

Citation and Resource Guide

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Be Cautious With Hard-to-Value IRAs

- The IRS lists examples of traditional IRA assets not having a readily available fair market value in the Instructions For Forms 5498 and 1099-R, p. 17, at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1099r.pdf.

The “Other” Exchange-Traded Funds

- The U.S. Securities And Exchange Commission provides information about closed-end funds at www.sec.gov/answers/mfclose.htm.

Profit Sharing Plans for Your Small Business

- The U.S. Department of Labor spells out the rules for profit-sharing plans in its publication, Choosing A Retirement Solution For Your Small Business, p. 2, at www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/ebsa/about-ebsa/our-activities/resource-center/publications/choosing.pdf.

Practice Development Tip

Resolve to Focus on Your Firm’s Website in 2017

A New Year will bring Resolutions: lose weight, exercise more, appreciate time spent with loved ones, and so on. In terms of practice development, one key promise to yourself should be a review and, if necessary, an upgrade of your firm’s website. In today’s world, prospective clients probably will visit the site before arranging personal contact and existing clients may be encouraged to expand their engagement by the content they find there.

The first step is simply to go over all the material available to visitors. Is it accurate? Up to date? If you post employee photos on the site, make sure that former staff members are removed and newcomers are included with the correct title for all pictured. Give your employees a chance to update their bios (and photos, if desired); do the same for your own bio.

The second step is to decide if any of the existing material should be deleted and other features added. Go beyond your own impressions and ask others—perhaps including younger relatives—for input. You don’t have to approve every suggestion, but it will be helpful to get an idea of how others react to your website and how they think it might be improved.

Be aware that your website doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Other marketing materials, such as emails to a targeted list with tax and financial content might drive people to your website for a more complete appreciation of what your firm has to offer.

Online Marketing Tip

Transition to Google Expanded Ads by January 31, 2017, or Face the Consequences

In mid-2016, Google announced an upgrade to its adwords text platform to include “expanded” ad formats. That means, among other things, that headlines and description lines in ads have increased in length.

Effective January 31, 2017, all text ad formats will be required to be in the new expanded format.

Why did Google make this change?

According to Search Engine Land, "Google has said the extra copy was specifically designed to give mobile users more information and cited an average CTR [click-thru rate] bump of 20 percent in early tests."

Here's what you need to know

- The expanded ads will appear 47 percent larger than traditional text ads, meaning they will be more visual than other text ads for a while.
- Two headline fields will be used rather than one, will be separated by a hyphen, and may wrap to a second line. Each headline field will consist of 30 characters, an increase from the previous, single line of only 25 characters.
- One description line of 80 characters versus the previous two-line descriptor of 35 characters each will be used.
- Display URLs are no longer needed. Rather, Google will provide two field options past the domain, including a landing page and tracking parameter. Learn more about the landing page parameter at <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/6049217?hl=en>. The tracking template parameter, which identifies the type of device used to access your ad, or a keyword, is also new. Learn more about tracking parameters at <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2375447>.
- The mobile device setting will no longer need to be checked when creating ads that will run on mobile devices. You also no longer need to create mobile-only campaigns to meet this need.

New Ad Format Example

Old Format

Headline [max 25 characters]: Get Ready for Tax Season
Description Line 1 [max 30 characters]: Individual, Corp, Small Biz We
Description Line 2 [max 30 characters]: have you covered. Call today!
Display URL: <http://A1AccountingFirm.com/TaxSeason>
Actual URL: <http://A1AccountingFirm.com/Tax-season-landing-page-123475>

The ad would look like this when displayed on desktop, mobile, or tablet device:

Get Ready for Tax Season
Individual, Corp, Small Biz We
have you covered. Call today!
<http://A1AccountingFirm.com/TaxSeason>

New Format

In this example, we are going to run the ad with a focus on real estate, which will be reflected in the URL's keyword field.
Headline 1 [max 30 characters]: Get Ready for Tax Season -
Headline 2 [max 30 characters]: Indiv, Corp, Small Biz
Description Line [max 80 characters]: Specializing in tax returns for more than 50 yrs. Get money back. Call us today!
URL [15 characters past the domain name + tracking parameter]: <http://A1AccountingFirm.com/Tax-Season?keyword=Real-Estate>

The ad would look like this when displayed on desktop, mobile, or tablet device:

Get Ready for Tax Season - Indiv, Corp, Small Biz

Specializing in tax returns for more than 50 yrs. Get money back. Call us today!

<http://A1AccountingFirm.com/Tax-Season>

Transition

The transition period has already begun. The new format will be implemented on January 31, 2017. However, old-format ads may continue to run alongside new ads, but you will not be able to edit them.

What you should do now

1. Update all standard ads using the bulk editor and add new ads using the bulk upload feature.
2. Don't pause the old ads right away. Use both ad formats for a little while, up to 60 days, to compare which ads are performing better. Adjust expanded ads until they outperform your traditional ones.
3. Optimize headlines using the first line for the most important information and the second line as a supporting line.
4. Consider the additional description line length and how you can maximize your message with a few extra characters.
5. Use a landing page URL extension to send searchers directly to the content you want.
6. Include a tracking parameter, such as device or keyword that triggered a conversion to your site.

There are a lot of resources online that can help walk you through this change. However, if you're not comfortable with the new format, consult a professional adwords consultant to help you out.

Now that you know the change is coming, how will you modify your adwords campaigns to include these new features?

Practice Development and Management Resources

from the AICPA

For more information or to order, log on to www.cpa2biz.com or call 1.888.777.7077.

Management of an Accounting Practice eHandbook

■ This is your go-to resource for all things practice management. Streamlined online guidance for easy reading and quick reference on the topics you care about: employee compensation and benefits, staffing, disaster recovery, firm organization, benchmarking, strategic planning, and more!

[Item no. MAP-XX—AICPA Member \$149.00, Nonmember \$189.00]

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Client Bulletin[®]

SELECT

Smart Tax, Business & Planning Ideas *from your* Trusted Business Advisorsm

January 2017

MAP On Track

- Often, practitioners and small- to medium-sized firms find it challenging to stay on top of firm management responsibilities. The new *Management of an Accounting Practice On Track* (MAP On Track) will help keep you organized. This new scheduler is easy to download and functions as an add-in to Microsoft Outlook, adding tasks to keep your firm running throughout the year. As an added bonus, within the automatically scheduled tasks, you'll find useful links to relevant content within the comprehensive MAP eHandbook as well as PCPS tools that can inform your next steps. [Item no. MAPTKD—AICPA Member \$229.00, Nonmember \$289.00]

10 Steps to a Digital Practice in the Cloud: New Levels of CPA Firm Workflow Efficiency, Second Edition

- In today's marketplace, leveraging technology and cloud-based solutions to automate data processing and other low-value work is essential to running an efficient and profitable CPA practice. This popular how-to guide is your roadmap to building your successful practice in the cloud in just 10 steps. [Item nos. PTX1401P—AICPA Member \$55.00, Nonmember \$69.00 and PTX1401E—AICPA Member \$49.00, Nonmember \$59.00]

Managing Your Tax Season

- Reduce stress and make the most of your staff's time and skills with this hands-on guide to improving your tax season. Filled with checklists, sample letters, and worksheets to help keep your clients happy while effectively managing workflow during the busiest time of your year. [Item nos. PTX1402P—AICPA Member \$79.00, Nonmember \$99.00 and PTX1402E—AICPA Member \$69.00, Nonmember \$85.00]

The Engaged Employee: 10 Initiatives for Successful Firms

- The most successful firms have discovered a solution that retains the best and the brightest while driving desired business outcomes: employee engagement. In this book, author Sandra Wiley presents 10 key initiatives that your firm can employ to foster engagement. [Item nos. PPM1402P—AICPA Member \$49.00, Nonmember \$59.00 and PPM1402E—AICPA Member \$45.00, Nonmember \$55.00]

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