

The proliferation of financial terms and jargon in the mass media (even more now as a result of the current financial crisis) such as balance-sheet, capital, depreciation, book-value, profit and loss etc. is something confronting more and more laypersons. It was my aim to make these terms easily understandable for everybody in order to make it more fun to follow the news, talk-shows etc. and consequently motivate the readers' interest by connecting financial terms with an entertaining story.

These supposedly dry terms are explained on the basis of a one month exposure to Max Beancounter's (the bookkeeper) private life. Banal everyday transactions, with which every person can identify, demonstrate how they influence Max's personal balance-sheet and income statement: drawing money from the bank, purchasing a computer, food, petrol, paying rent, or receiving wages and interest etc. It's an exciting month, because of the strong fluctuation of the price of his stock, being cheated on the Internet, and, on the happier side falling in love and winning in the lottery.

At the end of the month the reader will find out whether Max has made income or suffered a loss, simulating a company's business. Reading Max's personal story from this perspective makes it easier to understand a company's balance sheet, income statement, accounting principles (debit-credit entries) and financial terms.

The second part explains general differences to a company's balance sheet and income statement and deals with particularities in reference to tricks and fraud.

Target audience

- Start-up companies.
- Company owners and responsible employees – especially helpful in recognizing problems and for discussions with accountants, tax-advisers, and creditors like banks.
- Trainees in commercial professions and employees in commercial departments of companies.
- Scholars and students of accounting, book-keeping, law, taxes, finances, and economics.
- Shareholders.
- Private persons interested in economics.

About myself

I was born 1956, live in Düsseldorf/Germany and have worked for tax-advisors, chartered accountants and various companies (including those in the US with a branch in Düsseldorf).

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