

'It can be the most rewarding job in the world'

Rhonda Sides

Director of health care services
Crosslin Vaden & Associates PC

Time in current position: I joined Crosslin Vaden in May 2002, but have been in the accounting and health care fields more than 20 years.

Describe your core business: Crosslin Vaden's Healthcare Services Division provides numerous services for our health care clients, including professional advice on financial, operational, tax accounting, entity, shareholder, compensation and accounts-receivable issues. We also conduct valuation and litigation support. STAT Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of Crosslin Vaden, is a physician and health care billing provider.

Who is your ideal customer? Our ideal customer is a growing health care provider with multiple locations and services that provide Crosslin Vaden the opportunity to become a proactive professional advisor for its growth.

What is your business model? At the heart of our business model is the goal to continue to provide the best service we can to our clients on a daily basis. We also want to be an integral part of the client's professional services team - providing advice and assistance with the health care provider's billing, accounting, financial, tax, regulatory and compliance needs. Ultimately, we want to help that client grow and, in turn, grow with them.

How do you market and develop customers? I find the key to marketing and developing customers is doing the best job I can do for my current clients. Word of mouth and referrals are a big part of our business, so my work needs to be able to speak for itself. I also spend a good amount of time lecturing nationally for various health care and financial organizations regarding the issues of combining the practicality of accounting with the needs of health care practice management.

What are your recurring revenue streams? Audit, tax, accounting, medical billing and consulting all provide recurring revenue streams for Crosslin Vaden's health care division and STAT Solutions.

What does it take to be successful in your industry? It certainly takes a good deal of energy, patience and the willingness and desire to learn new things every day. With such a massive and growing industry, hard work and effort are imperative in order to stay on top of the new regulations and standards that have a huge

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impact on our clients' businesses. You

also have to be active in the health care community and spend time developing relationships. It is not a "behind the desk" job - it requires that you be involved daily with your clients, their businesses and the industry.

How do you try to differentiate yourself from competition? What sets Crosslin Vaden apart from the competition are the full-service capabilities we offer our clients by providing audit, tax, accounting and consulting services, as well as medical billing through STAT Solutions. We are able to provide all these services through one location with decisions being made at the local level, which makes business much easier for our clients. The best way to differentiate yourself from the competition is to work hard and do a great job for your clients; therefore, your reputation does the speaking for you.

What is the biggest challenge facing your industry? The biggest challenge in the health care industry is the increasing complexities in the medical billing and reimbursement system which cause undue anxiety for health care providers trying to collect billings.

Who is your mentor and what is one thing you learned from him or her? I've been fortunate in life to have two mentors who have shaped my career. The first person is Mike Fleishman, a principal at Gates Moore & Co. in Atlanta. Mike provided opportunities for me to do public speaking, which gave me the courage to stand in front of an audience and believe in myself. The second person is Dell Crosslin, managing director at Crosslin Vaden. Dell taught me how to distinguish between what matters and



Rhonda Sides says technology plays a huge role in health care today.

what doesn't.

What business alliances have you formed? Since our business depends heavily on referrals and word of mouth, the types of relationships you formulate are extremely important. I have formed alliances with clients, numerous professional and industry associations, other professional advisors - such as bankers, attorneys, stock brokers and individuals I have worked with in the past.

How important is technology to your business and what role does it play? Technology has become a significant success factor for the health care industry. The need for software, information technology consulting, internal controls, electronic medical records and other technology advantages has become a major area for growth in our business.

Also regarding technology, our medical billing company - STAT Solutions - has developed a business relation-

ship with a technology service provider in Bangalore, India. This relationship, which began a year ago, has added tremendously to the success of STAT Solutions.

By joining our local and Indian teams together, we are able to virtually work "around the clock" for the benefit of our health care clients. The level of professionalism, education and eagerness from our Indian team, which I witnessed personally during a recent visit to Bangalore, has been extremely impressive and refreshing.

What is one thing you wish you'd known when you started? Being a certified public accountant is so much more than what you learn in college - it's a fast-paced, challenging environment that never presents that textbook, "perfect" scenario. However, with a high energy level, clear head and constant communication, it can be the most rewarding job in the world.