

Focused on NASCAR

CPA firm grows by targeting racing teams as clients

by [Fred Tannenbaum](#) Staff writer

You might say NASCAR has driven the success of local accounting firm [Greer & Walker](#).

At an early stage in the 20-year-old company's evolution, founders Charles Greer and Kevin Walker recognized the need for their business to target particular sectors.

Partially by design but also by coincidence, the company steered into the NASCAR niche just as the popularity of motorsports exploded. From a modest start in that industry in 1989, Greer & Walker has grown to handle a range of accounting duties for seven drivers and 15 teams competing in the Nextel Cup, Busch and Craftsman Truck series.

The company provides drivers and teams with tax and audit services. For some, Greer & Walker also is the money manager, estate planner and executor.

The firm's client base also includes manufacturers, distribution businesses and construction and real estate companies.

NASCAR has been a primary focus, however, with as many as 14 of Greer & Walker's 55 employees working on those accounts. Leading Greer & Walker's motorsports practice are tax managers Wendy Wheeler, Abby Champion and Paula Tilley, and audit managers Deanna Dycus and Melissa Critcher.

"The racing part is where they want to focus," Greer says.

The motorsports practice started in 1989, when a client who ran a T-shirt and souvenir shop in Myrtle Beach, S.C., bought a racing team's clothing venture, says James Reichard, a Greer & Walker partner. That soon led to introductions to other NASCAR teams and drivers.

By 1994, Greer & Walker had built a solid reputation within the motorsports community. As John Bickford Sr., stepfather and business manager of then-rising superstar Jeff Gordon, prepared to move the driver's team here from Indiana, others in the racing game suggested Greer & Walker as accountants.

Bickford, vice president and general manager of [Jeff Gordon Inc.](#), met Greer and Reichard and was immediately impressed. "They work hard to understand your business, as opposed to teaching you about their business," Bickford says.

Gordon has been a client ever since.

Greer & Walker's principals expect the firm's revenue to increase 20% this year over the 2003 total, though they decline to disclose details.

And they plan to add as many as five employees by year end, in part to help corporate clients comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

Walker notes the firm has steadily expanded without any direct marketing. "Growth is a byproduct of taking care of your clients," he says.