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# OCCUPATIONAL ALERT

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Occupation: Chief Financial Officer and CPA's

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Update: Due to reorganizations, layoffs, and mergers, many financial professionals wind up looking for new positions every 3-5 years. While this can often be frustrating, CFO Magazine reports that finance professionals can relax and be selective regarding the opportunities they will consider in the current market. Increased compliance issues related to Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the accounting scandals of the past few years that precipitated it, have meant that the challenges that a CFO handles and the skills they call on place a *heavy emphasis back on accounting and financial reporting issues*. This has also created the perfect scenario for CPA's wanting to move from public accounting firms into higher profile corporate finance positions.

Indeed, according to CFO Magazine (April 2006 issue), the turnover rate at public accounting firms remains quite high, averaging about 17% at large firms and 15% at smaller firms - with 4 out of 5 people who leave those firms moving into corporate finance positions. To try to confirm and retain talent, accounting firms have **raised CPA's salaries 25%** (on average) over the past 5 years, and they are now often offering signing and retention bonuses. Midlevel Accounting Managers can now earn retention bonuses between \$20-50K, as well as impromptu midyear raises.

Even though enrollment in accounting programs has increased over the past few years, the demand for CPA's continues to outstrip supply by as much as 20%. Thus, the labor market remains extremely strong for both CFO's and CPA's wanting to enter into corporate finance.

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Select References: CFO Magazine (issues 2006-2007)  
Business Finance Magazine's 2003 Finance Executive Career & Compensation Survey