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them and share best practices and tips for their firms.

Taija Sparkman • Mar. 21, 2013



Roughly a year and a half ago, two friends were having a discussion about the lack of resources available to smaller CPA and accounting firms when a great networking opportunity was born. In October 2011, Ellen Bushnell, CPA, President of [Bushnell and Company, P.A.](#), formed a CPA strategy group with two other friends in Jacksonville, Florida.

Named “The CPA Roundtable,” the group has grown to include 10 CPAs and meets

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accepting the prospect. Acceptance is granted only in the case of a unanimous vote. In fact, all decisions are made as a group.

“The whole purpose is for us to provide a need that is currently unmet among smaller firms and sole practitioners. In order for us to continue to help each other work through the unique issues we face, there has to be a high level of trust among everyone. So we all get a say in who joins the group,” said Bushnell.

In addition to bouncing ideas off each other and discussing common issues, the group's members also share knowledge gained from various courses, conferences and other learning opportunities. Bushnell would like to expand the educational resources the group offers by organizing CPE events and hosting several outside speakers such as experts from the IRS and other tax and accounting organizations.

The group emphasizes the importance of face-to-face contact, meeting at local establishments for their monthly meetings. Bushnell prefers this format, adding that it's conducive to the one-on-one support the group provides for its members. It also gives the group a more personal experience because it's not just another networking group.

“As a small practitioner, you can sometimes miss the atmosphere at a big firm, such as holiday parties or group CPE. With this group, you can recreate that while not getting lost in the crowd. Our members choose to be a part of this, so the topics we cover are more specific to what they want to discuss every time,” said Bushnell.

Bushnell would also like to see practitioners in other areas start similar groups with their own peers. She believes groups like The CPA Roundtable are very beneficial for professionals in smaller firms and would even like to host various events with similar groups.

“Our motto is ‘Supporting, Motivating and Enlightening CPAs,’ and that’s exactly

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