



**Selecting a  
Professional  
Accountant**

# Selecting a Professional Accountant

“The accountant you choose may become your most valuable resource.”

It's time to look for an accountant...but how do you select the right accountant to meet your needs? The Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGA Ontario) has prepared this handy brochure to guide you through the selection process.

The accountant you choose may become your most valuable resource. Begin by selecting an accountant with a professional designation such as a certified general accountant (CGA). Then name your need. CGAs are ready to respond.

## **SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT**

The term “accountant” is unregulated in the province of Ontario. This means that anyone can call him or herself an accountant, even with little or no formal training and experience. To ensure your accountant is fully trained for the financial tasks and projects ahead, engage a professionally designated accountant.

CGAs have the education and training required to fulfil advanced business and financial functions. CGAs undergo rigorous training, offer relevant experience, adhere to a code of ethical principles, and keep their skills current through mandatory continuing professional development.

CGAs in public practice carry liability insurance and are subject to regular practice inspections conducted by experienced senior accountants.

CGAs merit the confidence and trust of all who rely upon their professional knowledge, skills, judgment and integrity. Selecting a professional accountant is so much simpler when you begin by naming your needs.

## **NAMING YOUR NEEDS**

Before engaging the services of an accountant, name your needs...

### ***Select an accountant whose services meet your needs.***

Accountants provide a wide range of services.

You may require planning and preparation of financial statements or tax returns. You may require representation to bankers or the Canada Revenue Agency. Prior to selecting your accountant, establish which services you will require.

### ***Select an accountant who can meet your needs on a short or long-term basis.***

Some accounting services, such as audits and tax returns, are short-term, recurring needs. Others, such as business development, will require a long-term commitment from your accountant.

### ***Select an accountant with whom you can meet conveniently.***

Although it may be convenient for your accountant to meet you at your home or office, the accountant's billable time is likely to increase. Select an accountant that works in an accessible location.

### ***Select an accountant who can explain accounting in language you can understand.***

How much do you know about accounting? If your knowledge is limited, select an accountant who will be able to explain basic accounting concepts and terminology.



## **PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW WITH A PROSPECTIVE ACCOUNTANT**

When speaking to prospective accountants, consider their answers to the following five questions:

1. Do you have prior work experience with my type of business?
2. Can you provide references of clients in similar businesses to my own?
3. What is your standard billing procedure, and can you provide me with an estimate?
4. Who will do the routine work, yourself or other staff?
5. Are you open to seeking advice from outside experts on specialized business affairs?

Select an accountant with whom you can speak freely—someone whose comments and suggestions indicate an understanding of your business, someone who both listens to and *hears* what you say. Select an accountant with whom you can develop a solid relationship based on mutual trust.

The accountant you choose may become your most valuable resource. CGA Ontario can offer you assistance in selecting a professional accountant through our free online accountant referral service:

**[www.cga-ontario.org/applications/  
accountantreferral/default.aspx](http://www.cga-ontario.org/applications/accountantreferral/default.aspx)**

Certified General Accountants. Name Your Need.

For more information about the Certified General Accountants of Ontario and its resources, visit [www.cga-ontario.org](http://www.cga-ontario.org) or call 1-800-242-9131.

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