

CHAPTER ONE



Remember, You're An Accountant

Nothing, it has been said, is duller than accounting.

—Jane Mayer, *The New Yorker*

Why are accountants always portrayed as dull and boring? Because it's amusing.

An insomniac wife lies in bed, beyond the help of sleeping pills. In despair, she wakes her accountant husband. "Tell me again dear," she says hopefully, "what is it that you do?"

This image is indoctrinated into children's books. Harry Potter has just met Ron Weasley on the train to Hogwarts.

"Are all your family wizards?" he asks.

"I think Mom's got a second cousin who's an accountant," Ron replies, "but we never talk about him."

Playing a vocational guidance counselor, John Cleese offers advice. "You see, our experts describe you as an appallingly dull fellow, unimaginative, timid, lacking in initiative, spineless, easily dominated, no sense of humor, tedious company and irrepressibly drab and awful. And whereas in most professions these would be considerable drawbacks, in chartered accountancy they are a positive boon." Monty Python skits frequently picked on accountants.

Songwriters portray accounting as drudgery: