to Miami.

It's a brave new world, but Pam is definitely proof that keeping ahead technologically can not only help a professional provide better and more responsive services, it can also improve the professional's personal life. With her

multiple speaking engagements and other activities, Pam can literally be almost

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