

Accounting expert offers tax tips for brokers

Tax season is stressful – especially for business owners – so MPA spoke to Platinum Accounting and Platinum Training managing director Coco Hou to get some tips on how to make the burden easier on brokers.

Being aware of new tax laws sits on top of Hou's tip list, followed by thoroughly reviewing records, gathering documents as soon as tax time begins, considering retirement savings, and giving to charities.

While her tips can be applied essentially by anyone in any field of work, she offers a few that are particularly beneficial to brokers.

Make it through as a broker

Although income is easy to trace, people tend to miss out on some expense claims, Hou told MPA.

Hou advises brokers to get all income and deduction related items organised. Income for brokers with employers is the PAYG payment supplies; while for the self-employed, it's income bank statements.

As for deductions, apart from the standard ones, Hou tells brokers to remember to claim all income-generating expenses that have not been reimbursed by the customer. These include travel costs such as tolls and parking, mobile or home phone usage, work-at-home utilities such as the internet, books related to work, trainings and seminars, and marketing materials such as house signage and flyers. She also reminds brokers to make sure capital loss is offset against capital gain.

“For a broker who's running his own business, the \$20,000 asset write-off rule applies,” Hou said.

Brokers can assist their customers during tax time by reminding them that property-related expenses that they paid for, and not by the tenant, are deductible. These can be landlord insurance, pest control, land tax, strata fee, repair and maintenance fee, or pool or gardening expenses.