



FINANCIAL KNOW-HOW: Understanding the business of making and managing money is Melanie Kührau's forte. PICTURE: IAN LANDSBERG

Making cents off accounting

WHAT does your job entail? I'm director of consulting and auditing in an audit, consulting and business advisory firm. The services we provide include accounting and related tasks, business start-up, financial planning and advice, payroll services, audit and assurance, trusteeships, internal audits, forensic investigative and audit, corporate governance, risk management, corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, information technology services, entrepreneurial business services, company secretarial services, business rescue.

Describe your average work day: Tasks include overseeing and guiding large teams, to ensure that overall performance and reporting are in terms of the required laws and standards, and the quality prescribed by the client. I also review complex controls and technical issues, make recommendations to the clients and hold meetings.

I am also involved in the firm's training programme, developing the next generation of chartered accountants, and I've been a Southern Region council member at South African Institute of Chartered Accountants for the past five years.

Best part of the job: It's rewarding to see clients prosper with our assistance, and it's a privilege to work with a team of experienced and technically strong chartered accountants. Having clients in different businesses and sectors keeps me challenged, and the firm encourages corporate social responsibility which makes the job even more worthwhile.

Worst part of the job: Becoming a chartered accountant requires

years of study and continuous learning, which calls for discipline and dedication. Maintaining a balance between work, study, and other responsibilities is challenging.

Why did you choose this career? It is a clean and professional environment, which is well respected and in demand, all over the world. From an early age I enjoyed accounting, business and providing a service. The chartered accountant profession is a cornerstone for being an entrepreneur; and enables you to understand how money works in the world. It helps you understand how people earn or make and manage money, how they invest it and donate it to help others. And it enables you to make informed and effective decisions about all your financial resources.

What else would you have liked to do? I would have chosen to be a veterinarian.

Are you paid enough? Yes, I get paid enough to lead a comfortable lifestyle and contribute to society.

Rate your work stress on a scale of 1 to 10: This job revolves around clients' year-ends, and during these busier periods stress levels can go up to 8 or 9.

Travel opportunities? Staff and directors at this firm regularly travel nationally and internationally. Member firms often reach out across borders for expertise and resources to jointly work on projects, and we have worked on assignments throughout sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Mauritius, the US, Germany, Spain, the UK, and France.

I have travelled extensively across South Africa and have been to Mauritius twice, to Papua New Guinea, Australia and Singapore, as well as Mexico and London.

Enter a challenging and exciting career path

CHARTERED accounting is a gateway to a challenging and exciting career; global mobility, flexibility and great earning potential in the business field of your choice.

Chartered accountants are recognised for their technical competence and the ability to analyse and interpret business problems and develop solutions.

The minimum requirements for university admission are a National Senior Certificate with matric exemption and a Level 4 pass in maths. So, at school you need to take pure maths as a subject.

Qualifications needed: You need a BCom Accounting degree or equivalent undergraduate qualification from a South African Institute of Chartered Accountants-accredited university, followed by a Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA), which focuses on

**Real jobs,
real people**



By Sarah-Jane Bosch

Every Monday Sarah-Jane Bosch interviews real people at work in Cape Town.

- Today: Melanie Kührau
- Job: Chartered accountant
- Qualifications: B Compt (Hons) CA (SA), Post Grad Dip Forensic and Investigative Auditing
- Place of work: Nexia SAB&T Chartered Accountants

accounting, auditing, taxation and financial management. Once you have a CTA, you are eligible to enter into a three-year learnership with a registered training office.

If you study part-time, you may immediately enter into a five-year training contract with a registered training office. During your contract you must get a BCom Accounting degree or equivalent and then complete the CTA or equivalent.

Where to train: Universities accredited by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Expected earnings: The starting salary is between R20 000 and R30 000 a month. This expands rapidly with experience or specialising.

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