

Financial Services News

Certification Puts Bookkeepers in Key Financial Role

Certified Bookkeepers (CBs) Serve as Small-Business CFOs and Guardians Against Theft

ROCKVILLE, Md., Oct. 26 -- The bookkeeper, once viewed as a backroom toiler in a green eyeshade who kept the books for a small business, today has emerged as an essential professional relied upon as a key source of advice for best accounting practices and protection against embezzlement and fraud.

Small businesses often have only a bookkeeper as their sole financial officer. Now they can rely on that de facto CFO as a highly qualified and certified expert, complete with the experience, training and qualifications provided by a program established by the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers (www.aipb.org).

"Certification tells a business owner that the bookkeeper is a true professional with a clear understanding of correct accounting practices that are so crucial for small businesses seeking investors, loans or simply tax returns," says AIPB Co-President Steve Sahlein. "Even more important is the protection that Certified Bookkeepers bring to company assets because of their training in internal controls and preventing fraud by employees, customers and vendors."

More than 100 colleges and universities today have courses that prepare bookkeepers for the AIPB certification exam. Another 150 colleges and community colleges offer on-line courses to bookkeepers who typically previously had little more than a high school diploma.

But certification is changing the lives of bookkeepers as much as the companies they work for.

"My credibility went way up with our president and vice-president as soon as I became certified," says Anita J. Green, Chief Bookkeeper in the four-person accounting department of Mid-City Supply Co., Elkhart, IN. "The owners now regularly seek my input on important decisions involving capital improvements, lease-purchase decisions, the timing of new asset purchases and how to treat various expenditures."

When freelance bookkeeper James M. Perillo, CB, Oakville, CT, added "Certified Bookkeeper" in italics to his Yellow Pages ad, traffic picked up substantially. "It's amazing how people pick up 'Certified Bookkeeper' more than anything else on my Web site and my Yellow Pages ad."

Despite the growing numbers of schools offering a prep course for the national certification exam, most bookkeepers study by using the Institute's self-teaching preparatory workbooks.

Bookkeepers can enroll for certification by clicking on the "Certification Program" page at the www.aipb.org web site at the www.aipb.org or by calling 1-800-622-0121.