



## WHEN WILL THE DIRECTOR LOOK AT MY RETURN?

Subject to the complexity and urgency of the job, support staff or junior/intermediate accountants process all the records and produce a draft set of financial statements. These then go to the director who reviews them and discusses any tax planning.

It's this tax planning session that could save you thousands in tax.

The staff then finalise the statements according to the director's instructions. Sometimes a client is called in to discuss various issues or look at options.

These processes are designed to minimise the costs to you.

## WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO GET MY RETURN?

An accountant's peak period is May to November, and the turnaround time may stretch out to a few months, as almost everyone wants their work done in this period. We ask for your patience during this time.

Our off-peak period is December-March, and the turnaround time can be just a few weeks.

## ABOUT MILLER JOHNSON LTD

For over 40 years we've been helping our clients get the most out of their money. We're committed to working with you to achieve your goals and dreams. We're large enough to help with any facet of accounting, and small enough to know your name when you call.

We are happy to work with you to the level you require, from preparing basic tax or GST returns right through to providing advice for your business or suggestion what actions you could take during the next year.

As well as the director, one of our accounting team is assigned to each client, so you always have two points of contact at our company.

**In a recent client survey, the most frequently used words to describe Miller Johnson were *friendly, professional and efficient*.**

Contact us today and we can talk about what you might need. You deserve to have someone on your side whose proactivity, approachability, reliability and accuracy can be counted on, no matter your circumstances.

*"We have always felt our business has been in excellent hands with any questions we have promptly answered. Your company has always made us feel that our business was important to you and we have appreciated that."*

*Ken & Alison Upson*



# How can I minimise my accounting costs?

Answering some common questions

  
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# Minimising your Accounting Costs

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY THE TEAM  
AT MILLER JOHNSON

## 9 steps to help you minimise costs

### HOW DO ACCOUNTANTS CHARGE?

All accountants charge by time. Restaurants sell food, sales people earn commissions - and lawyers, tradespeople and accountants sell their time.

The clearer and more presentable you submit your financial work, the quicker we get it done and the more cost-effective it is. The longer it takes to prepare your return or complete the job, the more expensive it's going to be.

We do not pad our billing and we often write off small or quick items.

### WHY DON'T YOU OFFER MONTHLY FIXED FEES?

If you look closely at the prices, you'll notice the "fixed" monthly fees offered by many accountants say "From". These costs, worked out over a year (plus anything extra for items not covered in the plan), are often more expensive than time-based charges.

We believe if we don't do any work for you, it's not right to charge you a fee. Instead, you pay for actual work done and no more.

We do offer payment arrangements; we are happy to discuss this with you.

### CAN YOU GIVE ME A QUOTE FOR THE WORK?

Most times we can. But similar to other businesses, it is often not possible to know how long a job will take without reviewing the scope, especially if you are a new client. A set of records for one business may take twice as long as a similar set for another business, depending on how well the information is presented and what is required.

We can provide a quote after reviewing your records. If you are a new client, the initial consultation meeting (one hour) is free, but there may be one-off set up costs after that.

### I SENT YOU A QUICK QUESTION BY EMAIL AND YOU SEND ME AN INVOICE?

If the task takes less than 6 minutes, we don't charge. More than 6 minutes and we usually do charge, including phone calls and emails.

From a client's perspective, it's very fast to send an email asking us a question. But if we have to research the answer, review your files or accounts, call IRD or ACC, or discuss with a consultant (e.g. tax specialist), what seems to be a quick answer may have actually taken a lot longer than it looks.

### WHY IS MY INVOICE MORE THAN LAST YEAR?

It is in your interest (and ours) to complete each job quickly so we can use time efficiently and get onto the next job. We want to keep you happy!

There are four main reasons why your invoice may higher than you expected, or is higher than last year.

1. **There is more work this year.** Examples include purchase or sale of investment property, GST did not reconcile, wages did not reconcile.
2. **Missing information.** If information is missing, we will advise you what we need, then put down your job and pick up another job while we wait for the information. The more often a job is picked up and put down the longer it's going to take.
3. **Sorting out your record-keeping.** We know it is frustrating when you spend hours getting your records together and we have to spend hours sorting it out (this applies whether you use a computerised or a manual system).
4. **Verifying records.** Professional accountants take some responsibility for the accounts they produce. Therefore, when we get records we cannot just convert them into the accounts. We have to make sure the results are accurate before we add the usual adjustments such as depreciation, FBT, owner salaries, taxes, etc. Sometimes significant fixes are needed before we can proceed, e.g. it may be that several items bought were actually used in completion of an asset, so we have to move it from expenses to assets. Or an asset may have been capitalised when it cost less than \$500 and so can be expensed.



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PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS