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## Blake Oliver

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advertising.

**In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it better?**

When I started [Cloudsourced Accounting](#), my goal was to build an accounting services business that would disrupt the business models of both traditional CPA firms and freelance bookkeepers.

We operated on fixed fees versus hourly billing. We implemented the latest project management and cloud accounting software to “pull back the curtain” and give clients visibility into the work being done by our bookkeepers. We did effective content marketing to reach a wide audience without spending money on advertising. And it worked.

Our rapid growth from zero to over 200 clients in under 3 years proves that customers are hungry for a new approach.

When [HPC](#), a CPA firm, acquired Cloudsourced Accounting in 2015, they adopted many of the same methods to the benefit of the firm.

**In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?**

When I started my bookkeeping company, I found a lot of excellent content on the internet to help me, but there wasn't one place where I could go to find it all. I had to do a lot of digging.

I started [Cloud Accounting Weekly](#) in response to that challenge. My goal with the newsletter is to collect the best articles of interest each week for accountants and bookkeepers looking to run modern practices.

At first I thought there might not be enough content for a weekly newsletter about

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the gift of hearing thanks to cochlear implant surgery at UCLA Medical Center.

I also donate my time to manage a website for the [New Millennium Concert Series](#), a non-profit classical music organization run by my former cello teacher.

**What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?**

As it concerns the bookkeeping profession, cloud accounting software such as [Xero](#) is enabling us to eliminate manual data entry and automate the coding of a large percentage of transactions. We're no longer cutting checks or filing paper documents.

This has all happened in the last 5 years. In 3-5 more years, the job of a traditional bookkeeper will no longer exist.

The bookkeepers that are left will be what I like to call "information systems managers." The job is to oversee the flow of data within and among various integrated accounting and other information systems.

You can see this trend in action with the [recent layoff of 7,000 U.S. accounting employees by Walmart](#). These store employees will be replaced by cash counting machines and a centralized accounting department that will manage cash flow and payables for all stores from one place.

As technology improves, the same trends will expand to other areas, such as tax and audit. Relatively simple tasks will be automated and those workers who primarily do those tasks as their job function will be replaced by software.

The accountants who are left will do the highly analytical and customer-facing jobs that machines can't do well.

## How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting

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There's been a lot of talk about how the CPA license is losing relevance. Many people — both CPAs and non-CPAs — have told me not to bother getting my CPA because I can do everything interesting without it. But I'm going forward with the exams because I think it's a really important designation.

As a future CPA, I plan to get involved in my state society and other accounting associations so that I can help steer the profession in the right direction.

### **What is your career philosophy?**

In the words of the great Bill & Ted, "Be excellent to each other." Also, don't try to plan everything out.

I studied classical cello performance in college. Then I became a bookkeeper, entrepreneur, and now I'm on the path to being a CPA and educator.

I couldn't have planned that path if I'd tried. And I probably would have missed most of the opportunities that came by.

So be flexible and be willing to take risks.

### **Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.**

I didn't start my career in accountant. Pretty much the opposite. For my undergraduate studies I majored in cello performance at Northwestern University. My primary teacher there was Hans Jensen.

Although obviously I didn't end up as a professional cellist, what Hans taught me in music applied equally well to what I was doing as an entrepreneur.

For instance, Hans taught me the mental discipline to sit in a room by myself for 6

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