

THE GRAND LEDGER



QUARTER 3
2025

Welcome,



As we close another quarter together, I want to take a moment to reflect on what we've achieved.

This quarter brought us closer not only through offsite gatherings where we strengthened our bonds, but also through our online training programs. From building resilience to mastering tools like n8n, each step we take together strengthens both our individual growth and our collective capabilities.

I am incredibly proud to celebrate the promotions within our teams. These milestones are not just titles; they are recognition of your dedication to growth and development within CKH Group. It is inspiring to see how CKH has become a part of someone's career, and each time they take the next step up it feels like a win.

At the same time, we have continued to tackle complex matters such as VAT, budgets, city audits, and LERs. We restructured a couple of our teams to better align with the work we are winning every single week. All of this reminds us that when we face challenges as one, no problem is too large.

New opportunities are coming to us every week, which speaks volumes about our reputation and the trust we've built with clients. This is not something that happens overnight, and I applaud the consistent quality of work and dedication that has built up to this point (and continues to grow!). Of course, we have also experienced the other side: losing projects. But even there, we've found value in learning from each loss and sharpening our approach for the next win.

Through it all, one truth remains constant: you will never walk alone. Every success, every setback, every change, we go through it together. And I want you to know, from my seat to yours: I am with you.

Thank you for your resilience, your commitment, and your spirit. The journey is ongoing, and the best is yet to come.



KATE KUDRENKO
CEO

Halloween Costume Contest Oct. 31!

A reminder that CKH will have its annual costume contest—everyone is invited to dress up on October 31 in the office, or to submit a photo if you are online. To take part, submit an individual picture of your costume to marketing (ckhmarketing@ckhgroup.com) with a title (e.g. "ghost" "witch",) by end of day on Halloween. If you're wearing a full costume, be sure to get all of it in the picture. Please do not wear any costumes that would be offensive/insensitive in any way, shape, or form. If you are unsure whether your costume would be appropriate, please check with HR first.

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CKH

CKH SUCCESS

NEW ENGAGEMENTS



REDEN | RIDDELL



Government Contracts

Audit

Town of Sumner, GA
Oconee County, SC
Town of Ulmer, SC
City of Donalsonville, GA
City of Pelham, GA (Existing)

Agreed Upon Procedures

City of Talking Rock, GA

Augmentation

NASA Shared Services Center
City of Helen, GA
City of Brunswick, GA
City of Thomson, GA
Town of Lane, SC

Non-Government Contracts

Quality of Earnings

Aqua Tots
+ 8 other new wins by Kate!

Augmentation

Reden Riddell

Audit

The Twenty Pearls Foundation Inc (AKA sorority)

Tax/Payroll

Chatham County Gang Prevention & Intervention Commission

CKH GROUP NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED



CKH Group has been recognized by INSIDE Public Accounting (IPA) as one of the Top 400 CPA firms in the United States, earning a national ranking of #353 on IPA's prestigious 2025 Top 500 list. This annual ranking is widely regarded as a benchmark of excellence within the accounting profession, highlighting the top-performing firms across the United States based on net revenue.

With more than approximately 46,000 CPA firms operating across the U.S., earning a place within the Top 500, and particularly the Top 400, places CKH Group in the top 1% of firms nationwide. The IPA rankings are the result of extensive annual surveys and analysis of firm financials, offering an objective look at leadership within the industry.

"From a small team with big dreams to a nationally recognized firm, being named to the IPA Top 400 is a reminder that size is the consequence rather than a cause of success," - Kate Kudrenko

A huge congratulations to our BD team—and especially Proposal Manager Bill Webb, who led the submission—for their hard work on a major win! CKH Group has been awarded a contract to provide financial services to NASA, marking a big milestone as we continue expanding our govt. contracting practice.



Well done to everyone at CKH Group for contributing to the overall success of the firm!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Tarlan Ismayilov Recovers €33.5 Million in VAT Refunds

At CKH Group, our strength lies not just in technical skill, but in persistence, creative problem-solving, and our dedication to client outcomes. Tarlan Ismayilov, compliance manager and a key member of CKH Group's Statutory Compliance team, demonstrated all of these qualities in two high-impact VAT recovery cases that resulted in a combined €33.5 million in refunds from German tax authorities to one of our biggest clients. Well done to Tarlan for this accomplishment!



Case 1: €29.5 Million Import VAT Refund

When Tarlan joined CKH Group in January 2023, Spectrum Brands had already been VAT-registered in Germany due to its warehousing operations. However, a major issue had gone unnoticed: for a period of 9 months, all import VAT paid at customs was stuck- millions of euros outlaid, but no refunds returned.

Tarlan immediately took initiative. Partnering with colleague Leyla Hasanova, he led a methodical review to gather missing customs declarations, import invoices, and other documentation gaps. In collaboration with the client's logistics partner, and coordinating with Deloitte for additional compliance, he restructured the VAT return approach, ensuring import VAT was properly declared going forward.

The results were staggering. By mid-2023, Germany's tax authority began issuing refunds, eventually returning €29.5 million, all without triggering an audit or even a questionnaire. For a case of this size in Germany, such a smooth resolution is virtually unheard of, and is a testament to Tarlan's background in German law.

Case 2: €4.06 Million VAT Refund - Resolving a PE Misunderstanding

The second case centered on €4.06 million in blocked refunds caused by incorrectly issued service invoices that included German VAT. The client didn't have a permanent establishment (PE) in Germany, and under German law, a warehouse alone doesn't meet PE criteria.

Tarlan spotted the issue and raised it repeatedly with the client's contact. After six months of inaction, he escalated the matter. He brought it to CKH Group's CEO and reached out directly to senior contacts on the client side, eventually securing a high-stakes meeting with seven members of the client's logistics' team.

Tarlan was more than prepared- in German, he explained the legal nuances of PE status, drawing on his studies and professional experience in Germany. His clarity and legal grounding convinced the client to apply for a withdrawal declaration with the tax authorities. The blocked amount was refunded in full, again with no audit, no questionnaire.

"For me this wasn't just about the numbers, it was about persistence. At first it looked impossible. But step by step, we turned it into a success," - Tarlan Ismayilov

Results That Speak for Themselves

Together, these two cases recovered a total of €33.5 million for the client. But beyond the numbers, the story showcases the qualities that set CKH Group, and particularly Tarlan's, apart: proactive approach, relentless follow-through (even in the face of client delays), Cross-functional collaboration, and a high level of expertise and legal fluency.

CKH Group is proud of the impact Tarlan and his team made. Their efforts exemplify our mission: to be a trusted CPA partner that treats your business like it's our own. And this win is an example of our constant persistence and proactive approach to save our clients money.

CKH CAREER JOURNEY

We take pride in celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of our team members. This quarter, we're thrilled to spotlight Kristina Tataru, who has been a dedicated leader at CKH Group since 2023 and was recently promoted to Vice President of Finance Operations.

Kristina Tataru

VP of Finance Operations



Kyiv, Ukraine



Kristina Tataru's Career Highlights

- **2023 - Joined CKH Group:** Kristina began her CKH career leading the EMEA Statutory Financial Statement team. She managed audits and statutory reporting for more than 55 entities, overseeing external audits, reconciliations, and compliance requirements across multiple jurisdictions. Her leadership quickly established her as a key player in CKH's finance operations.
- **2024 - Growing Impact:** Kristina continued to broaden her impact by leading strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing statutory reporting processes across EMEA entities for the Client. She built a strong relationship with the client and supported them by establishing robust planning frameworks and standardized procedures, strengthened collaboration with auditors and key stakeholders, and provided critical support during multiple changes.
- **2025 - Promotion to VP of Finance Operations:** Kristina's promotion reflects collective team achievements and the strong network of support and collaboration built with colleagues across CKH team. The team significantly improved the quality, efficiency, and timeliness of statutory reporting, and these accomplishments were recognized internally and by the Client's management team. Building on more than 12 years of industry experience, Kristina stepped into her new role, continuing to foster a high-performing team culture.



Making an Impact

Kristina's collaborative leadership approach has driven meaningful change within CKH's statutory reporting function. By fostering strong partnerships with both her team and stakeholders across the organization, she has enhanced process efficiency, improved reporting accuracy, and strengthened compliance. Her leadership has helped build a culture of ownership and accountability, ensuring sustainable high-quality delivery and reinforcing client trust.



Driving CKH Forward

Kristina's journey illustrates the career pathways CKH offers for professionals eager to take ownership and lead. Her growth from managing EMEA statutory statements to overseeing finance operations globally shows how dedication and technical expertise can translate into meaningful leadership opportunities. Congratulations, Kristina, on this exciting next chapter!

"Your potential has no ceiling - only the boundaries you choose to accept. Let your mindset define your possibilities, not your fears."
- Kristina Tataru

NEW HIRES: Jul. - Sept.

ATLANTA, USA



Kenneth Dandy
Government Augmentation Manager

Mr. Dandy has over 30 years of accounting experience in the federal government contracts industry. Over the course of his career, he has held a variety of positions including CFO, Controller, Accounting Manager and Director of Finance/Contracts, to name a few. In his spare time, he enjoys events sponsored by the Atlanta Track Club, golf, and reading.

HAWKINSVILLE, USA



Bridget Carranza
Tax Intern

"I am very excited to join the CKH team as a Tax Accounting Intern. I am in my last year of High School and I am in dual enrollment currently taking Financial Accounting 1 at Central Georgia Technical College. After High School, I plan on going to college and get a degree in Accounting. I am excited to gain experience and grow in this field. I am looking forward to working with everyone!"

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN



Aytaj Gozalzada
Junior Statutory Compliance

"Aytaj Gozalzada is a STAT Accountant Specialist in the Tax Department. She graduated from Azerbaijan State Economic University and holds ACCA certificates in Financial Accounting and Financial Reporting. Aytaj previously worked at Ekvita (2021-2022) and Pasha Property Management (2023-September 2025). Outside of work, she enjoys fly yoga and pilates"



Pakiza Aliyeva
Government - Senior Auditor

"I'm thrilled to be joining the team as an auditor. I have experience in audit and finance across various industries. I have actively contributed to audit engagements, assessed internal controls and applied relevant international accounting standards to ensure accuracy and transparency in financial reporting. I like to engage with sports and music in my free time."



KYIV, UKRAINE



Daria Borzda
AP Specialist

"I graduated with a bachelor's degree in finance, focusing on auditing, and I have over four years of

experience working in international companies. I'm eager to bring my skills, learn, and grow with the team. Outside of work, I enjoy diving into true crime documentaries, reading detective novels, staying active through sports, and exploring new cuisines and cultures. I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone at CKH Group!"



Kate Chornenka
AP Team Lead

"I'm a finance professional with over 10 years of experience in accounts

payable, financial operations, and ERP system implementations, primarily within global tech companies. Most recently, I worked at Grammarly, where I managed AP processes and collaborated with US- and EU-based suppliers to ensure timely and accurate payments. I love to travel and explore new places. I'm looking forward to a new journey at CKH!"



Hlib Bereza - AP Specialist

"Hi, I'm Hlib, an Accounts Payable Specialist who enjoys keeping things organized and running smoothly. By day, I work with numbers, invoices, and spreadsheets, keeping everything precise and on time. By night, I switch lenses and capture moments through photography - my longtime hobby. I also collect postage stamps from my travels, because every journey deserves a souvenir! I'm excited to be part of the CKH Group team and to grow while helping the company move forward."



Iryna Kuzmenko
AR Specialist

"Hello, everyone! My name is Iryna Kuzmenko and I'm thrilled to be part of your team. I have had the opportunity

to work in various fields, and most recent experience is in the accounting department. I'm looking forward to using my skills to contribute to the team, while also learning and growing together with all of you. I'm a team player and always open to new challenges. Looking forward to working with you all!"



Olena Kotelnikova
AP Specialist

"Hi! I'm Olena. I have over 10 years of experience in finance, administration, and

team coordination, with a background that spans both Ukraine and Canada. I'm passionate about learning new things and love bringing structure and clarity to the projects I'm involved in. In my free time, you'll usually find me reading a good book, staying active with sports, listening to music, or out for a walk to recharge."

WORK ANNIVERSARIES

THANK YOU TO OUR DEDICATED TEAM

At CKH Group, we want to see our employees succeed. Your personal development is important not just to the success of the company but also to your own personal development. Remember our core values to never stop growing and reach higher. A special thank you to the below employees who have been dedicated to CKH Group for over five years. Well done and here's to many more successful years!

CONGRATULATIONS ON 5+ YEARS!



Ilze Nel
8 years



Helen Kisteniuik
8 years



Nick Catrakilis
8 years



Olena Honcharova
7 years



Margarita Lebid
6 years



Maro Karamoschou
5 years



Katerina Ontrousek
5 years



Nasja Anthony
5 years



Lilia Sych
5 years



Sergii Kozak
5 years



Mykhailo Nevechera
5 years



Mariia Biakova
5 years

CONGRATULATIONS!

Azerbaijan

- Jul. 2 - Emil Dadayev (**1 year**)
- Jul. 17 - Nargiz Abbasova (**2 years**)
- Aug. 1 - Sadan Mammadova (**1 year**)
- Aug. 5 - Sahib Aliyev (**1 year**)
- Aug. 28 - Haji Hajizada (**2 years**)
- Sept. 1 - Aynur Jafarova (**3 years**)
- Sept. 9 - Mikayil Mikayilzade (**1 year**)

Cyprus

- Jul. 29 - Erdogan Garip (**1 year**)

Greece

- Jul. 1 - Stavroula Karamoschou (**4 years**)
- Jul. 20 - Maro Karamoschou (**5 years**)
- Aug. 3 - Katerina Ontrousek (**5 years**)
- Sept. 2 - Ellie Digeni (**1 year**)
- Sept. 4 - Vasiliki Dima (**2 years**)
- Sept. 19 - Eleni Filippidi (**3 years**)
- Sept. 26 - Renia Kourti (**3 years**)

South Africa

- Jul. 4 - Rentia Venter (**1 year**)
- Jul. 8 - Carina Thirion (**1 year**)
- Aug. 3 - Nasja Anthony (**5 years**)
- Aug. 10 - Ilze Nel (**8 years**)

Spain

- Jul. 18 - Zlata Komarnytska (**3 years**)

Ukraine

- Jul. 13 - Lilia Sych (**5 years**)
- Jul. 25 - Olena Honcharova (**7 years**)
- Jul. 29 - Sergii Kozak (**5 years**)
- Aug. 8 - Yuliia Riznychok (**3 years**)
- Aug. 14 - Mykhailo Nevechera (**5 years**)
- Aug. 15 - Svitlana Apanasenko (**3 years**)
- Aug. 16 - Margarita Lebid (**6 years**)
- Aug. 17 - Mariia Biakova (**5 year**)
- Aug. 17 - Larysa Khmelnytska (**3 years**)
- Sept. 4 - Helen Kisteniuk (**8 years**)
- Sept. 15 - Larysa Kril (**3 years**)

United States

- Aug. 15 - Ji Liu (**2 years**)
- Aug. 25 - Clara Busé (**4 years**)
- Sept. 1 - Storm Haas (**4 years**)
- Sept. 4 - Nick Catrakilis (**8 years**)

July 4 - US Independence Day



Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States which commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America.

July 18 - Mandela Day



Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday. The day was officially declared by the United Nations.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS ACROSS THE WORLD



Aug. 9 - South Africa National Women's Day

National Women's Day is a South African public holiday celebrated annually on 9 August. The day commemorates the 1956 march of approximately 20,000 women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to petition against the country's pass laws under the The Population Registration Act during the apartheid era. Today's celebrations of Women's Day aim to continue to draw attention to issues women face.

Aug. 15 - Poland Armed Forces Day

Armed Forces Day, known also as the Feast of the Polish Armed Forces, is a national holiday celebrated annually on 15 August in Poland, commemorating the anniversary of the 1920 victory over Soviet Russia at the Battle of Warsaw during the Polish-Soviet War.



Aug. 24 - Ukraine Independence Day

This holiday commemorates the declaration of Independence of 1991, and celebrates Ukraine's Independence, honoring the spirit of defending freedom and democracy. Today it is prominently recognized in the face of ongoing conflict.



Sept. 1 - Labor Day (US)

Labor Day is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the first Monday of September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements in the United States.

Sept. 11 - 9/11 Remembrance



This day remembers the nearly 3,000 lives lost in the attack on 9/11 in 2001 in which several planes were hijacked and crashed into US buildings including the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This day has become a tribute of remembrance.

Sept. 21 - World Peace Day



The International Day of Peace, also officially known as World Peace Day, is a United Nations-sanctioned holiday that provides a globally shared date for all humanity to build a Culture of Peace.

Sept 24 - South Africa Heritage Day

Heritage Day is a South African public holiday celebrated on 24 September. On this day, South Africans are encouraged to celebrate their culture and the diversity and traditions, in the wider context of a nation that belongs to all its people.



NASA Reverse Industry Day

Members of the CKH Group team had the opportunity to attend NASA's Reverse Industry Day! The event brought together government and industry leaders to share insights, strengthen collaboration, and explore new ways to work together.



OFFICE EVENTS AND EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES

NCMA Conference

The CKH Group team attended the NCMA World Congress and had a fantastic time learning, networking, and hearing from leaders like Jeffrey A. Koses, Senior Procurement Executive at GSA.



Salesforce Visit

The Business Development team was invited by Salesforce to have the opportunity to visit the salesforce tower to tour and spend the afternoon learning more about the software and how to leverage it for their BD needs.



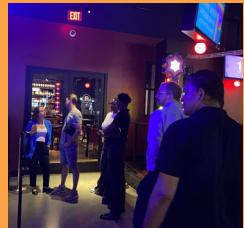
ESGR Patriot Award

Bill Webb and Roger Nixon received Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)'s Patriot Award. Nominated by Sawyer Davis, this award recognizes a boss or supervisor who gives above and beyond support to a nominee who is serving in the national guard or reserve.



Puttshack Intern Farewell and Team Event

The US office got together to wish our interns farewell after a productive summer. Joined with visitors from abroad, the team enjoyed food and high-tech mini golf at Puttshack, which combines tech, trivia, and unique trick shots.



Mulberry Team Building

Some members of CKH Group's government accounting team and the City of Mulberry spent the day team-building at Topgolf! It was a great chance to connect outside of the office and continue strengthening our partnership with the City of Mulberry. Here's to our government accounting teams that strengthen our connection to the communities in Georgia!

CPE Course

CKH Group hosted our first public CPE course, "Monthly Accounting 101: Month-End Close for Local Governments". Well done to Stephne and Kyle for your expert presentation, as well as Roger, Storm, and Eon who helped coordinate it. The event was a huge success with over 100 attendees from across SC and GA cities and counties.

FREE CPE WEBINAR

TOMORROW:

Monthly Accounting 101

The Basics of the Month-End Close
for Local Governments

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025: 10:00AM

Qualifying participants will earn 1.0 CPE credits

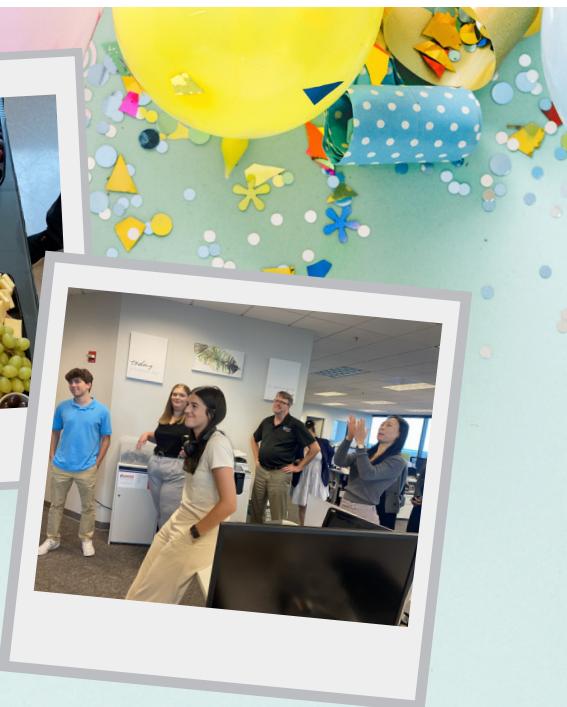
OFFICE EVENTS AND EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES

ADMH Run

The team showed up to support our client for another year at their annual ADMH Run For Health, a fundraiser event to raise money for their cause: audilt disability medical healthcare.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Quarter Three Birthdays

Azerbaijan

Jul. 4 - Elnara Hajiyeva-Rzayeva
Jul. 10 - Aynur Jafarova
Jul. 18 - Sabina Hajibayli
Aug. 4 - Emil Dadayev
Aug. 11 - Mehdi Javadzade
Aug. 13 - Jalal Quliyev
Aug. 18 - Fidan Imanova
Sept. 5 - Zack Gasimov
Sept. 10 - Nargiz Abbasova
Sept. 14 - Lala Ismayilova

Cyprus

Jul. 28 - Ozer Ozsoz
Aug. 28 - Erdogan Garip

Greece

Jul. 8 - Renia Kourti
Jul. 22 - Stavros Vasilis
Jul. 27 - Tzogia Zapanti
Aug. 1 - John Stamoulis
Aug. 5 - Eleanna Pappa
Aug. 23 - Afroditi Zerva
Aug. 31 - Michalis Mpamis
Sept. 2 - Stavroula Karamoschou
Sept. 11 - Evangelia Gkika
Sept. 12 - Pepi Delimari
Sept. 15 - Nikolas Limanis
Sept. 25 - Angeliki Chatzaki
Sept 29 - Maro Karamoschou
Sept. 30 - Alexandra Michalopoulou

South Africa

Aug. 12 - Jasmitha Ragunanan
Sept. 1 - Ilze Nel
Sept. 19 - Marco Francisco

Spain

Sept. 1 - Franco Cicchiello

Ukraine

Jul. 5 - Yuliia Chernobai
Jul. 9 - Anna Rudakova
Jul. 19 - Zoriania Hrynda
Jul. 22 - Vita Tytechko
Aug. 21 - Sofiya Kalyandruk
Aug. 22 - Yuliia Kostevych
Aug. 27 - Margarita Lebid
Sept. 25 - Karina Sihalova

United States

Jul. 7 - Umesh Patel
Jul. 14 - Yvette Hasbrouck
Jul. 22 - Ashley Han
Aug. 16 - Nick Catrakilis
Aug. 28 - Bryson Banks
Sept. 23 - Lauren Hames

Chatting with Franco

A column dedicated to the thoughts and writings of Franco Cicchiello from our Barcelona office. Reach out if you would like to contribute too!



Mexican Villas and Fantastic Negrito

It is Saturday, the 2nd of August 2025.

We cross the French border at the Col du Larche at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. This mountain pass is at 2000 meters altitude and, from there, the view of the Alps all around us is already worth the travel. We begin the 20km downhill journey to Jausiers with joy. The air is fresh, car windows are open, and we laugh telling funny stories.

The road is in typical alpine style: only grass and rocks in the beginning, the presence of trees increasing while going down and then the first group of houses, then a village and finally, at the end, we are in Jausiers. From there we need to travel another 8 kms to reach Barcelonnette, our final destination.

Even though both villages are not big at all, I can't help but notice the presence of a lot of magnificent villas on both sides of the road between the two. These are the so-called Mexican villas.



Their name does not derive from the building style but from the fact that they were built in the XIX and in the first years of the XX centuries by French immigrants that went to Mexico selling textiles and returned after making a fortune there.

They are all big and magnificent, with parks outside. The architectural style is a mix of Liberty, Art Nouveau, Baroque

and Tyrolean. They are all private so you can only see from the outside but, Villa La Sapiniere in Barcelonnette is open because it hosts the Museum of the Valley together with other events like the Jazz Festival, which is also the reason for our journey.

The village of Barcelonnette is nice, colorful and has strong ties with Mexico, like the Avenue Porfirio Diaz, the Theater El Zocalo and, last but not least, the 3 days celebration in November for Dias de Los Muertos.

This place is really a gem hidden away down in the alps. It is so little yet so rich at the same time.

After parking the car, we soon go to find the place for tonight's concert and here is the first surprise: Fantastic Negrito and his band are rehearsing. The entrance is free so I can go close to them and see what they do and, most of all, how they can play that way. It is always an exceptional



experience to me.

I am afraid I have brought you in an unknown land. It is like I see you asking yourself: who is this guy?



Xavier Amin Dphrepauzezz (aka Fantastic Negrito) is one of the most rewarded blues artists in the world. He has won 3 Grammy awards for the Best Contemporary Blues album in 2016, 2019 and 2021. If I must

define his music, I cannot say it is just blues. The blues is the base, this is clear, but then the artist

mixes it up with other genres like funk, spiritual and also rock. He says that he plays "punk blues", and it is, somehow, true, but I would say he is like a bluesy Prince with the intensity of James Brown. Fantastic Negrito is, nowadays, one of my favorite musicians and I have all his albums.

After the rehearsals we are kindly asked to leave the place, probably, in case we try to stay in without paying the entrance to the concert, but we already have our tickets in hand, and we will be back in due time.

At 7.30 we go to a little restaurant for a quick dinner based on local products and at 8.30 we go the concert.

By 9 o'clock, when the band comes on stage, Fantastic Negrito catches the scene with an effortless ease. Without even a single moment of decreasing

tension, he speaks to the audience in English while also adding French, Italian and Spanish words and, finally, generating his own personal esperanto that eliminates all distances between us.

Two hours of great music with a band that is precise like a Swiss watch, even when the leader takes them into improvisation. All of the audience follows along carefully, dancing and shouting when asked to.

They finally explode with songs like Plastic Hamburger, The Duffler and The Bulls**t Anthem.

At 11 o'clock the show is over. Lights are turned off on stage.

Everyone leaves very satisfied. Do you know the sensation after a great meal? Everything was good, you are full, and you cannot ask for more. This is the way we felt and, I think, it was the same for everybody else at the concert.

Paola and I reach the car and take the road home. The night is dark and the travel is long. She starts to sleep while I mentally sing all of the songs that I have heard. We had a great day.

Happiness is really a little thing.



Passing the Baton

"When I shared with some friends that I was planning to retire, many responded with a common refrain: "Harry, you have no hobbies, what are you going to do? Other than work, you don't do anything else."

Their concern wasn't without merit. But there was a deeper rationale behind my decision. CKH Group is home to an incredibly talented team, many of whom we've spent years mentoring and developing. I began to feel that by remaining in the driver's seat, I was inadvertently holding back their potential.

One friend, one of the few I have and therefore someone I truly listen to, offered me a powerful perspective: "Harry, I remember that when I was young, if my mother was in the room, I naturally deferred to her. In the same way, if you're in the room during meetings, the true class acts will likely let you lead out of respect. So, your objective of stepping back and letting them take charge won't be achieved."

Of course, as anyone who has passed the baton can attest, there are always nagging doubts. Did I step aside too early? Will the firm suffer with me not being in the driver's seat, but the backseat, a background advisor only involved when called upon? Even when you know the people you've trained are more than capable, even more talented, you still wrestle with those thoughts.

But my friend's words had stuck with me.

The next person would only ever be able to run as fast as me if I still held on to the baton once I'd passed it. Eventually, after they'd met my momentum, I had to let go.

This month, however, I'm writing to you from Greece, in my ancestral village on the island of Limnos. Located in the northern Aegean Sea, Limnos is one of Greece's quieter, lesser-known islands, celebrated for its unspoiled landscapes, welcoming villages, and strong agricultural roots. The island's fertile volcanic soil makes it ideal for farming, and many of its residents still live close to the land, and this summer, I am no exception. For the first time in my life, I'm tending a garden, and it has been an absolute joy.

I'll admit, I still get a little anxious. I'm sure it will take me years to become even mediocre at this, but it's full of challenges that remind me of business, and the results are surprisingly rewarding. The garden is



completely pesticide-free and includes cucumbers, eggplant, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, cantaloupe, and watermelon.

The man teaching me, a 75-year-old deeply connected to the land, gave me this advice: "Harry, see the watermelons are getting ripe. We need to cover them with crates. If we don't, the crows will come pick at them." I was fascinated.

But what truly made my summer was a long-awaited recognition for CKH Group.

For years, I've aspired to get us onto a notable list of firms in Atlanta. Despite repeated attempts, we never quite made it. I think the way I led the firm made

it difficult to scale in the traditional sense. But this week, something even more exciting happened. CKH Group was named to the INSIDE Public Accounting (IPA) Top 500, a national ranking of the largest public accounting firms in the United States based on net revenue.

CKH Group ranked 353 out of 500. IPA top 400 firms award

This is a tremendous milestone- not just top

500 by a small margin, but top 400 across the United States! Considering there are around 46,000+ CPA firms in the US, this was a huge win for the whole firm.

Congratulations to my protégés. This accomplishment is yours. Here's to even bigger and better things ahead. I hope this recognition affirms that stepping aside and letting you take the wheel was the right choice.

I'll always be beside you, offering my advice when needed, but watching you take the wheel has been as enjoyable as driving myself."

-Harry Catrakilis

by Harry Catrakilis

(Published on ckhgroup.com under the Accountability in Accounting blog)



CKH

The Kudos Corner

Big kudos to **Dimitris**

Dimitrelis! Dimitris is always super helpful and kind, no matter how busy he is.

Dimitris always finds a way to support and resolve your issue and makes everything feel easier. Big thank you!



Congratulations to **Roger Nixon** and **Bill Webb** for winning the ESGR Patriot Award. Nominated by Sawyer Davis, this award recognizes a boss or supervisor who goes above and beyond to support a nominee who is serving in the national guard. In addition, well done on all your recent wins in the government space.

Thank you **Lauren Hames** for your support during tax season! Appreciate you always picking up the phone and keeping things running smoothly. And ordering food to keep the tax team fueled! Your hard work does not go unnoticed.

To the Best Supervisor Ever – **Ilze Nel**. Thank you for being more than just a supervisor; you are a mentor, a teacher, and truly one of the kindest people I've ever had the privilege to work with. Your dedication, hard work, and guidance inspire me every day.



Even under pressure, you remain patient, compassionate, and supportive. Your leadership style reflects the pure heart you lead with, and it means more than I can express. I'm incredibly grateful for everything you do — you truly are the best supervisor anyone could ask for.

Well done to **Stephné Kukard** for your excellent presentation during the CPE course. Your content was thorough, technical, and informative and you spoke very effectively during the course. Thank you for your support!

Kyle Heyl, well done presenting the CPE course. Your addition to the training was crucial and much needed for the local governments. Appreciate you taking the time to help develop this course and practice.

Congratulations to **Kristina Tataru** for your recent promotion to VP of Finance Operations. It is wonderful to see both you and the firm grow.

Well done to **Kate Kudrenko** for all your recent wins in the QoE space.

Huge congratulations to **Bill Webb** on managing the NASA proposal that ultimately won us our first federal contract. Well done to you and everyone involved!

Thank you to **Pavel Martinovych** with all your impressive work on the government dashboard and insights portal demo.



I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the head of the Polish Office, **Andrzej Badura**! Your support, patience, and consistently positive mindset mean so much for all the team. It's truly a blessing to work with and learn from someone like you!

Lilia Sych, Thank you for being such a valuable part of our team and for all the support you continuously provide. It's truly appreciated!

Vicky Kapetaki, You're doing an excellent job, thank you for your support and dedication!

Yvette Hasbrouck, thank you for stepping in to assist payroll, much appreciated.

Qian Ren's first tax season with CKH has not been easy but she made it happen! Working overtime with the rest of the tax team everyday & finishing returns quickly. She has done an amazing job with her work so far! Welcome to the team and excellent job with your first tax season at CKH!



Clara Busé has done an incredible job taking on the payroll duties, especially while continuing her regular duties! Thank you for being the payroll MVP

Thanks so much, **Lala, Ismayilova** for your help with the Netherlands tax codes! You totally made my day

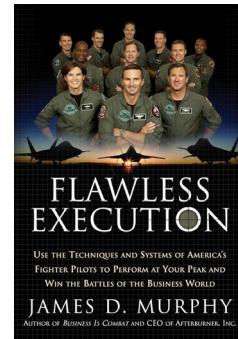


Storm Haas, incredible job and ownership of the CPE course and certificates. Excellent initiative on making sure our first CPE course was up to standard. You set a very high standard for our future training sessions, you should be proud. The event went so smoothly, all the content was professional, and your follow up with cpe eligible participants was perfect. Well done!

The whole **tax team** has done amazing! The tax managers have been reviewing returns at lightening speeds and answering so many questions for new-comers & clients! The rest of the team's extensive work to pump out as many returns as possible has not gone unnoticed! The CKH tax team have been an amazing team, not letting anything stop them from reaching the deadline.

If you would like to praise a coworker on a job well done, scan this qr code to fill out the form! (can be submitted anonymously)





Flawless Execution:

The Flawless Execution Engine

"To win in a dynamic environment, you must accelerate the experience of your team." — Murph

Now we move from strategy to action. Until now, we've focused on the Future Picture — defining strategies and high-value targets to reach it. With that foundation set, it's time to get tactical.

In the Flawless Execution Engine, strategy becomes execution. As Murph says, "Outcomes are now vitally important, and detail is everything." Our objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, and clear, and every team member should understand the Leader's Intent to act with agility while staying aligned to the mission.

Executing the Leader's Intent

Senior leaders must empower their teams to make decisions that support the Future Picture. Execution follows a proven rhythm:

- **Plan** - Use the Six Steps to Mission Planning to define objectives, roles, and contingencies. Preparation sets the stage for precision.
- **Brief** - Before execution, brief the plan so everyone knows their role and expectations. This ensures, as Murph puts it, "all arrows are pointed in the same direction."
- **Execute** - Carry out the mission with discipline and communication. Maintain situational awareness (SA) and keep leadership informed. Watch for Task Saturation—when workloads exceed capacity—and redistribute as needed to stay on target.
- **Debrief** - After execution, gather to review what worked and what didn't. During the debrief, titles are set aside for open, honest feedback. Using the STEALTH process, the goal is learning, not blame—so we don't repeat the same mistakes twice.
- **Win** - Apply lessons learned to the next mission—whether it's a new product launch, audit, or tax season. Each cycle strengthens our process and sharpens our edge.

-Roger Nixon, VP of Business Development



Planning

"Flexibility is the key to airpower... preparation is the key to flexibility."— Murph

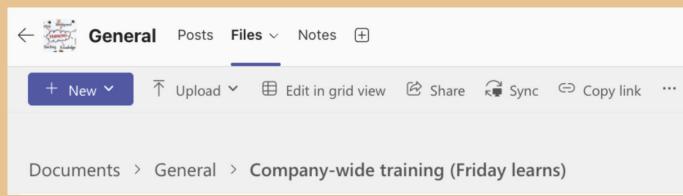
We've all heard the saying, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." That couldn't be more true when it comes to execution. Murph's Six Steps to Mission Planning serve as a practical framework for turning preparation into power. It's a process that becomes instinctive through repetition — and it's especially critical at the tactical level, where real work gets done.

The Six Steps to Mission Planning

- **1. Determine the Mission Objective:** Define who does what, where, when, and why. The objective should be clear, measurable, and achievable—and directly support the organization's Future Picture. When everyone understands the "why," commitment follows.
- **2. Identify Threats:** Threats can be external (competitors, economy, politics, weather) or internal (complacency, indifference, apathy). As Murph says, "We have met the enemy, and the enemy is us." Guard against the "CIA" and focus on strong communication—our greatest defense.
- **3. Identify Available Resources:** Know your assets: people, technology, time, money, and skills. Leverage your team's strengths and tools to overcome challenges. A well-utilized resource can turn obstacles into advantages.
- **4. Evaluate Lessons Learned:** Regularly debrief to capture insights and avoid repeating mistakes. Sharing knowledge—like passing the baton between teammates—keeps the team agile and informed.
- **5. Determine Courses of Action (COA):** Encourage collaboration and creativity. Develop multiple COAs, compare them, and finalize the best approach. Then test your plan with a Red Team to find and fix weaknesses before execution.
- **6. Plan for Contingencies:** No plan unfolds perfectly. Identify potential failures and prepare "what if" responses. The best teams adapt quickly because they've already anticipated change.

Missed a Company Training Event?

Don't forget that recordings of all past trainings can be found in the shared teams channel "CKH Group Training" under the General Tab, in the files section. ([Documents > General > Files > Company-wide Training](#))





THE GRAND LEDGER

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