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Taija Sparkman • Sep. 04, 2013



[This is part of our ongoing blog series, “Behind the Numbers,” during which I talk to various individuals in the profession and shine a little light on what they are like when they sign out of the accounting cloud.]

In this [Behind the Numbers profile](#), I spoke with Byron K. Patrick, a 36 year-old CPA.CITP, CGMA, MCSE and co-founder of [Simplified Innovations Inc](#) in Baltimore, Maryland. He has a BS in Accounting from Salisbury University and is active with the Maryland Association of CPAs and AICPA.

Byron runs the day-to-day operations of Simplified Innovations Inc (SII), which

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leaving that firm because my job responsibilities became so IT-focused. I wasn't doing anything with accounting. I went to a larger firm, intent on staying focused on accounting. A year later, I was made IT director.

At that point, I decided I needed to refocus. I went to school for accounting but I kept finding myself in these IT roles, so I decided to get my Microsoft certification. I left the larger firm in 2008 and started my own company providing IT support for CPA firms. So you can say I'm a CPA that specializes in helping other CPAs.

I remember getting my first computer in the 90s and messing around with it a little. At the time, I was far from what you would call a tech geek; I knew just enough to do what needed to be done. And what I didn't know, I happened to be able to learn pretty quickly. I'm much more of a tech geek now. I'm always ready to check out the latest technology and toys. It's so exciting and I love every aspect of the innovation that's going on right now. In our lifetime, we're going to see technology that we could never imagine. It's amazing to me the things that are coming.

How do you like to spend your time away from work?

I'm a natural born sports lover. Anything with a ball is fun to play. I love watching pro football and the girls play basketball and soccer, though, not quite as competitively. I like to work out regularly. It's a good stress reliever, but it doesn't happen often in the winter. I like a lot of outdoor activities, like jet skiing, going to the beach, skiing, anything that will help me stay active. But, you know, I don't really spend time away from work. It follows me wherever I go.

How does that affect your work/life balance?

Technology and the nature of my work make it easy to work whenever I have to. Unfortunately, at this time, I'm on call at all times. Thank God for my iPhone and calendar or I would never know where I was supposed to be. My girls understand because I'm pretty adamant about being there for them. I have always been upfront

with customers – my daughters take priority – and most of them understand. I've

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be more of just a helper, so I'm spending a lot more time on the sidelines. It's kind of cool because I can take a few hundred photographs, get some cool action shots, and make posters. I'm always there for their events because I just want to be a part of their lives despite running a company.

What ONE piece of technology could you absolutely not live without? Why?

The easy answer is just the Internet itself – it makes everything happen. Today, if you power on your laptop or iPad and don't have internet, you're like dead. Your devices are almost useless. When it comes to actual devices, my iPhone gets more attention than anything else. It manages my schedule and lets me communicate with the outside world.

I also have an iPad, which I like. It's fun. From a business perspective, I don't use it as much as I would like to be able to, but it's incredible for streaming Netflix. I spend a lot of nights working. I fire that up and I can watch an entire season of Breaking Bad.

What advice would you share with someone just breaking into the accounting profession?

Get involved with your state society early on in your career. My involvement with MACPA and AICPA has been the biggest game changer in my life. I have had exposure to successful people, lots of information and multiple leadership opportunities. There's no question about the impact that has had on my career. I was lucky enough to meet the right people and that's why I've made it my personal policy to help others whenever I see the opportunity to. Helping others and having others help you – it's a big deal.

Social Media

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/simplifiedinnovations>
- **Twitter:** [@byron_cpa](#)

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