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Imagine an accounting practice where you rarely met your clients, didn't market to

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course. She focuses primarily on helping small businesses implement SaaS bookkeeping and management systems, and is an expert when it comes to point-of-sale systems. The web-based systems she most often recommends to her clients are Xero (www.xero.com) and Vend Point of Sale (www.vendhq.com).

Among her clients is a business with 10 retail locations, some of them automated, which requires good inventory management and remote data access. She also has clients willing to try new things, such as Silver Obsession (www.silverobsessionjewelry.com) in Sarasota, which was her first client, and one who has gone through all the phases of the firm with her. She says the store's owner, Leslie McKnight, has been a champion for testing new technologies, from virtual bookkeeping to new POS and e-commerce systems.

She also offers virtual accounting, multi-state sales tax compliance and some income tax services. She partners with other accounting professionals to aid them in servicing their clients' IT needs, including data file design, getting staff and management trained, and providing support and trouble-shooting.

These specialty services come from a love of entrepreneurs and a desire to help them be more productive, and she makes it a goal to understand her clients' needs and processes. She's also energized by her interest in technology, especially social media, and she's turned heavily to Twitter and Facebook for marketing her practice and personal use.

"I'm a Twitter addict," she admits, adding that she has directly increased clients from Twitter and, although she doesn't have a set posting schedule, she averages at least four posts per day, not including direct messages. "It just comes so naturally to me. Chatting with other people, even on non-business subjects, can help build relationships that eventually extend into business ones."

An Apple MacBook and iPad user, Kara also relies upon many web-based

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her MSA, where she also discovered her technological interests, then worked for the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and several small accounting practices prior to moving down to Florida and opening her own firm.

There was just something about the real business world, small businesses in particular, that steered her back on course. That something was probably in her blood, passed on to her and her brother Martin, an industrial engineer, by their entrepreneurially addicted father, Marty. Their dad has owned several businesses over the years, mostly geared toward machining industrial parts, and the entire family played a role. Some of Kara's early memories include riding bikes in steel chips and helping make brake rotors in a warehouse, before she moved into the office to help with the bookkeeping.

The life of a serial business starter is rarely boring, and throughout her childhood and even into her adult life whenever significant decisions needed to be made or had already been made about moving, starting a new business, college or personal matters, they'd head out for a drive. Even in the decades since the old Dodge has been gone, Kara says the phrase "Going for a ride in the Caravan," continues to mean "We need to talk" or "Somebody's going to get an attitude adjustment."

Although her dad now claims to be retired, he still owns a few businesses in Florida and Pennsylvania, and Kara still helps run them. But she doesn't do their taxes, and instead relies upon the family's long-time CPA, George Wachter. During a recent audit, which she called "the best worst experience ever," this extra level of professionalism helped, since it was independent of the family interests.

Among recent events, the family purchased an ornamental iron fabrication shop with its existing inventory, and has established a business (Kreissle Forge) selling cathedral-style fans and lights, as well as custom gates, railings and patio furniture. Even the family home is a business, with her parents living on an old fruit farm that

still produces concord grapes they sell to Welch's, as well as apples and peaches that

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anyway, and she says she takes advantage of her clients using web-based systems since it allows her to be more mobile, too.

Being on the Florida gulf coast, midway between Tampa and Fort Myers, has its recreational benefits. But when Kara really wants to escape on a vacation or short trip, she sets her eyes back north, but not during the winter. "I don't really have a favorite, it's wherever my friends are," she says, but then notes that she has good friends in Denver and Milwaukee, where she went to school. And she's planning to visit Milwaukee again for the 2011 Summerfest, an 11-day music festival.

Her practice and the various family businesses keep her pretty busy, so she's not as involved in the local community as she once was when she coached, taught Sunday school and participated in leadership programs, but she is a vocal supporter of the local Minor League Charlotte Stone Crabs.

Kara's found success in her niche and, although her brother calls it "chasing their dad's dream," the entrepreneurial spirit must be in the genes, because it really has become their dream, as well. That is, unless there are any upcoming "rides in the Caravan" she isn't aware of yet.

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