

The Profit and Value Manager

The Profit and Value Manager is a free service, with quarterly updates, for subscribers to CPA Leadership Report. It is a list of questions about leadership and practice management that every firm should investigate.

The Profit and Value Manager is based on the sources in the monthly issues of *CPA Leadership Report*, from which we add new questions each month. Each question has one or more references to the source articles, and electronic links to the articles. The checklist has over 125 questions.

The checklist is categorized as follows:

- A. Strategy and Profitability
- B. Management/People/Culture
- C. Training
- D. Recruiting and Retention
- E. Compensation
- F. Client Relationships
- G. Succession/M&A
- H. Administration and Technology
- I. Marketing

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How to Use the Profit and Value Manager

The Profit and Value Manager is a series of questions to which the desired response is “Yes.” If your response is “No,” or if you are uncertain about the effectiveness of your procedures related to the question, you have the ability to drill down for more information. Here’s how:

At the end of each question is a link to one or more articles to help you focus on the question. Click on this link and you will find the summary of the article. At the end of the article, you will find the source from which the article was summarized and the source for the complete article. For most articles there is an electronic link to a Website with the complete article.

In addition to the links at the end of the Profit and Value Manager, use the index and archives in CPA Leadership Report to find other articles relevant to the checklist question.

The Profit and Value Manager will help you:

- Select ideas for inclusion on agendas for retreats or partner meetings.
- Prepare for discussions on the above.
- Conduct performance appraisals—to help employees with specific improvement projects.
- Serve clients —adapt selected questions to develop a management checklist for your clients.
- Prepare personal development or marketing plans by partners and managers.
- Develop training sessions in leadership and management.

Using the questions, article summaries, original articles, articles and references where appropriate, your objective should be to prepare an action plan for implementing each idea from the checklist that is appropriate for your firm and your circumstances.

A. Strategy and Profitability

- 1) Do you begin the planning by analyzing your market? ([Strategic Planning--Doing it Right](#)—June 2007)
- 2) Do you have a process for developing your firm culture? ([How to Create a Firm Culture](#)—July 2007)
- 3) Do you limit your goals to a realistic number (if everything is important, nothing is important)? ([Determining Priorities When Planning](#)—December 2005)
- 4) Are the following performance measures showing increases?
 - a. Revenues per full-time employee
 - b. Average billing rate per hour
 - c. Investment in technology as a percentage of revenue
 - d. Utilization rates ([Balancing Current Profits Against Long-Term Value of the Firm](#)—January 2005, No. 1)
- 5) Have you set standards for revenue per FTE? ([Ten Ideas for Becoming a Better Managing Partner](#)—June 2005)
- 6) Do you disallow budgets based on a percentage of the previous year numbers? ([After the Merger](#)—December 2006)
- 7) In analyzing your profitability on each client, do you account for the costs of marketing, administration, and service—costs that are not incorporated into the gross profit calculation? ([Focus on Profitability Instead of Growth](#)—March 2005)
- 8) Have you considered an advisory board to address: ethics and customs, achieving goals, communicating with the community, independence, quality of people and services, fees, earnings, marketing, operations ([Advisory Boards](#)—January 2005, No.2)
- 9) Do you recognize that your firm's growth depends on the growth of your clients, and that you must be selective about the clients you serve? ([Maximizing the Value of the CPA Firm](#)—April 2005, [Are You Charging Enough?](#) — March 2005)
- 10) Are you developing skills beyond audit and tax? ([Fourteen More Challenges for the Profession](#)—July 2005)
- 11) Do you value management and business development skills over billable time? ([Manage Better for Better Earnings](#)—September 2005)
- 12) Do you recognize that billable time devoted to weak clients hurts your firm's growth prospects? ([Maximizing the Value of the CPA Firm](#)—April 2005; [Increasing Popularity of Strategic Alliances](#)—April 2006)
- 13) Have you considered alliances with other firms to help serve niches and provide specialized services? ([Increasing Profitability with Controlled Growth](#)—June 2005; [Increasing Popularity of Strategic Alliances](#)—April 2006)
- 14) Have you considered all the pros and cons of tax preparation outsourcing? ([The Pros and Cons of Tax Preparation Outsourcing](#)—July 2005)
- 15) Have you considered outsourcing to an HRO or PEO to save on health care costs and reduce overhead? ([Outsourcing to HROs and PEOs](#)—July 2005)
- 16) Does your billing system take into account the investment in technology, which may have reduced the number of hours required to complete an engagement? ([How Technology Affects Your Earnings](#)—July 2005)
- 17) Do you contact liability insurance carriers for suggested wording for many types of engagements? ([Trends in Engagement Letters](#)—January 2007)
- 18) Is your firm organized as a republic, as opposed to a dictatorship or a democracy? ([Do You Have the Right Organizational Structure?](#)—December 2005)
- 19) Have you considered using client portals—Web sites for clients where financial data can be stored and accessed by the client and its advisors? ([Portals—Why You Must Start Planning for Them Now](#)—June 2006)
- 20) Have you developed a system for deciding on the right niches? ([Beware of "Hot" Niches](#)—August 2006)
- 21) Do you select people who are compatible with the firm's vision, and release those who won't adapt? ([Do Your Partners Really Buy-in to the Firm Strategy?](#)—December 2005)
- 22) Do you have a task force to envision the future and plan for it? ([Preparing Your Firm for the Future](#)—March 2007)

B. Management/People/Culture

- 1) Does the managing partner conduct periodic (daily?) rounds of the office? ([Motivating Staff by Doing Rounds](#)—February 2006)

- 2) Do staff members have mentors in the firm? ([How to be a Mentor or a Protégé](#)—February 2006)
- 3) When considering the admission of a new partner, do you evaluate his/her ability to manage people as well as clients? ([Criteria for Admission of Partners](#)—November 2005)
- 4) Do the partners delegate authority to the managing partner commensurate with his/her responsibility? ([Choosing a Governance System](#)—July 2005)
- 5) Is the role of your managing partner to provide leadership and vision, drive the firm toward the realization of its goals, and manage the other partners, rather than to be the chief administrative officer? ([Paying the Managing Partner](#)—July 2005)
- 6) Does the managing partner have a plan for becoming more effective? ([How to be an Effective Managing Partner](#)—August 2006)
- 7) Do all partners comply with the policies of the firm? ([Choosing a Governance System](#)—July 2005)
- 8) Are partners focused on leadership—including training, mentoring, marketing, and sales, rather than being obsessed with their personal chargeable hours? ([Efficient Service Delivery Requires Leadership](#)—March 2005)
- 9) Do partners have a life outside the firm? ([Is Work/Life Balance a Myth?](#) —June 2008)
- 10) Do you analyze client price complaints and discuss the real issues therein? ([Why You Should Not Discount Your Fees](#)—June 2008)
- 11) Are you charging enough? ([Are You Charging Enough?](#) —October 2007; [How to Start a Value Pricing Initiative](#)—November 2007)
- 12) If your realization is very high, say 98%, have you increased fees to force people to increase realization? ([Manage Better for Better Earnings](#)—September 2005)
- 13) Have you considered putting one person in charge of pricing engagements? ([If You Want to Implement Value Pricing, Put Someone in Charge of It](#)—September 2005)
- 14) Do you accept only those engagements for which you have qualified people to handle them? ([How to Lower Your Liability Risk](#)—June 2008)
- 15) Do you have a positive attitude about getting new clients (as opposed to thinking each new client is the last one you will ever get)? ([Choices You Should Make as a Leader](#)—June 2008)
- 16) Are decisions about the acceptance of clients and the assignment to partners made by the firm, not by the individual partners? ([Choosing a Governance System](#)—July 2005)
- 17) Do you pay close attention to all client relationships that are significant to any partner's personal income? ([Can the Enron Syndrome Affect Your Firm?](#)—November 2005)
- 18) Do you have a checklist for client acceptance? ([Setting Standards for Client Acceptance](#)—July 2005)
- 19) Can you describe the culture of your firm and assess its impact on your goals? ([Culture Clash in Mergers](#)—June 2005)
- 20) Are all partners and staff accountable for meeting performance objectives, and are there penalties for failure to meet them? ([Culture Clash in Mergers](#)—June 2005)
- 21) Do you have a system for comparing achievement to goals? ([How Leaders Influence the Firm](#)—July 2005)
- 22) Do you provide growth opportunities to the entire staff rather than to star performers only? ([Manage Better for Better Earnings](#)—September 2005)
- 23) Do you place a high value on management skills? ([Manage Better for Better Earnings](#)—September 2005)
- 24) Do you solicit feedback from staff on management performance and publish it for all to see? ([Leaders Must be Accountable too](#)—January 2007)
- 25) Are you skeptical about decisions based on consensus in group meetings? ([Tips for Improving Firm Management](#)—April 2005)
- 26) Before scheduling a meeting, do you first determine if its purposes can be accomplished by communicating with a few people by phone or e-mail? ([Conducting Better Meetings](#)—July 2005)
- 27) Have you considered appointing non-partners to be niche leaders? ([A Potpourri of Ideas](#)—May 2005; [How to Create Non-Compete Covenants](#) —December 2007)
- 28) Have all your professionals signed non-compete agreements? ([M&A Due Diligence](#)—March 2005; [How to Write Noncompete Agreements](#)—July 2006)
- 29) If you use staff pools, do you centralize the selection function and bar selection by individual partners? ([Manage Better for Better Earnings](#)—September 2005)

- 30) Have you developed strategies to help women achieve their potential in the firm? ([What is Holding Women Back?](#)—December 2005)
- 31) Do you distinguish between management and administration? ([Is Your Managing Partner Managing or Just Administering?](#)—April 2006)
- 32) Do performance appraisals focus on improvement, not on identifying negative performance? ([Basing Compensation on Performance Management](#)—April 2006)
- 33) Are you aware of people who are more concerned with their activities than their results? ([The Team Leader's Job – Accountability and results](#)—January 2007)
- 34) Are all partners aware they are role models for staff? ([Basing Compensation on Performance Management](#)—April 2006)
- 35) Can you describe your firm's culture, and does it include the right ingredients for success? ([What is Firm Culture and How Does it Affect Your Success?](#)—May 2006)
- 36) Do you simplify performance measurement administration by having employees maintain self performance evaluation records, reviewed every 90 days by management? ([How to Simplify Performance Measurement](#)—July 2007)
- 37) Is staff at the same level of importance as clients? ([Best Practices of Successful Firms](#)—June 2006)
- 38) Do you recognize the symptoms of burnout, and are you taking steps to cope with it? ([How to Recognize Burnout, and What to do About It](#)—June 2006)
- 39) Do you ask your people what they do best and do you try to use them for that work if possible? ([How Small Firms Can Improve Recruiting and Retention](#)—June 2006)
- 40) Do all your people know the firm's goals and how they contribute to them? ([How Small Firms Can Improve Recruiting and Retention](#)—June 2006; [If Your Staff Doesn't Know the Firm's Goals, It Will Not Achieve Them](#)—June 2006)
- 41) Do you have a plan for alleviating the conflict between success and the quality of life? ([Is Success Compatible with Quality of Life?](#)—March 2007)
- 42) Do you have a program to motivate people to internalize core values? ([One Managing Partner's Dedication to Core Values](#)—March 2007)
- 43) Is yours a learning organization? ([Becoming a Learning Organization](#)—May 2007)
- 44) Have you considered nonequity partners? ([Value of Nonequity Partners](#)—May 2007; [Selecting, Managing and Compensating Partners](#)—June 2006)
- 45) Do you prohibit partners from unloading their unwanted clients on new partners? ([How to Choose the Right Partner](#)—June 2007)
- 46) Do you recognize and deal with problem partners? ([Working With Problem Partners](#)—March 2007)
- 47) Do you avoid leniency with dysfunctional or underperforming partners? ([Dysfunctional and Underperforming Partners](#)—August 2007; [Don't Ignore Underperforming Partners](#)—July 2007)
- 48) Do you have a complacency checklist? ([Diagnosing the Health of Your Firm](#)—October 2007)

C. Training

- 1) Have you considered an in-house leadership training course with rigorous admission requirements? ([Training Your Firm's Future Leaders](#)—April 2005)
- 2) Does your training curriculum include soft skills? ([Ten Ideas for Becoming a Better Managing Partner](#)—June 2005; [The Growth of Learning in Accounting Firms](#)—June 2005, see heading "soft skills")
- 3) Have you done a cost/benefit analysis of your training expenses? ([Does Training Pay for Itself?](#)—April 2005)

D. Recruiting and Retention

- 1) Do you avoid staff communication on a "need-to-know basis?" Do you let staff know the firm's vision and how they fit in to it? ([Improving Staff Morale](#)—January 2006)
- 2) Have you considered hiring professors to develop CPE presentations? ([PCPS White Paper on Recruiting and Retention](#)—January 2006)
- 3) Do you maintain a network of ex-staff members—invite them to CPE events, social events, etc.? ([PCPS White Paper on Recruiting and Retention](#)—January 2006)
- 4) Have you overcome the fear of losing people? ([Recruiting Ideas for Smaller Firms](#)—January 2006)

- 5) Do you help staff acquire public profiles ([More Tips on Staff Retention](#)—February 2006)
- 6) Do you communicate with staff at regular intervals, not just when there is something special to report? ([Recruiting Ideas for Smaller Firms](#)—January 2006; [Give Feedback to Employees to Retain Them](#)—April 2007)
- 7) Are you using technology to increase productivity and mitigate the need for more people (e.g. document management systems, which also help retain people)? ([Innovative Approaches to Staffing Problems](#)—November 2005)
- 8) Do you do due diligence on recruiters before engaging their services? ([Outsourcing the Recruiting Function](#)—July 2005)
- 9) If you have an internship program, have you considered offering internships to accounting majors who have just completed their freshman and sophomore years? ([How to Attract Top Graduates](#)—July 2005)
- 10) Do you use younger people in the firm to play leading roles in the recruiting process? ([The Tie-In Between Staffing and Succession](#)—May 2005; [Use Your Staff to Recruit](#)—July 2007)
- 11) Have you designed a role for your marketing people in recruiting? ([Marketing's Role in Recruiting](#)—July 2005)
- 12) Are you hiring smart, non-accountants to fill certain jobs including management roles? ([Efficient Service Delivery Requires Leadership](#)—March 2005)
- 13) Are you hiring non-accountants in IT, finance, service areas, and firm administration? ([Accent on Human Capital](#)—March 2005)
- 14) Have you reconfigured some jobs to create positions to be filled by non-accountants? ([Creative Recruiting Strategies](#)—July 2005)
- 15) Do you recognize the need for learning, frequent appraisal, and candid feedback on the part of generation X (1965-1981) and the millennium generation (1982 and after)? ([Working With Generation X](#)—February 2005; [Dealing With Four Generations in the CPA Firm](#)—March 2007)
- 16) Do you have a mentoring program to reduce staff turnover? ([Mentoring Can Reduce Staff Turnover](#)—February 2005)
- 17) Do you have a detailed staff retention program? ([How Firms Deal With Staff Scarcity](#)—February 2005; [How Firms with Low Turnover Retain Staff](#)—July 2005; [Give Feedback to Employees to Retain Them](#)—April 2007)
- 18) Do you conduct post departure interviews with employees about 60 days after the leave when they are more likely to give candid feedback? ([Return on Investment in Employee Benefits](#)—June 2005)
- 19) Have you adopted a flexible work program with standards for hours worked, percentage of chargeable hours, realization percentage, and billing rates? ([Flexible Work Schedules](#)—April 2005)
- 20) Do you look for recruits who have the characteristics of your most valuable current staff members with longevity? ([How to Reduce Staff Turnover](#)—May 2005)
- 21) Do you use your Web site for recruiting? ([Using Your Web Site for Recruiting](#)—July 2007)

E. Compensation

- 1) Is the compensation of your managing partner in the upper quartile of all partners? ([Paying the Managing Partner](#)—July 2005)
- 2) Is compensation linked to your strategic plan? ([How to Tie Compensation to Strategic Plans](#)—September 2005; [Partner Compensation Systems are Changing](#)—September 2005)
- 3) Is partner compensation tied to profit rather than revenue? ([Partner Compensation](#)—April 2005)
- 4) Does your partner compensation program place managing and developing new business over technical skills and billable time? ([Essential Components of a Partner Compensation System](#)—February 2005; [Compensation Plan Should Recognize Partner Value](#)—July 2005)
- 5) Do you use performance measurement to help determine compensation? Are the measurements used in all compensation, not just bonuses? ([Basing Compensation on Performance Management](#)—April 2006; [Compensation Method Can Develop Internal Entrepreneurs](#)—January 2007; [Compensation, How to Implement a Performance Based System](#)—April 2007)
- 6) Does your partner compensation system promote collaboration among partners? ([Crystallize Your Thinking on Partner Compensation](#)—July 2006)
- 7) Do you use compensation to make partners accountable? ([How Partner Compensation is Changing](#)—June 2007)
- 8) Has “book of business” been moved down from the top criterion for partner compensation? ([New Criteria for Partner Compensation](#)—November 2007; [Survey of Partner Compensation Methods](#)—December 2007; [Partner Compensation Should Reflect Partner Value to the Firm](#)—December 2007)

F. Client Relationships

- 1) Do you want to be an advisor, rather than in charge and having all the answers? ([Maister on Relationships](#)—January 2006)
- 2) In your consulting or advisory activities with clients, do you avoid acting like a hammer looking for a nail? ([Sales Advice for Introverts](#)—February 2006)
- 3) Have you developed a marketing plan specific to each client—with goals for each client and action plans for meeting them? ([Marketing to Current Clients](#)—March 2005)
- 4) Do you know your clients in a personal way—their personal strengths and weaknesses? ([Keeping Clients Takes Planning](#)—March 2005)
- 5) Do your clients feel a sense of security when interacting with you? Do they know that your skills and experience are invaluable to them? ([Keeping Clients Takes Planning](#)—March 2005)
- 6) Have you set up a client advisory board to help improve client satisfaction? ([Client Criticism](#)—March 2005)
- 7) Are you developing advisory skills throughout the firm and do you recognize that as something clients want? ([Maximizing Your Effectiveness in Landing Clients](#)—February 2005)
- 8) Do you conduct a client survey after each significant engagement? ([Client Surveys Should be Conducted After Each Significant Engagement](#)—December 2005; [Sample Questions for Client Surveys](#)—January 2006; [Information and Tools for Conducting Client Surveys](#)—November 2007)
- 9) Do you review each client, at least, annually to determine if you are meeting all its unmet needs? ([The Process of Managing Client](#)—April 2006)
- 10) Do you really know what each client expects from you? ([Do Clients Want What You Think They Want?](#)—April 2006)
- 11) Do all significant clients have multiple partner relationships, and do clients belong to the firm rather than the partners? ([Is Your Managing Partner Managing or Just Administering?](#)—April 2006; [Best Practices of Successful Firms](#)—June 2006; [How to Respond to Staff Unhappiness](#)—June 2007)
- 12) Do clients belong to the firm, not to any particular partner? ([Is Your Managing Partner Managing or Just Administering?](#)—April 2006)
- 13) Do you have a program of regular calls to clients rather than waiting for them to call you? ([Do You Have a Keep-in-Touch Program?](#)—April 2006)
- 14) Do you have a checklist for risk management? ([A Checklist for Risk Management](#)—December 2006; [More Advice on Risk Management](#)—December 2006)
- 15) Are you open with clients about your profit structure, your fees, and your competition? ([Being Open with Clients](#)—July 2007)
- 16) Are you obsessed by the desire to provide excellent services? ([Best Practices of Successful Firms](#)—June 2006)
- 17) Do you have a plan for preventing client claims? ([Preventing Liability from Client Claims](#)—March 2007; [Avoiding Lawsuits](#)—July 2007)
- 18) Do you have a plan for dealing with clients who won't sign engagement letters? ([Engagement Letters--When the Client Won't Sign](#)—April 2007)
- 19) Have you recently reviewed the provisions in your engagement letters? ([Trends in Engagement Letters](#)—January 2007; [Engagement Letter—A Positive Factor in Client Communication](#)—December 2007; [Preparing Engagement Letters](#)—December 2007)
- 20) Does the firm report on significant client accounts to which only one person is charging time, risking under-serving the client and having no succession plan? ([New Ideas](#)—March 2005)
- 21) Do you espouse a policy of providing five or more services to clients to improve retention? ([Getting Close to Clients](#)—September 2007)
- 22) Do you fire clients who can't be transformed into good clients? ([Turn Bad Clients to Good, or Fire Them](#)—November 2007; [What to Do About Clients Like These](#)—September 2007)

G. Succession/M&A

- 1) Has your firm eschewed management by committee after the retirement of the founders? ([Succession Planning](#)—March 2005)

- 2) If you are considering merging up, have you developed a due diligence checklist on your potential “buyer?” ([M&A Due Diligence](#)—March 2005)
- 3) If you are considering merging up to achieve growth goals, have you exhausted all other possible growth strategies? ([Before You Merge, Consider These Issues](#)—April 2005; [Can You Grow Without Merging Up?](#)—April 2005)
- 4) Are senior partners helping future leaders to learn how to deal simultaneously with many clients and difficult matters? ([Succession Planning](#)—March 2005)
- 5) Have all your professionals signed non-compete agreements? ([M&A Due Diligence](#)—March 2005)
- 6) Are you merging to solve problems that are better solved internally? ([Before You Merge, Consider These Issues](#)—April 2005; [Can You Grow Without Merging Up?](#)—April 2005)
- 7) Will the acquisition reduce or, at least, not increase pressure on your partners? ([Tips on Buying Small Firms](#)—July 2005)
- 8) Will the acquisition produce cash flow immediately? ([Tips on Buying Small Firms](#)—July 2005)
- 9) Have you weighed the consequences of loss of independence and authority, disappearance of your firm culture, and the possible failure of the merger? ([Before You Merge, Consider These Issues](#)—April 2005; [Can You Grow Without Merging Up?](#)—April 2005)
- 10) Do you have a succession plan that provides for the replacement of every significant leader in the firm? ([The Good and Bad News on Succession Planning](#)—May 2005; [How One Firm Plans for Succession](#)—March 2007)
- 11) If the firm you acquired has overpaid partners or staff with longevity, are you considering retiring them to increase profits? ([The Small and Medium Size Firm Mergers](#)—December 2005)
- 12) Do you exploit the value of retiring partners? ([Exploiting the Value of Retirement Partners](#)—December 2006)
- 13) Do you identify future leaders and provide them with mentoring and training to fulfill top leadership positions? ([Accommodating Growth—Staff Alternatives, Leadership and Succession](#)—July 2007)
- 14) Do you have a plan for paying out retiring partners? ([Partner Retirement Plans in Bad Shape](#)—May 2007)
- 15) Have you started succession planning early enough? ([Firms are Not Ready for Succession](#)—October 2007; [Succession Planning—When do You Begin?](#)—November 2007)

H. Administration and Technology

- 1) Are you phasing-in your document management system, rather than implementing it all at once? ([Document Management](#)—March 2005; [Tips on Going Paperless](#)—May 2005)
- 2) Does your technology leader report to the managing partner? ([The Technology Function Must Be Managed](#)—February 2007)
- 3) Have you evaluated your document management system prior to automating it? ([Update on Document Management Experiences](#)—June 2005; [Content Management Decision Making](#)—June 2005; [The Pressure to go Paperless](#)—July 2005)
- 4) Have you included senior management and administrative people on your transition team for a paperless office, and not relied on IT people alone? ([Content Management Decision Making](#)—June 2005)
- 5) Have you taken steps to prevent people from relying on paper after automating your document management system? ([Update on Document Management Experiences](#)—June 2005)
- 6) Have you considered using an outside provider to host your document management system? ([Are You Realizing an Adequate Return on Your Technology Investments?](#)—December 2005)
- 7) Have you set up a system for archiving e-mails and incorporating them into the firm’s policy manual? ([E-Mail Archiving](#)—March 2005)
- 8) Have you set up a set of standards for communicating through e-mail? ([E-Mail Can be Assets or Liabilities](#)—December 2005)
- 9) When making decisions on IT purchases, do you involve management along with the IT personnel? ([Ideas You May Not Have Thought About](#)—March 2005)
- 10) Do you spend between \$6,500 and \$8,000 per person per year on technology? What characteristics in your firm cause it to be more or less than that? ([How Much to Spend on Technology](#)—May 2005)
- 11) Do you use administrative staff to make collection calls when partners are too busy? ([Speeding Collections](#)—May 2005)
- 12) Are invoices generated by non partners? ([Alleviate Your Collection Problems](#)—December 2005)
- 13) Does your bank have experience with and understanding of accounting firms and the type of companies

in your client base? ([Does Your Firm Have a Bank Line of Credit?](#)—November 2005)

14) Do you have the right new technologies and do you have the right people to manage them? ([How to Manage the IT Function](#)—July 2007)

I. Marketing

- 1) Do you have a “press room” on your Web site where journalists can find information about your areas of expertise? ([Are You an Invisible Partner?](#)—January 2006)
- 2) Do you have a formal process for dealing with prospects which starts after the initial contact and continues through the presentation of the proposal? ([Sales Advice for Introverts](#)—February 2006)
- 3) Do you have a one-page marketing plan? ([A One Page Marketing Plan—Emphasize the “Doing.”](#)—February 2006)
- 4) Do your partners and managers prepare individual marketing plans that tie-in to (and maybe exceed in the aggregate) a firm-wide plan? ([A Potpourri of Ideas](#)—May 2005; [Nine Sins](#)—July 2005)
- 5) Does your marketing plan focus on niches? ([A Potpourri of Ideas](#)—May 2005)
- 6) Does your brand message express what you are as opposed to what you would like to be? ([So What is a CPA Firm’s Brand?](#)—September 2005)
- 7) Have you developed a brand identity that expresses your mission, vision, and values? ([Brand Identity Comes Ahead of Service Offerings](#)—February 2005)
- 8) Do you encourage one-on-one relationships with prospects and referral sources, rather than group meetings? ([Landing the Big Engagement](#)—May 2005)
- 9) Do you encourage partners and staff to join the professional associations your clients belong to, and to become involved with committees, writing, and speaking? ([Join Your Clients’ Professional Associations](#)—June 2005)
- 10) Do you prohibit legal provisions in your proposals? ([Maximizing Your Effectiveness in Landing Clients](#)—February 2005)
- 11) Do you avoid phrases like “quality service,” “high integrity,” “comprehensive services,” etc., in expressing your brand identity? ([Branding. What Does it Really Mean?](#)—February 2007)
- 12) Do you use your brand identity in all you marketing messages to lay the foundation for any lists of services offered? ([Brand Identity Comes Ahead of Service Offerings](#)—February 2005)
- 13) Is your sales training 20% classroom and 80% practical, and is it spread over a long time in small digestible segments? ([A New Look at Sales Training](#)—January 2005)
- 14) Do you calculate the ROI on your marketing investments? ([Calculating ROI on Marketing Investment](#)—May 2005)
- 15) Does your Marketing Director monitor the achievement of personal marketing goals? ([Nine Sins](#)—July 2005)
- 16) Have you considered creating a “blog” as a marketing tool? ([Blogging for New Clients](#)—July 2005)
- 17) Do you have special Web site offering information about a niche? ([How to Become a Dominant Provider in Your Niche](#)—July 2007; [How to Get New Business from Your Web Site](#)—July 2007)
- 18) Do you have a special Web site (not your regular site) offering information about a niche in exchange for the visitors’ email addresses? ([How to Become a Dominant Provider in Your Niche](#)—April 2006)
- 19) Does your website distinguish you from other firms? Does it avoid glitz and too much “about us,” and instead focus on information, knowledge, and easy navigation? ([Web Sites](#)—January 2005, No. 2; [How Important is Your Web Site?](#)—July 2005)
- 20) Do you avoid sending press releases without news that is valued by the publications? ([Public Relations Made Easy](#)—June 2006)
- 21) When a prospect mentions a problem, do you refrain from leaping at the opportunity to be a savior? ([Don’t Frighten Your Prospects](#)—June 2006)
- 22) Do you focus on the prospect’s need rather than on your own excellence? ([Which of These Marketing Mistakes are You Making?](#)—July 2006)
- 23) Do you know how to write an effective ad? ([How to Write an Effective Ad](#)—July 2007)
- 24) Do your people prepare personal marketing plans? ([How to Prepare a Personal Marketing Plan](#)—July 2007)
- 25) Do you practice “netweaving” as well as “networking?” ([Netweaving v. Networking](#)—July 2007)
- 26) Do you use a pipeline report? ([Designing a Pipeline Report](#)—August 2007)