



[LETTER FROM THE CHAIR](#)

[LETTER FROM THE VP](#)

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At PCPS, we provide members with the information they need and the tools they can use to benefit from that information. The PCPS Top MAP Issues Survey, for example, is a respected study of the most significant challenges facing small practitioners. PCPS performs this research to offer member firms a valuable perspective on the problems that are having an impact on practices like their own and on developments within the profession of which they may not yet be aware. We also use the results to determine which new programs and resources will best fulfill our members' needs.

To help members tackle some of the key issues in the survey, PCPS is publishing *The Top MAP Issues for CPA Firms—And How to Address Them*, based on the findings of our most recent study, released late last year. This commentary—an exclusive PCPS member benefit—provides practical ideas and information for small practitioners. For this edition of the survey, we did not issue one overall Top Issues list because averaging the answers from many different types of firms does not accurately reflect the issues that are of greatest importance to all segments. Instead, we released five separate Top Issues lists for sole practitioners and firms with two to five professionals, six to ten professionals, 11 to 20 professionals and more than 20 professionals. This allows CPAs to focus in on the concerns that are most significant to them.

Although we did not compile one single list of top issues, in the commentary we look at the five challenges that appeared most frequently on all the lists. They are:

- *Staying on top of tax and technical issues.* The commentary provides a lengthy inventory of easy-to-use, accessible resources that can help PCPS members stay current.
- *Finding qualified staff.* For both hiring and retention, the next category, there are several practical steps to address the issues, along with relevant links.
- *Retaining staff members.*
- *Addressing succession concerns.* The commentary provides a checklist of questions that firm leaders can consider to understand where they stand in the succession process and what steps should be taken next.
- *Maintaining a healthy work/life balance.* The commentary offers advice and links to resources that can help them create a less stressful work environment and meet the expectations of younger professionals.

I believe you will find the commentary to be a very useful resource for handling the greatest challenges facing smaller firms.

David K. Morgan

All the best,
David Morgan, CPA/PFS
Chair, PCPS Executive Committee

LETTER FROM THE VP

I hope that all of you have made plans to register for the 2008 AICPA Practitioners Symposium, which will take place in Las Vegas from May 5 through 7 at Caesar's Palace, with special pre-conference workshops on May 4. PCPS members receive a \$100 discount on registration for this must-attend event. PCPS has been very much involved in planning the Symposium, which this year will include many of the features that have made this conference so popular, as well as some exciting new additions.

The Sunday pre-conference sessions will be devoted to the interests of the smallest firms, including a sole owner retreat and a PCPS Small Firm Roundtable lunch, as well as other valuable workshops. These sessions provide a great opportunity to share challenges and solutions with other small practitioners.

Our keynote speaker will be Rebecca Ryan, the founder of Next Generation Consulting and a renowned expert on the issues that are most important to promising young professionals. I'm sure you'll enjoy her presentation on this timely topic.

Of course, the Practitioners Symposium is well known for its unique gathering of nationally known speakers presenting practical workshops and presentations on hot topics in the profession. Our speakers this year will include Gary Boomer, Joseph Buckley, Gayle Crossley, Mary Eklund, Jim Hitchner, Roman Kepczyk, Alan Koltin, Sharon Kreider, Steven Preston, Bill Reeb, Duane Rehyl and Jennifer Wilson.

Finally, I would like to extend a personal invitation to all PCPS members to attend a special gala reception given exclusively for them on Tuesday, May 6. The reception will include our first PCPS Firm Practice Management Best Practices Spotlight Recognition Ceremony, where we will acknowledge firms that demonstrate exemplary ideas in several practice management categories. It's a great way to learn about successful innovations that could be adopted in your own firm.

The unofficial theme of this year's Symposium is "Reflect, Refresh, Renew." It is taking place in May so that practitioners can use the occasion to recover from tax season stress and plan for the coming year. You may want to build your own firm or partner retreat around the Symposium because of the many valuable offerings for all firm members. For more information on the Symposium, go to http://www.cpa2biz.com/AST/Main/CPA2BIZ_Primary/PracticeManagement/Marketing/PRDOVR~PC-PS/PC-PS.jsp.

I look forward to seeing you there.

James C. Metzler

Best regards,
Jim Metzler, CPA.CITP
AICPA Vice President, Small Firm Interests

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