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How should I go about hiring a part-time bookkeeper?

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Finding someone you can trust and rely on to handle your books is not a decision you should make lightly.

I would first call your current accountant and ask them if they offer bookkeeping services. If not, I would ask them to refer you to one that they have used and are confident in their ability.

Finding a great bookkeeper can be a difficult task, given the amount of so-called bookkeepers out there. The recent changes with the Tax Practitioner's Board (TPB) has really given the industry a shake up and now requires bookkeepers to get qualified and become registered with the TPB.

They are also now quality controlled and required to keep their profession education hours up-to-date.

Once you have selected someone, the first thing you should do is check their details on the [TPB](#) website to make sure they are a registered bookkeeper.

You should also treat it like employing a staff member, review their background and experience, ask them for names of other people they have worked for or for someone who could give them a reference and contact those references.

You really want to do your groundwork here, if your bookkeeper gets it wrong it could result in you paying too much GST or tax or, worse still, put you at risk of being dragged over the coals by the Australian Taxation Office.

If they pass, then you would want to sit down with them to discuss what they have to offer you. Look at what software they use/recommend (for myself it is MYOB) and then set out their role and deadlines and your expectations.

Be clear to explain what you want from them; this may include weekly P&L's or cashflow reports or you just want to know how much GST you owe for that quarter.

You may also like to clarify if they are proficient with payroll and will handle that as well as lodging your quarterly BAS.

I would still recommend until you are confident with them to get your current accountant to lodge the BAS for the first quarter to double check their work.

To me, price is not the biggest factor here, you first need to find a bookkeeper who ticks the boxes and then you can negotiate price.

Remember though, you get what you pay for.

The last thing would be to ask them what happens to your processing when they take holidays and if they have someone who takes over for them, this is really only a worry if they process your payroll or lodge your BAS. Ask these questions upfront to avoid any surprises later down the track.

Again, start with your accountant; if they aren't someone who is approachable or can help, it might be time for a new one.

Brad has more than nine years' professional accountancy experience. He has worked in senior management roles within taxation and business services dealing with a number of clients from a range of business sectors. www.callaghanpartners.com.au