



WHAT YOUR STAFF ARE THINKING



We assembled a group of 15 young CPA firm staff (8 women and 7 men) for the 3rd Annual Rosenberg Associates' Staff Forum. Our continuing goal is to see how staff look at

their jobs, their firms, the partners and the accounting profession in general.

Before starting the meeting, we had the group complete a written survey of the most important things they want out of their job and the firm they work for. The top 4, in order: Work-life balance, compensation, training and advancement opportunities. Surprise: Mentoring ranked only 9th (it was 12th the previous year).

This year's group demonstrated a level of maturity, sophistication and insight that their partners usually don't give them credit for.

1. They don't understand why the partners can't agree on how work should be done.

ROSENBERG MAKES THE TOP 100 – AGAIN!

AccountingToday

In 2007, *Accounting Today* magazine acknowledged Marc Rosenberg as one of the 100 most influential people in the CPA profession, the 4th year in a row he has received this honor.

2. They recognize that, just because the partners are in a small firm, this doesn't mean that they are their own bosses. They see clients as the real bosses.
3. When asked what the firm could do to get them to stay for at least 5-10 years, some responded, "Assurance that the firm will be around in 5-10 years." This shows that the staff understand what exit strategies and succession planning are all about.
4. Ethical behavior is very important to them.
5. They like to be busy.

Every year, when we ask what the staff like most about their jobs, we get the same response: The people they work with, both partners and staff. One person referred to their firm's culture as being like a "family."

7 of the 15 could see themselves becoming partner one day. The men found their current perception of work-life balance at their firms "right" enough for them to feel comfortable going for partner. The women, on the other hand, had doubts caused by the perceived difficulty of managing two full-time jobs (work and home), lack of a supportive enough partner group, and simply not knowing what the future will be like.

The group overestimated the amount of time partners work, guessing on average 2,865 total work hours per year, and underestimated annual per partner income, guessing an average of \$265,000.

The actual numbers: 2,495 total work hours and \$327,000 in annual partner income (Chicago firms).

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Their advice to partners on how to bridge the "communication" gap?

- Don't buy into the "Gen X/Y" hype
- Find something we have in common
- Just spend time around the office; you'll learn a lot

They'll hang around for another 5-10 years if you let them work from home, let them know what your plans are for the next 5-10 years, and give them measurable expectations.

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