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## E-TOOLS

# The Family Practice

With young professionals increasingly focused on work/life balance issues, many might look to Chad Bordeaux with a little envy, or perhaps as a role model for successfully combining work, family life and technology. The 37 year-old CPA is a co-principal in Bordeaux and Bordeaux, CPAs, PA ([www.yourcpapartners.com](http://www.yourcpapartners.com)) a full-service accounting firm in Lake Wylie, South Carolina.

Sep. 01, 2009

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A suburb of Charlotte, N.C., the town sports a distinctive Southern charm. Its location has helped it develop a thriving economy that attracts families to its lakeside living and respected schools. It's this community atmosphere and spirit that led Chad and his family to move to the area, as well. And with his office only about a mile from his house, the family is able to share much of its time together.

But while location might be the key buzzword when it comes to some of his real estate clients, there's another reason that Chad and his wife Donna spend much

more time together than most couples — their business partnership. You see, Donna is also a CPA and an AICPA-credentialed Personal Financial Specialist (PFS), and she’s the other Bordeaux in the firm’s name. To be more precise, she’s actually the first Bordeaux, since she founded the practice in 1996 while the two were engaged and Chad was using the marketing degree he’d earned from Radford University. But he soon grew tired of some of the sales aspects of that field, and he decided to return to school.

He had always liked working with numbers and finance, so an accounting degree made sense, and he enrolled at nearby University of North Carolina, Charlotte. After earning his BS in

accounting, he gained his CPA credential while working in the financial reporting department of the telecom company US LEC Corp., which was subsequently acquired by PAETEC. During nights and weekends, though, Chad found himself growing into a support role for his wife’s practice, and finding that he enjoyed it more than SEC reporting and SOX compliance. In 2006, shortly after the birth of their son Zack, Chad joined her full-time.

Chad says that the two have succeeded in developing their practice because of the shared respect the two have for technology and client service. “Donna saw the advantage of online programs early on and started using them in the practice in the late 1990s,” he said. “By using hosted programs, she helped

Professional Snapshot	
	<p><b>Chad Bordeaux, CPA</b></p> <p>Partner, Bordeaux &amp; Bordeaux, CPAs, PA</p> <p><a href="http://www.YourCPAPartners.com">www.YourCPAPartners.com</a></p> <p><b>Lake Wylie, SC</b></p> <p><b>Productivity Score: 410</b></p>
<p><b>Follow Chad</b></p>	
<p>Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/clt_cpa">@clt_cpa</a>   Facebook: <a href="https://facebook.com/cbordeaux">/cbordeaux</a>   LinkedIn: <a href="https://linkedin.com/in/chadbordeaux">/chadbordeaux</a></p>	

develop a business model that now allows us to be a lot more flexible with our time.”

Their mobile flexibility is surely appreciated, allowing them to spend time with four year-old Zack (who occasionally interns at the office and will be starting junior kindergarten this fall), catch up on work from home or get away for a few days, while still being responsive to their clients’ needs. Fortunately, the third person in their practice will certainly be able to take on the workload. After all, administrative

manager Nancy Nelson is Zack's grandma and Donna's mother. Yes, Chad works with his wife and mother-in-law, so I'm sure that he appreciates some mobile flexibility.

The practice uses workstations with dual monitors, and both partners also have laptops which, combined with an integrated suite of remotely hosted professional accounting and tax programs, has allowed them to develop a work schedule that rarely includes more than 50 hours in the office, even during tax season. The firm was also an early user of paperless technologies, making the transition nearly 10 years ago. They scored an impressive 410 on *The CPA Technology Advisor's Productivity Survey*, a free technology assessment tool for tax and accounting practices.

The firm specializes in write-up, planning, tax and consulting services to small and mid-sized businesses, and has a strong client base in real estate development and investment. And while the current economy has stunted those industries on the national level, Chad says the local area has been less affected.

"Lake Wylie area and the Carolinas haven't felt the real estate crunch and recession as much as other areas, although we're not totally immune, either. Which is why our consulting services focus our clients' attention toward not only growth, but secure growth." Fortunately, the practice also has clients in the remodeling and contracting fields, which Chad says has seen growth in their area. Also, through a separate entity called RedWolf Payroll ([www.redwolfpayroll.com](http://www.redwolfpayroll.com)), the two offer payroll and employer compliance services to businesses in the area.

In addition to its consulting services and traditional one-on-one client meetings, the firm has been very active with other outreach tools, including their blog ([www.yourcpapartners.com/blog](http://www.yourcpapartners.com/blog)), and both Chad and Donna were early users of social networking websites like [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Chad was recently recognized as among the most successful accountants using social media in a presentation by technology and accounting guru Rick Telberg. From a business perspective, social networking is marketing, of course. Apparently, some of the education from Chad's first degree must have stuck with him, and he's using it in the firm's outreach strategies.

"Twitter can be a complete and utter waste of time or it can be one of the most productive marketing tools you can have, especially considering the costs. It comes down to how a professional uses it," according to Chad. "Many firms use it only to redirect to a blog post or an article on another website which can seem like spam to many of the site's users. The key is in making connections and providing useful

content to prospective clients in your area that will help establish the professional as a valued resource they will think of when they look for professional guidance.”

They’ve been successful with their strategy, too. In addition to being written about in local news media, he says they’ve met several prospects at Tweet-Ups (live social events of local Twitter users) and have even signed new clients this way. Chad notes that their social networking activities are just a part of their approach. The firm is also active with the Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce ([www.lakewyliesc.com](http://www.lakewyliesc.com)) and recently co-hosted a Business After Hours event that drew about 200 attendees. He is a member of the Lake Wylie Rotary Club and the current President of the local “DyeHard” Toastmasters club ([www.dyehard.org](http://www.dyehard.org)), where he works with other professionals to improve their leadership and communications skills.

Chad and Donna also make sure that they have plenty of “networking time” with Zack, and with a lakefront home and dock, which obviously includes time on and in the water. They have a 24-foot pontoon boat that serves as a good fishing school for Zack, who will no doubt be cruising in it before he gets a car. Chad also likes golfing with his father and friends. And since Chad’s dad has been a season ticket holder since their first season, he attends about six Carolina Panthers home games each year in Charlotte. He’s also a North Carolina State fan.

Even though some professionals might find working every day alongside their spouse and mother-in-law to be a challenge, it seems that Chad has found happiness and professional success because of this somewhat unique arrangement.

“You don’t have to keep family life and business separate in order to have a good work/life balance. You just have to find what works for you.” And what better place for a family and its business to thrive? After all, nothing could be finer than Lake Wylie, South Carolina.

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