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People who make Hawaii work: Glenn Roberts

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Courtesy: ProAccounting

*Glenn Roberts has moved from chief financial officer of **ProService Hawaii** to general manager of **ProAccounting**, the company's wholly owned service line.*

Roberts, 42, was born in Los Angeles, graduated from San Lorenzo Valley High School in Santa Cruz, Calif., and received his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California Santa Cruz and his MBA from the University of California Berkeley.

What brought me to Hawaii: Whenever my wife, Anke, and I visited Hawaii we dreamed of some day living here. The climate is as close to perfect as you can get and we love ocean sports and hiking.

Why I took this job: After a year and a half as CFO at ProService Hawaii, I had the opportunity to focus on ProAccounting and I jumped at it. A big factor for me was the growth potential for this business. We offer businesses a way to significantly reduce their spending on accounting by outsourcing to us, and especially right now that's a very exciting concept for business owners.

Like most about the job: I like being able to tailor truly effective financial reporting for our client businesses. For example, when a restaurant owner sees a metric for the first time that reveals the exact cause for the increasing food cost and declining margins, the excitement is very real. From there we can move directly to finding a solution.

Immediate priority: To continue improving our work-flow management tool so our teams always know who owns a given task, its priority and when it is due.

Biggest challenges in my industry: Helping clients understand the difference between bookkeeping and financial accounting. ProAccounting offers a range of services depending on a client's needs, but we always apply accounting best practices.

Five-year vision for the industry: We're growing exponentially right now, so we know we're offering a service that makes a lot of sense to businesses — which means we'll probably be seeing others attempt to enter the marketplace over the next few years.

Essential business philosophy: Don't offer the same old thing. Offer a range of services depending on client needs, clearly differentiate your services and price them at very

competitive rates. Then deliver on your commitments and make sure your clients see the value you provide.

Biggest risk taken in my career: In 2000, leaving a Big 4 accounting firm (KPMG) and joining a dot-com company run by a friend of mine. Interestingly, they are still around and doing well.

Smartest move taken in my career: Leaving the Bay Area to pursue an opportunity in Hawaii. Compared to my prior roles in corporate finance, my ProAccounting position allows me to get back to the client focus that I really enjoy.

Most important mentor: My father. He led by example with his own business. He taught me the value of looking beyond your job description for ways to have an impact, and of staying focused on keeping your current customers happy. If you do that well, new business will always come.

Favorite stress reducer: Watching the sun set over Diamond Head, ideally while drinking a glass of wine.

Best place I've traveled to: The Amalfi Coast of Italy.

Favorite island: The Big Island, which my wife and I think has the best diving. Where else can you see flowing lava?

When I was little I wanted to be: A firefighter. When I was 6 or 7 the local fire captain gave me an honorary badge that's probably the coolest thing I've ever received. Still love "putting out fires" today.

Book by my bedside: "The October Horse," about the final years of Julius Caesar, his military and political genius, and the fate of those who brought him down.

Randi Petrello