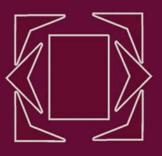
TENTH EDITION

# ACCOUNTANTS' HANDBOOK

VOLUME TWO: SPECIAL INDUSTRIES AND SPECIAL TOPICS



D.R. CARMICHAEL
PAUL H. ROSENFIELD

# TENTH EDITION

# ACCOUNTANTS' HANDBOOK

**VOLUME TWO:** 

SPECIAL INDUSTRIES AND SPECIAL TOPICS



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D. R. CARMICHAEL PAUL H. ROSENFIELD



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## **PREFACE**

The tenth edition of *Accountants' Handbook* has the same goal as the first edition, written over 79 years ago: to provide in a single reference source answers to all reasonable questions on accounting and financial reporting that might be asked by accountants, auditors, executives, bankers, lawyers, financial analysts, and other preparers and users of accounting information.

The Accountants' Handbook is accounting's oldest handbook and has the longest tradition of providing comprehensive coverage of the field to both accounting professionals and professionals in other fields who need or desire to obtain quick, understandable, and thorough exposure to complex accounting-related subjects.

This edition of the *Handbook* continues the presentation initiated in the ninth edition of two soft-cover volumes; the current edition contains a total of 44 chapters. To provide a resource with the encyclopedic coverage that has been the hallmark of this *Handbook* series, this edition again focuses on financial accounting and related topics, including auditing standards and audit reports, that are the common ground of interest for accounting and business professionals.

This edition was prepared during the unfolding of the Enron and WorldCom collapses, the largest bankruptcies in U.S. history, accompanied by severe financial reporting breakdowns. The collapse and the breakdown at Enron destroyed Arthur Andersen & Co., one of the five largest international CPA firms. WorldCom's breakdown was called "the most sweeping book-keeping deception in history." Those financial reporting breakdowns were accompanied by other reported large-scale breakdowns, for example, at Adelphi, Cedant Corporation, Global Crossing, Qwest Communications, Rite Aid, Waste Management, The Baptist Foundation, Vivendi Universal (a French company), and Xerox.

Though the breakdowns led to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, described in Chapter 2, at this writing, only a hint of the eventual effects of those events on financial accounting and reporting is available. Nevertheless, this edition contains a chapter on the lesson of those events for accountants. In addition, earnings management became a topic of regulatory interest since the ninth edition was published. A chapter on this form of abuse has also been added. Further, a chapter on price change reporting, a topic formerly covered by the *Handbook*, has been added in connection with the problem of earnings management, plus a chapter on producers or distributors of film.

The explosion in the scope and complexity of accounting principles and practice that dominated the preparation of the eighth and ninth editions has not abated. Though the FASB continues to be the primary source of authoritative accounting guidance, other sources of guidance are prominent. Pronouncements by the AICPA, SEC, GASB, and EITF are considerably important in particular areas. It is necessary to look to the EITF and to the AICPA SOPs and guides for guidance in specialized areas. All of those sources of accounting guidance are included in this edition of the *Handbook*.

The tenth edition of the *Handbook* is divided into two convenient volumes:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Daniel Kadlec, "Worldcon: The Fall of a Telecom Titan," *Time*, July 8, 2002, p. 21.

Volume One: Financial Accounting and General Topics includes:

- A comprehensive review of the framework of accounting guidance today and the organizations involved in its development, including the development of international standards.
- Material on the Enron collapse, earnings management, and price change reporting.
- A compendium of specific guidance on general aspects of financial statement presentation, disclosure, and analysis.
- Encyclopedic coverage of each specific financial statement area from cash though shareholders' equity, including coverage of financial instruments.

Volume Two: Special Industries and Special Topics includes:

- Comprehensive single-source coverage of the specialized environmental and accounting considerations for key industries, including, for the first time, a chapter on the film industry.
- Thorough coverage of accounting standards applying to pension plans, retirement plans, and employee stock compensation and other capital accumulation plans.
- Diverse topics including reporting by partnerships, estates, and trusts and valuation, bankruptcy, and forensic accounting.

For convenience, the pronoun "he" is used in this book to refer nonspecifically to the accountant and the person in business. We are aware that many women are also active in accounting practice and business. We intend the traditional choice of pronoun to include women.

The specialized expertise of the individual authors remains the critical element of this edition as it was in all prior editions. The editors worked closely with the authors, reviewing and critically editing their manuscripts. However, in the final analysis, each chapter is the work and viewpoint of the individual author or authors.

Some of the chapters in this edition have been prepared by university professors. However, over two-thirds of the chapters have been prepared by partners in accounting firms, financial executives, or financial analysts. Every major international accounting firm is represented among the authors. These professionals bring to bear their own and their firms' experiences in dealing with accounting practice problems. All of the 67 authors are recognized authorities in their fields and have made significant contributions to the tenth edition of the *Handbook*.

Our greatest debt is to these 67 authors of the 44 chapters of this edition. We deeply appreciate the value and importance of their time and effort. We also acknowledge our debt to the editors of and contributors to nine earlier editions of the *Handbook*. This edition draws heavily on the accumulated knowledge of those earlier editions. Finally, we wish to thank Judy Howarth and Sujin Hong at John Wiley & Sons, Inc., for handling the many details of organizing and coordinating this effort.

D. R. CARMICHAEL P. H. ROSENFIELD

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