

# News &

## CPAs AS ADVISERS TO ENTREPRENEURS

The Entrepreneurship and Personal Enterprise program, associated with Cornell University, has embarked on a series of studies on entrepreneurship, with the objective of helping to start, manage, and grow businesses. The first study, "Creating a New Venture? Business Activities Essential for Entrepreneurship," was published in the Spring of 1996 and sought, through the use of focus groups, to identify the kind of information entrepreneurs need to successfully start a new business and the places and ways in which the entrepreneurs can presently obtain that information. The perceived benefits to society in terms of new jobs and other economic activity of successful new ventures is the reason for the study.

The study identified the top ten essential activities for starting a business as seen by business owners, business professionals, and community leaders. While the top ten list was not the same for each of the groups, there were four activities that made it to each and 18 items comprised all the items on the three lists. The four common items were—

- anticipating cash flow requirements
- organizing finances
- business planning
- locating sales prospects.

The study, based upon the focus groups—28 groups to which 822 business owners and entrepreneurs, professionals providing services to small and independent businesses, and community leaders were invited—then discussed the ways in which start-up business owners can learn about the essential activities.

The report concluded with a number of findings and recommendations. Of interest to CPAs are the following:

- Business professionals (CPAs and lawyers) complete few formal courses and have limited training in entrepreneurship or small business

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## ARTHUR ANDERSEN'S SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

Will today's children have the motivation and wherewithal to become the lifelong learners who will successfully make the transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age into the 21st century? "Not unless there is a fundamental change in the current educational model toward a model that is active learning focused," says Thomas B. Kelly, managing director, Western Region of Arthur Andersen and head of U.S. Human Resources.

"In the Industrial Age, most people's work consisted of following orders and using basic skills that didn't vary much from one job to the next. Today's workers by contrast, are 'empowered,' increasingly expected to manage themselves, share brainpower within teams and networks, be technology literate, continuously redefine the way they deliver value, and upgrade skills and knowledge," said Kelly. "Despite the revolution in the workplace, our schools have not changed and continue to graduate students who are largely passive learners, not active, lifelong learners that they need to become."

Arthur Andersen, long regarded as a leader in professional education and training, and believing in the need for educational transformation, undertook its School of the Future Initiative in 1990 to develop and demonstrate a new model for learning. This fall, the Arthur Andersen Community Learning Center will premiere at Encinal High School, in Alameda, California, across the bay from San Francisco where Kelly heads the Arthur Andersen office.

The School of the Future Project was the brainchild of Morton Egol, a New York-based partner who led the development of this new learning model, which is based on

combining the best educational practices with technology to create a learning environment that is focused entirely on the learner.

Arthur Andersen conducted extensive research on the strengths and drawbacks of countless educational approaches being used throughout the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. According to Kelly, the AACLC is an 8,000 sq. ft. one-room schoolhouse. At capacity, 150 randomly selected students from grades 7-12 will share a technology rich environment where teachers become facilitators who encourage learning

through discovery using project based activities that have the district's educational requirements imbedded in them.

The curriculum components are interconnected, emphasizing thinking, reasoning, creativity, self-mastery, and problem-solving skills through collaboration and investigation. Students are self-directed, self-motivated, and focused on their future. "Students are learning through discovery in an educational environment that develops the individual's capabilities to be successful in the rapidly evolving workplace," said Kelly. "The School of the Future is here today."

Arthur Andersen expects the AACLC to be a model for other school districts. As this learning approach's benefits gain acceptance, the firm envisions similar centers cropping up across the country. The School of the Future Initiative was funded by Arthur Andersen as a demonstration of its commitment to education and, according to Egol, was undertaken without any anticipation of financial benefit to the firm.

For additional information about Arthur Andersen's School of the Future Initiative, contact Natanya Yellin, School of the Future Initiative, Arthur Andersen, 500 12th Street, Suite 340, Oakland CA 94607. □

