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Greetings!

Welcome to the December 2017 issue of The Bean Counters' Quarterly!

Happy Holidays! How did we get to the end of 2017 already? Writing a quarterly newsletter really lets you see just how fast a year goes by. It should be a lesson, at this time of year especially, to not let time get away on us. We should be actively pursuing our goals, our dreams, and spending time wisely, on what matters most to us. That could be the focus of the 'New Year Resolution' process - decide what's important and how to make the most of it and spend your time committed to it for 2018!

I know it's a busy time of year, and this possibly finds you getting ready for a holiday break, and maybe some festive gatherings, or maybe some travel. In all the busy-ness of the season, I hope you'll be able to take a few minutes to relax and read through our newsletter for you.

You'll want to read Sherry's response to our **Dialogue** question, asking whether she's a stay at home or go away holiday person?

Also in our **About Us**, you can read about how most of the team plans to spend their holidays and looking ahead to winter activities or travel.

In the Reading Recommendation section, you'll find a timely book that could help you craft some of the most important moments with people you'll spend time with over the holidays in '**THE POWER OF MOMENTS: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact**'.

On behalf of the team at Kirkham CA's, we wish you an amazing holiday time, spending it just the way you want!.

Steve Kirkham

The Dialogue Department!

The idea is to open the lines of communication on a topic or question that may be light and breezy or deep and serious, in an otherwise busy and hurried world. We'll start on our end by telling you about our thoughts on a particular topic or question, and then we'll wait to hear back from you - just hit the link "Here's What I Have to Say" and send us a quick reply.

Here's our question/topic for this issue:

"When it comes to the holidays, are you more the 'holiday time away, maybe in the sun having fun somewhere, or just away from a home', OR the 'all about the family visiting or hosting, wearing ugly Christmas sweaters, drinking eggnog, and listening to -insert family member name- old jokes and other home based holiday time'?"

Our reply for this quarter is from **SHERRY SKIPPEN:**

"I love decorating the tree. A lot of my ornaments are special and unwrapping each one is like opening a present all over again. We get a fresh tree every year and Grant trims the bottom and gets it balanced on the stand so I can have my fun. Grant and I don't have kids of our own so we always go to his brothers house for Christmas. I love Grant's family and we always have a ton of fun when we get together. One year we played "Heads Up" and we laughed so hard we were crying. As much as I enjoy this family time, I know it's not always going to be available to us and in the future I can see Grant and I going away someplace hot for Christmas. Our only concern will be finding someone to look after our fur farm. (2 cats and 2 dogs = farm). In the mean time I look forward to spending time with family, having a cocktail or two, a fantastic turkey dinner and lots of laughs."

Here's What I Have To Say - (send reply to) steve@kirkhamca.ca



CRA High Call volume

Canada Revenue Agency unable to handle high call volumes: auditor general

Millions of telephone calls from Canadians with tax questions are going unanswered because the Canada Revenue Agency is unable to handle high call volumes, auditor general finds. OTTAWA-Les Couchi didn't need the auditor general to tell him that the Canada Revenue Agency is ignoring millions of phone calls from Canadian taxpayers.

He learned that firsthand after his own phone calls to the agency's call centres this week were met with busy signals or frustrating "merry-go-round" on its automated answering service.

"Just totally frustrated with these people," the North Bay resident told the Star Tuesday. Couchi, who was trying to ask a question about a reassessment, finally got through but it took persistence. He's not alone.

Between March 2016 and March 2017, individuals and businesses made more than 53.5 million telephone calls to the agency's call centres. But more than half - about 29 million - were "blocked" and not answered by an agent or the automated self-service

system. Instead, they got a busy signal or got a message telling them to go the website or call back later.

Each caller made an average of three or four calls a week attempting to get through and even then, weren't always successful, the report found.

Three-quarters of those who reached the self-service system hung up before even listening to the main menu.

The agency claimed that callers would rather get a busy signal or an automated message rather than wait long to speak with an agent, an assertion challenged by the auditor general. "The agency had not surveyed callers to verify this assumption," the report said.

The auditor general revealed problems even when calls were answered. In 255 test calls by audit staff, Canada Revenue Agency employees gave incorrect information 30 per cent of the time.

National Revenue Minister Diane LeBouthillier blamed Conservatives cuts for the problems suffered by the CRA today. But she said the agency was making investments to improve services, including a new telephone system by 2019 that will provide callers with estimated hold time and be able to transfer calls to the next available agent, no matter where they are in the country.

"We will be able to answer more calls. . . . This new technology will prevent our customers from getting a busy signal," she told reporters after the report's release.

The agency has seen calls increase by 27 per cent since 2012-13 and has added 23 per cent more agents - to 2,482 - in an attempt to keep up.

The auditor general also found that the Canada Revenue Agency has tried to gloss over the problem and make its performance "look better than it really is" in public reports, in part by failing to account for the millions of unanswered calls.

Instead, the performance of Canada's tax agency responding to queries lags far behind the experience in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, which all handle calls in a more timely fashion, the report said.

"Taxpayers need timely access to accurate information to help them prepare their tax returns and to ensure that their benefits are correct," the report said.

In a damning report Tuesday, the auditor general revealed that millions of telephone calls are going unanswered - some two-thirds of all calls - because the Canada Revenue Agency is unable to handle the high call volumes.

[CRA High Call Volume](#)

Spotlight On KIRKHAM Accounting & Tax Services

KIRKHAM Accounting and Tax Services

We know that many people will be reviewing end of year their finances, their financial goals, and their plans (personally and/or for their business) for 2018 over the holidays.

We'd be happy to discuss your plans or concerns in the new year, to help ensure that you'll be able to meet your goals and find the success and security you're working for.

We provide services in the areas of individual and business Tax Planning, Accounting, Corporate Tax, and/or Bookkeeping. If you need assistance in these areas, or would like to discuss if we can offer more services to help your business even more, please let us know and we'd be happy to setup a meeting in the new year. We often find that once we sit down to discuss your business needs, you'll be surprised at what we can offer and how it can help your business.

Whether your business is mature, brand new or somewhere in the middle, there are unique challenges to each stage of business. We can tailor our services to fit your business needs. We've been helping our clients for over 20 years!!

www.KIRKHAMCA.ca

Recommended Reading:

THE POWER OF MOMENTS: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact

By Chip and Dan Heath

The New York Times bestselling authors of *Switch* and *Made to Stick* explore why certain brief experiences can jolt us and elevate us and change us-and how we can learn to create such extraordinary moments in our life and work.

While human lives are endlessly variable, our most memorable positive moments are dominated by four elements: elevation, insight, pride, and connection. If we embrace these elements, we can conjure more moments that matter. What if a teacher could design a lesson that he knew his students would remember twenty years later? What if a manager knew how to create an experience that would delight customers? What if you had a better sense of how to create memories that matter for your children?

This book delves into some fascinating mysteries of experience: Why we tend to remember the best or worst moment of an experience, as well as the last moment, and forget the rest. Why "we feel most comfortable when things are certain, but we feel most alive when they're not." And why our most cherished memories are clustered into a brief period during our youth.

Readers discover how brief experiences can change lives, such as the experiment in which two strangers meet in a room, and forty-five minutes later, they leave as best friends. (What happens in that time?) Or the tale of the world's youngest female billionaire, who credits her resilience to something her father asked the family at the dinner table. (What was that simple question?)

Many of the defining moments in our lives are the result of accident or luck-but why would we leave our most meaningful, memorable moments to chance when we can create them? *The Power of Moments* shows us how to be the author of richer experiences.

[THE POWER OF MOMENTS](#)

Stuff To Know About Our Team

-Sherry says this fall she and Grant started curling. They are now members of the Burlington Curling club. They are in the "Learn to Curl" program and are on a waiting list for a regular spot in the league. They've already participated in a bonspiel and hope to do another one in January. Also, November 1st was officially Sherry's 10th year anniversary working with Steve. It's been a great 10 years and she's hoping to still be here in another 10 years. Christmas is just around the corner and she's all ready. They are staying close to home again this year celebrating with Grant's family. She has some new appetizer ideas so is hoping they are as good as they look. For everyone out there, she wishes you health and happiness this holiday season.

-Linda says she's waiting for some "real" winter weather so that her skates and snowshoes receive a better workout this year than they did last year! Here's to WINTER!!!!

-Ana says OH NO, Christmas is just around the corner and Ana has barely done any shopping!!! They have been extremely busy with home renovations and family illness. She is looking forward to spending some quality time with my family over the holidays. It is going to be extra special due to our two new great nephews. Then in the new year she and her husband have booked a week in the sun and heat - SHE CAN'T WAIT. Happy Holidays Everyone! Hope you all stay safe. See you in the New Year.

-Andre says that he was happy to take advantage of a good promotion from the airline, and took a vacation back to China for 3 week, thanks to Steve's generosity. It has been 4 years that since he has gone back to his home. It was much to his delight and enjoyment that he reunited with his families, alumni, friends, and so many others whom he knew for years, and he had time to enjoy chatting and time to dine with them. The people that he met with, and the places that he visited, changed significantly in the last four years and to his comfort, mainly to the better/upper side. He also took the bullet trains to travel across the country for thousands of miles to visit his schoolmates in several cities that he had not seen for tens of years. Very exciting moments to be able to share with them. This was also a real relaxing vacation from continuous working in the year. Indeed he came back to Canada with wonderful memories and excitement.

-Derek says he so happy the snow has finally arrived in Toronto and he's looking forward to the winter. This time of year always makes him remember the days when he was a kid and the family went up to the cottage in the winter. Back then the only way into the cottage was by leaving the car at the "school house" and skiing in about 5kms. Once you go there you could get the snowmobile and ski booze (a trailer for the snowmobile) and make a few trips out to the car for all the luggage. There were lots of chores to be done - cut wood, start a fire, chop a hole in the ice for water, shovel the deck, shovel the roof. There were also all the unexpected surprises, like the red squirrel that made a home in a mattress or the pin hole leaks in the plumbing that were discovered when the water was turned on or getting the snowmobile stuck in the fresh snow. Those were the good 'ol days.

-Steve says another Fall has come and gone. Steve and Justin made a "surprise" trip to Cuba for a week in October. His sister has been going down for quite a few years, and this year they got some unexpected company at the airport, and then again at the resort where two other siblings were waiting. It was a fun week for all. Erin has just finished a busy Fall working long hours with a tree planting company, but unfortunately things have shut down for the season. She's hoping to "go west" at some point to plant some "big" trees and take in the outdoor life BC has to offer. Gavin has been playing for the Pakmen volleyball club in an attempt to fill dad's shoes in the sport. He is really enjoying it. Sherry spent the Fall doing a variety of jobs including her continued coaching for OAK swimming. Looking forward, and likely by the time you are reading

this, Steve and the family will in the sunny south enjoying Christmas and New Year just outside of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Can't wait for some warm, sunny weather (although adding to Derek's comments above, Steve also has some very fond memories of the trips to the cottage after Christmas every year. Nothing quite like heading to the outhouse on a crisp -20 degree morning). All the best over the Holidays and for the New Year!

Quick Links...

- [The Bean Counters' Quarterly Home Website](#)
- [More About Steve Kirkham C.A. and Our Team](#)
- [Canada Revenue Agency - for Business](#)
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