

Vetter said her CPA expertise was put to the test during the pandemic, as both her businesses – speaking at events and a yoga studio – are reliant on in-person interactions. She said she had to make some tough decisions and contact other CPAs for their advice.

“I also know to use other CPAs and to ask the right questions,” Vetter said. “I’m not a tax accountant. I was an auditor, and I do client advisory services. Tax was never something that was my expertise. So, I know the value of hiring a tax accountant and a CPA, even though I am a CPA, because they’re working in it all day long every day.”

Strengthening new skills

Owning a business can often reveal the level of soft skills a CPA has, Schroeder said, because many business owners have to be the face of their company. Responsibilities such as managing teams, hiring staff and appealing to customers all require a strong level of emotional intelligence and soft skills to be successful.

For Wenzlick, his time spent as CFO in corporate positions revealed all that can come with running a business, and that some decisions are more difficult than they might first appear when you’re now the one in charge.

“This past year there’s been a lot of things that have come up for my clients that they’ve needed, as a result of the various different types of relief available,” Wenzlick said. “And some of those things pushed me out of my comfort zone in the sense that I needed to go and obtain the knowledge to do it.”

Entrepreneurship and the accounting pipeline

While the profession continues its efforts to diversify the talent pipeline, one advantage of accounting has always been the opportunities that come from its strong foundational knowledge. That’s a foundation Ogochukwu Obiagwu said she benefited from as a student interested in entrepreneurship.

“I always felt if I’m able to have this accounting expertise, I would be able to know the ins and outs of the business world,” Obiagwu said.

Obiagwu graduated from The Ohio State University accounting program in 2020 and is now studying for her CPA license. She attended the Ohio CPA Foundation program ACAP-Ohio in 2015 and said that program opened her eyes to the opportunities in accounting.

Her entrepreneurial journey began in 2012 when she started making and selling her own clothes, which later became

her African streetwear brand, ByOgochukwu. After entering college a few years later, she found she enjoyed helping others with their own personal development and started Secure that Bag, a resource dedicated to helping students find scholarships, internships, conferences and more.

She said her accounting education empowered her in making decisions for those businesses and helped fuel her growth as a professional. In the fall she’ll start working at EY as a technology risk adviser, and said she’s looking forward to growing her accounting expertise.

“Being able to understand the intricacies of the numbers will help me sustain my business projects moving forward,” she said.

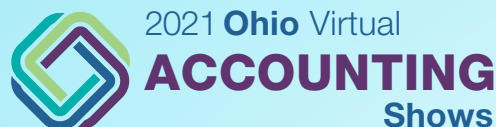
Advice for future accounting entrepreneurs

For those considering entrepreneurship, Vetter recommended working on it on the side first, to decide if this is something that might fit your life and interests long-term.

“The best way to do it is to tip your toe in the water, not to keep hemming and hawing about it,” she said. “You’ve got to do it to know if you want to.”

And if owning your own business doesn’t feel like the right fit, Vetter said there are opportunities in companies to flex entrepreneurial muscles, such as trying out a new line of business like advisory services. Vetter will discuss that topic this fall at OSCPA’s Virtual Accounting Shows.

“There are so many jobs that are created just from someone saying to their boss, ‘I want to head this up, I want to try this,’” she said. “And sometimes that means you’re still getting paid a normal salary but you’re starting up something new in the business.”



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