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Concerned about taxes? Experts offer webinars

By: [Julianne Mosher](#) November 30, 2020

Accounting firms, continuing to adapt to unprecedented times, are increasingly using webinars to reach their audience and potential new clients. And the trend is likely to continue long after the pandemic is behind us.



Andrew Finkle

When it comes to tax time, Andrew Finkle, a partner with Marcum LLP, said that this year is no different when it comes to planning, budgeting and accounting.

"Every year it's important because every year everyone is trying to run their businesses," he said. "Often times, taxes are put on the back burner."

But he said that 2020 has been a completely different level. "Business owners and CFOs are often looking for ways to save money, especially in this economy, with COVID and with a potential second shutdown," he said. "People are not keeping up with the next tax laws."

On top of the global pandemic, economic crisis and civil unrest, the U.S. will be experiencing a new administration come January – and things will begin to change.

That's where online webinars come in. Finkle said Marcum has been instrumental in providing their clients and potential clients with seminars online to help educate and plan for whatever might come next.

"I've personally been involved in more than two handfuls of webinars," he said. "We've been out in front of COVID and aid packages. We want people to know what's going on."

Finkle said it started in March with the first shutdown. When the PPP loans were announced, people jumped on them, but they were often unclear and confusing. Rules and guidelines kept changing.

"We conducted more than five webinars the week or two after the CARES Act came out," Finkle said. "It's been a marathon, but also a sprint."

Tom Hall, director of publishing and editorial services at EisnerAmper LLP, said when his firm decided to go online, it was a whole new experience. "We were building the car before we learned how to drive it," he said. "Webinars very quickly became a much more technical tool to our clients." Hall doesn't believe they're going away anytime soon. "They're part of the vocabulary now," he said.

EisnerAmper hosted 72 webinars from March until October, he said. Last year they hosted 12 and in 2018 just nine. But in 2020, nearly 30,000 attendees tuned in to ask questions and listen to accounting experts.

Hall said that the firm uses webinars to connect to their clients. "Knowledge is a currency," he said. "Sharing knowledge is just another avenue to bring us together. In a virtual environment, the webinar gives us immediacy."

But the webinars are a two-way street, he said, noting that EisnerAmper will use the forums to learn more about what their clients need.

"Unprecedented times require questions," he said. "And we're here to be advocates for our clients."

Frank Vitale, CMO of Berdon LLP, also noted the drastic increase in the number of webinars his firm has hosted since March, replacing all former in-person events.

"There has been a lot of questions this year," Vitale said. "And we're here to clarify these things."

He said that usually the summer is slower for his firm – but not this year. Berdon hosted webinars and sent out articles via email, on a wide range of topics. Beginning with the PPP loans and the CARES Act, they also spoke on state and local tax, international tax and even cyber security.

Vitale added that typically the firm would send out about 40 to 50 newsletters to clients. This year, so far, they have sent out 120 articles because new information was consistently coming out. "Having a webinar was a snapshot in time," he said.

But he thinks the webinar fad will become exhausting and might need to be revamped. He said people could start to experience webinar fatigue.

"In 2021 we may need to revamp it," he said. "We want to make it more interactive and add networking components. We're trying to come up with new ways, like smaller roundtables where we can engage with the audience more."

Within the next couple of weeks all three firms will be hosting different webinars to discuss a variety of topics.

"Clients don't like surprises," Finkle said. "We're trying to eliminate surprises and make sure that they take advantage of what they can take advantage of."

On Dec. 10, Berdon will host their latest hour-long webinar, Inbound USA: Knowing the Tax and Legal Requirements and Avoiding the Unexpected. The discussion will address important considerations foreign individuals and businesses should be aware of as they develop their expansion strategies. A week before on Dec. 2, EisnerAmper will host their 2020 Virtual Summit: Breaking the Rules – a three-hour long event featuring keynote speaker Reggie Fils-Aimé, former Nintendo of America president and COO.

That same day, Marcum will be hosting their Annual Year-End Tax Forum Panel Discussion, which will be comprehensive for both individuals and businesses, and will include information about new tax law provisions and revisions. It will also include the tax implication of the results of the election.