



From the Planning Table

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This is the season most owners sit down with their CPA before December 31. The ones who get the most out of that meeting walk in with the right documents and the right questions. Here is what we saw this fall, stripped of anything that identifies anyone.

CASE OF THE MONTH

The surprise that keeps coming back

An owner got hit with a six-figure tax bill nobody saw coming. They raised their quarterly estimates, and the business kept growing. Run the same math this fall and the gap was back.

Oct to Dec

Your window to fix it with your CPA

Jan 15

Fourth quarter estimate due

Apr 15

When the surprise usually lands

Estimates set on last year's business fall behind a business that is growing.

Illustration only

Profit your estimates were set on

\$500,000

Profit you actually earned

\$650,000

Bring this year's profit and loss to the meeting and reset your estimates to it. Growth is good news until the tax on it arrives all at once.

QUICK HIT

Reconcile before you plan

An owner's revenue, payroll and tax bill could not all be true at once. We asked for the return before building anything.

No return, no tax strategy.

QUICK HIT

Placed in service by December 31

An owner bought a property for a new location, but permits held up the opening. Whether it counts as in service this year decides which return the depreciation lands on.

Ask before year end, not after.

QUICK HIT

The deduction that isn't

An executive bonus in an S corp often nets to zero, because the deduction and the new wages land on the same return. A plan contribution is a deferral, not a write-off.

Ask what you actually keep.

YOUR YEAR-END CHECKLIST

Bring these to your CPA meeting

- ☐ This year's profit and loss and balance sheet
- ☐ Last year's business and personal returns
- ☐ What you paid yourself, and whether it holds up as reasonable compensation
- ☐ Anything you bought this year, and the date it went into service
- ☐ How many W-2 employees will cross 1,000 hours this year
- ☐ Whether your qualified business income deduction is being taken, and if not, why

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

20%

The qualified business income deduction, now permanent. Ask whether you are getting it.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025

DATES TO KNOW

Dec 31	Most year-end moves
Jan 15	Fourth quarter estimate
Mar 15	S corp and partnership returns
Apr 15	Individual returns

FOR HOME CARE OWNERS

Pull a payroll report showing hours and pay by employee before your CPA meeting. How many caregivers crossed 1,000 hours decides whether a retirement plan helps you or costs more than it saves. Nobody should design a plan without it.

Want a second set of eyes before your CPA meeting? Grab twenty minutes and we will help you walk in prepared.

BOOK 20 MINUTES WITH JASON

<https://my.timetrade.com/book/15WCP>

Some people call it luck. We call it planning.

Every case is a composite drawn from real planning work, with identifying details removed or changed. Figures are illustrative unless a source is named. Educational only, not tax, legal or investment advice. Confirm every tax position with your CPA.

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