

Four key factors to consider when choosing an accounting and bookkeeping service

Factors to consider when selecting an accounting and bookkeeping service or other financial professionals include these:

- **Services needed** : List the services you think you need, such as tax preparation, financial reports, balance sheets, invoicing, payroll services, general bookkeeping, someone to set up your books or suggest cost savings. Some firms may handle it all, or you may need to split the tasks. And don't forget about **Enrolled Agents (EA)**, EAs are licensed by the Federal government to prepare tax returns and have either worked for the IRS or have passed a rigorous IRS exam. They are savvy tax experts, but generally don't have the degrees of CPAs and tend to charge less.
- **Cost**: Fees vary greatly, from \$50 per hour to \$300 or more. Some accountants and bookkeepers will provide a specified list of services for a flat monthly fee, and may provide less costly help for bookkeeping and other tasks that don't require CPA-level training.
- **Who will you are working with**: If you are considering a larger accounting firm, find out which people you will be working with directly.
- **Philosophical fit**: Try to match your general philosophy with a firm that is as conservative - or aggressive - as you are on tax matters.