

Finance Tips: Finding an Accountant



- **Is the accountant qualified?**
Look for the words 'chartered' or 'certified'.
- **How many partners are there?**
As a rule, choose a practice comparable in size to your business. If you're a small business, choose a small practice. But think ahead: if you plan rapid growth a bigger practice might be better.
- **Who is the practice are other clients?**
It can be helpful if your accountant has experience of businesses of your size, in your sector or operating in your market.
- **Who will look after your business on an everyday basis?**
A good rapport with your accountant is vital. If you prefer to deal with a woman then just ask! There's probably one available.
- **Does the accountant understand you?**
Your accountant is likely to become a long-term business associate. For the relationship to work, they need to show an interest in where your business is now and where it is heading.
- **How effectively does the practice work?**
Ask for estimated response times. How long does it take to speak with a partner? Will the practice contact you with, for example, news about tax changes?
- **What additional services does the practice offer?**
You might be able to take advantage of services such as information-systems advice or personal-finance guidance or tax seminars.
- **Does it have any specialisms?**
If your business is a start-up, deals internationally, is planning a patent application or has other special needs, ensure the practice has the necessary expertise.
- **How does the accountant charge?**
Hourly fees are most common but a fixed fee for the first 12 months can often be arranged.
- **Can you speak to other clients?**
An accountant should be happy to put you in touch with other customers.