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Professional Tax Preparation Services

As a self-employed individual, I have to think about taxes all year long. From keeping meticulous business records and receipts to making estimated payments to Uncle Sam every quarter, it seems that I'm almost always doing something related to my taxes.

While I don't mind handling this day-to-day paperwork, there's absolutely no way that I could prepare my own returns properly. The few times I've tried doing this in the past, I ended up making a terrible mess of everything, and had to pay an accountant a lot of money to fix things up for me. So now every April I just go straight to a professional tax preparation service and let experts deal with my return.

I've tried many tax preparation services over the years in an effort to get a feel for which ones can get me the biggest refund in the shortest amount of time. Here's a quick outline of what I've discovered.

When I first decided to take my returns to a professional, I went to a well known national company because I figured they'd be best equipped to finish the job in a satisfactory manner. However, I was extremely disappointed with the results, particularly since the person who prepared my return didn't make himself readily available to answer specific questions I had about my return. Since that bad experience, I've been looking at other alternatives including online tax preparation services.

From what I've seen, most online tax preparation services fall into one of two categories: full-service or self-service. With the first kind, you basically submit all of your relevant financial records electronically, and a professional will prepare your return for you. This is just like taking your paperwork to a local CPA, except for the fact that you never have to leave your home.

With the second kind of online tax preparation service, you do the entire return yourself with the help of specialized software. The software simplifies everything, and utilizes various prompts and calculators so that you know exactly what to enter on every line of the return. While this is definitely a lot easier than trying to work through the traditional paper forms, it can still be a bit confusing for some people and is not 100 percent foolproof.

Out of all the different tax preparation services I've tried, I have to say that submitting my documents electronically to a professional firm is far and away the easiest solution. I keep all of my records in electronic formats anyway, so it doesn't take much time at all to locate them on my computer and send them via

email. It's fast, it's easy, it's stress-free, and I highly recommend it!