

Why You Should Join an MSCPA Committee

By Brent A. Wilson, CPA

If you watch late-night television, you probably have seen David Letterman's Top 10 Lists. The following list is similar only in that it has 10 items, not because it is humorous like Dave's! Here are the top 10 reasons it is both important and rewarding to join a MSCPA committee and attend Committee Day twice a year. Drum roll, please...

10. DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES When you join a committee, you gain access to different perspectives from a variety of people. In my service on the Not-For-Profit Committee, we have a mix of those who serve both in public accounting and private industry. The different perspectives you observe help make you a better CPA regardless of your sector.

9. NETWORKING Being a part of a committee allows you to network with your peers. It helps you learn to interact with others and provides an available resource should you need to consult with a fellow CPA on any business issues you are experiencing.

8. FRIENDSHIPS Throughout my years of committee service, I have met many interesting and fun people whom I now consider to be friends. While I may only see some of these people three to four times per year, friendships do arise from Committee Days.

7. LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES As a general rule, you get out of the committee what you put into it. If you choose to be an active member, it is likely that you will be able to at some point chair the committee, or be highly visible within the group. I was fortunate enough to head up the Not-For-Profit Committee for four years and learned many lessons on leadership along the way. There is no doubt that involvement on a committee enhances your skills and career path.

6. SERVICE One of the things most CPAs have in common is our desire to serve, whether it is in the community, within a charity or our profession. Service on an MSCPA committee allows you to promote the profession, along with your specific area of interest. There are many committees from which to choose, so search for the one that best meets your needs and utilizes your skills and talents.

5. PLANNING Each committee has its own "Program for Action." One of the primary functions of the Not-For-Profit Committee is to plan the annual MSCPA Not-For-Profit Conference. Service on this committee allows members to provide relevant educational topics, and interact with high-profile speakers within the industry. If you are a planner and place a premium on professional development, service on this committee would be a good fit for you.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND PROFESSION UPDATES

One of the benefits of attending Committee Day is that during the general session preceding the individual committee meetings, a legislative and professional issues update is provided. Staying current on issues impacting the profession is essential, and this meeting helps ensure you remain informed.

3. BRAINSTORMING Most committees spend a fair amount of time simply brainstorming and discussing ideas. This allows for open conversation about the issues and challenges members are facing, and helps provide solutions to problems that will benefit the membership at large. It is important to know that you are not asked to share trade secrets, pricing information, or other competitive advantages. It simply provides a venue for you to listen and learn from others, and helps you realize that the difficulties or questions you are experiencing are similar to those of your peers.

2. PROFESSIONALISM If you have interacted with the MSCPA staff and Board of Directors, you know what I am talking about. MSCPA President Jim O'Hallaron and his staff do everything they can to help make committees effective and efficient. Each committee has a liaison assigned to it so that when needs arise, you have a direct contact with the staff. When you serve on a committee, you know you will be contributing to an organization dedicated to the highest degree of professionalism, and one that is committed to the success of its members.

And the number one reason you should join an MSCPA Committee...

1. A DAY OFF FROM WORK OK, maybe not a complete day off, or much at all if you work from your Blackberry. But, if you can make the time to come to Columbia for Committee Day, you'll likely find it refreshing to be away from the demands of the office and in the company of like-minded peers.

I encourage you to consider serving on an MSCPA Committee. Spring Committee Day is Friday, **May 11** in Columbia, and Fall Committee Day will be **September 21**. To view a list of committees, or to register for the complimentary event, simply visit www.mocpa.org and follow the link to "Committees." Or, contact Brad Harrigan at the MSCPA office at (800) 264-7966 or bharrigan@mocpa.org. You will find serving on a committee to be both personally and professionally rewarding, and you're liable to have some fun along the way!

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