

Takin' Care of Business



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

January 2014

www.breitlinks.com

Climbing the Accounting Career Ladder

In order to become a certified public accountant, accountants must have the equivalent of a master's degree. But there's an easier, faster and less expensive way to go.

After earning a two-year degree, junior accountants are finding that once they get their first job, they can get more training and education on the job, often paid for by their employers.

An accounting careers is a good job – it pays well and accountants are in-demand. This bodes well for accountants with master's degrees, but what about those with two-year degrees?

John Ivanauskas, an accounting professor at Anoka-Ramsey Community College says, "Absolutely, to be honest, I was surprised by the need for accountants at the beginning level."

And employers do not just need senior accountants with advanced degrees. Employers are seeking entry-level positions for those that have completed 2-year programs.

Getting started climbing the career ladder and then continuing your education may seem intimidating, but many companies offer tuition reimbursement and on-the-job training. Often, you can earn-while-you-learn.

Kurt Juergensen, partner in Peterson, Juergensen, Hemerick and Co. says, "You're always learning in this profession."

Accountants need to take advantage of both formal educational training and on-the-

The chart on the right shows career opportunities for those that begin their accounting careers with a 4-year degree.

A 2-year associate degree may provide a path to become a junior accountant if you take advantage of on-the-job training and/or continue working towards a 4-year degree.

A 1-year certificate can get you started on the path towards a 2-year degree.



job education.

Accountants today can work during the day and continue their education in the evenings and weekends with online courses. This makes it much easier for those with full-time jobs to earn a living while they advance their skills.

But climbing the accounting career ladder takes motivation and commitment. When a company offers to help an employee advance their career, it's up to that employee to make it happen.

Two years of high school accounting and strong computer skills may be enough to get a recent graduate started in an accounting career, but in some communities, there are not that many offices with accounting centers.

A one-year certificate can help get that first entry-level job. A two-year degree is even better and gives you the option to continue working

for a 4-year undergraduate degree.

In Wisconsin, the top accounting programs are UW-Milwaukee, UW-Whitewater, and UW-Platteville. Using the 2+2 concept – it is possible to earn an associates degree and then work out a transfer into one of those schools.

Those that graduate at the top of the class in top-notch accounting programs receive multiple job offers, all high-paying and most of them out-of-state.

High paying professions, however, demand high-quality people. The three UW schools mentioned above have high standards. This is because the employers they work with have high expectations for their high-paying jobs.

Looking for a stable and rewarding career? Are you ready to make a commitment? Then consider accounting.