

## 12/03/07 - The Flexibility to Follow a Dream

by Melissa Spillum

A CPA that can boast development of his very own board game? Look no further than **Phil Tasto**, a tax manager in the Everett office.

Phil first came up with the idea of Smugglers, his board game, while still in college. During a business ethics course, Phil decided to develop a game, as a class project, that allowed the players to make a decision between good and evil—and the possibility to win either way.

Phil turned in his first version of Smugglers as a prototype on plywood. He remembers turning in his project to a surprised professor that asked, “Why are you going to be an accountant?”

Today, almost 10 years later, and with the support of his wife, friends, family, co-workers and an alternative work schedule, Phil has a fully produced, glossy version of his original prototype.

Every player has their own truck and makes deliveries throughout the United States. The twist? Each player decides before they start their delivery if they want to do so legally, or “smuggle” it instead. If you don’t get caught, you receive a double payout upon delivery. However, if another player decides to challenge you as a smuggler, and, indeed, you are, you get nothing for your troubles.

During this process, Phil received tremendous support from the Everett office. In fact, **Tom Sanger**, partner, arranged a testing party for the game at his house and 15 people from the office joined to share in the fun and provide Phil with feedback.

“For a CPA to make the game is a bit enigmatic. For those who know Phil, there are parts that are just contradictory and those that make complete sense,” Tom said. “Phil is one of the smartest people that I have met and he is one of the most technical and creative in the tax realm in our firm. So, it is not surprising that he can create anything that he puts his mind to.”

In addition to Tom, Phil received plenty of encouragement from **Caryl Thorp**, partner, as well. “The concept of the game is unique, and Phil clearly had to do some research on the long haul trucking industry in developing the rules. Phil is one of the best tax managers we have in our office, and I believe that giving him the flexibility to develop Smugglers via an alternative schedule was a win for both Phil and the office,” Caryl said.

Phil agreed, “Being able to work on an AWS has been a great benefit and makes me that much more passionate about working at Moss Adams.”

With a new baby and a wife at home, Phil has good reason to want his latest endeavor to succeed. He’s currently selling Smugglers via his Web site ([www.smugglersgame.com](http://www.smugglersgame.com)) and the Everett office has already bought several to give as holiday gifts to clients.

With the support of a great firm, a young family and the completion of a dream, Phil has much to be thankful for in 2007.