




AITKEN LAMBERT ELSWORTH

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS (S.A.)

With Compliments

**5A Rydall Views
Rydall Vale Office Park
38 Douglas Saunders Drive
La Lucia Ridge, 4051**

**Tel: 031 202 7601
Tel: 031 277 2740
Fax: 031 202 7663**

Email: info@aitkenlambert.co.za
Website: www.aitkenlambert.co.za

Directors: CC Elsworth, A King and AG Wiggill



[Forward email](#)

Keeping you in touch

AccountingDotNews

In this Issue

**This Halloween, Stay Safe
From eFiling Profile Hijackings**

**Salary Sacrifice: Why
Founders Should Always Pay
Themselves**

**Adapt or Suffer: How to Keep
Your Business Afloat in a
Changing Climate**

**Management Accounts: A
Strategic Tool for Business
Success**

October 2025

This Halloween, Stay Safe From eFiling Profile Hijackings

"Profile hijacking points to pervasive cybercrime with global links." (Edward Kieswetter, SARS Commissioner)



The Tax Ombud has again warned South Africans about the concerning increase in eFiling profile hijackings, which has spurred the Office of the Tax Ombud (OTO) to launch a survey of taxpayers' experiences and a systemic investigation into SARS.

What is eFiling profile hijacking?

Your Tax Deadlines for October 2025

Subscribe

This Halloween, Stay Safe From eFiling Profile Hijackings

eFiling profile hijacking involves cybercriminals gaining unauthorised access to taxpayers' SARS eFiling accounts. Once inside, they change the security details and banking information, and submit fraudulent tax returns to redirect the refunds into their own accounts.

Methods such as SIM swaps and phishing are commonly employed to get access to taxpayers' eFiling profiles. Using calls and fraudulent SARS text messages, emails and letters of demand, scammers pose as SARS officials or tax advisors, often pretending to want to assist taxpayers to get their SARS refunds.

Concerns have also been raised about possible internal fraud and insider involvement at SARS and certain banks.

SARS systemic investigation

While SARS acknowledges the rise in eFiling profile hijackings, it emphasises that although individual profiles have been compromised, the SARS system itself has not been breached.

SARS adds that additional security measures have been implemented and that it is collaborating with financial institutions and the OTO to combat the scourge of profile hijacking.

How to safeguard your eFiling profile

SARS has issued the following advice:

- Avoid sharing your eFiling login details. SARS will never request OTPs, passwords or bank details via calls, emails or text messages.
- Use strong and unique passwords and update them regularly.
- Enable two-factor authentication for an additional layer of security.
- Regularly check your eFiling profile and submitted returns for any unauthorised changes.
- Verify your bank account on eFiling before a refund is paid, even if there was no change to the banking details.
- If you suspect your profile has been hijacked, change your login credentials promptly using another device, and report it immediately to SARS and to the SAPS as an identity theft case.

Rely on the expertise of a SARS registered tax practitioner such as ourselves.

How we help keep your eFiling profile safe

As your accounting and tax partner, we help you keep your eFiling profile safe by, for example, keeping abreast of all the latest scams, validating the status of your tax affairs and any SARS enquiries or requests, and by using only official channels for interacting with SARS, especially when making payments.

If you are concerned about the security of your SARS eFiling profile, or if you have been contacted by anyone offering assistance to obtain a SARS refund, contact us immediately.

We are the ally you need in the fight against profile hijacking.

Salary Sacrifice: Why Founders Should Always Pay Themselves

***"Paying
yourself isn't***

*selfish, it's
sustainable.*

*The goal is to
strike a
balance that
supports your
personal life
without
compromising
the growth of
your*

company.” (Salim Omar, CPA and serial entrepreneur)



Many founders see skipping their own salary as a noble way to fund growth. In reality, underpaying yourself often backfires. Research shows that 82% of small business failures stem from cash flow problems and unpaid founders can mask true costs, distort margins, and create hidden financial pressure – and that's just the start of it.

What's the real cost of your time?

When founders refuse to take a salary, they are effectively treating their own time as free. In the scramble to conserve cash, they tell themselves they can wait to be paid until profits improve. But unpaid labour is not free. By not recognising this cost, you skew the economics of your business.

Imagine you hire a manager to take over your duties. Their salary would immediately appear as a line item. By not paying yourself, you are masking a true expense. This can mislead investors, lenders, and even yourself about whether the business model is sustainable and prevent changes that need to be made. Pricing, margins, and growth targets all look healthier than they are, setting you up for shocks later.

This is why savvy investors prefer to see founders compensated fairly. An unpaid or underpaid founder may seem admirable in the short term, but it raises questions about whether they and the company can endure the demands of growth.

Burnout is real

Founders who delay setting a salary usually do so because they are waiting for a day when they feel the business has “earned it.” The problem is that this line keeps moving. There's always another milestone, another round of investment, or another expense that feels more urgent. Meanwhile the founder is likely eroding personal savings, undermining their career advancement elsewhere and causing stress and sleepless nights in their own home.

A survey by Kruze Consulting of over 200 venture-backed start-ups found that business owners who underpaid themselves for too long often burned out and quit before their companies reached key milestones. By paying yourself out, and minimising the financial risks at home, you can avoid the same fate.

Tax benefits

Not paying yourself a salary isn't doing the company as many favours as you expect. All expenses put through the company (including salaries) reduce your company's tax burden, meaning that the benefit you're providing the company by not taking a salary is significantly smaller than you think.

As a general rule, it's advised that you take 50% or less of the business' net profits as compensation and save the rest for reinvestment, but each company is different. As your accountants, we can help you to structure the salary you pay yourself to ensure that the greatest benefit is achieved for all concerned – thereby lessening any guilt you may feel for taking a salary before the business is "ready".

The effect on morale

One of the more surprising aspects of not paying yourself a salary is the impact it has on staff morale. Salaries are a hot topic in any business, and the founder's salary is carefully watched by all who work there. Paying too much to the CEO or founder can lead to resentment, with staff feeling that difficulties on the floor are not shared in the board or that the effort at lower levels is not being adequately compensated.

Likewise, founders who take no salary, or a significantly reduced salary, instil distrust and fear among employees who begin to suspect that the company is struggling and likely to go under. This can lead to job-security worries, lower job satisfaction, increases in absenteeism, quiet quitting and higher than normal staff turnover – all of which will impact the business' bottom line.

Paying yourself is paying your business

Refusing to take a salary may feel like dedication, but over time it will eat away at both you and your company. Underpaying yourself masks the true cost of operations, distorts financial planning models, breaks employee morale and increases the risk of burnout. Setting a realistic salary is not selfish, it is a structural choice that strengthens transparency, stability, and resilience.

Let data guide the choice. Track your revenue, costs, and cash flow. And compare your compensation to industry benchmarks for founders at similar stages.

Businesses survive when their leaders are healthy, focused, and honest about costs. By recognising your worth and paying yourself accordingly, you are not taking from the business, you are ensuring it has a solid foundation on which to grow.

Speak to us if you'd like help with your salary structure.

Adapt or Suffer: How to Keep Your Business Afloat in a Changing Climate

"Taking bold action on climate change simply makes good business sense. It's also the right thing to do for people and the planet."



(Richard Branson)

Climate change impacts the fundamentals of business operations. Rising heat affects productivity, floods and storms damage infrastructure, droughts disrupt supply chains, and new regulations increase compliance costs. Many leaders still believe their sector will be spared, but no industry is truly insulated. Just as one-third of startups fail because they never properly defined their target market, businesses that fail to assess climate risks may find their models undermined by forces beyond their control. The message is clear: failing to future-proof your business, will result in extremely hard times ahead.

Start with the risks you're facing

The first step is to identify which climate risks could most directly affect your operations. These can be physical (think floods, wildfires, and extreme temperatures), or transitional, such as regulatory changes and shifts in customer expectations.

According to the latest prediction models, South Africans can expect a hotter, more erratic climate with the country warming at about twice the global average. This means more very hot days that will hurt worker productivity and equipment reliability. On top of this, the country is also experiencing heavier downpours with increased flood damage. These damaging floods, such as those seen KwaZulu-Natal in April 2022 and the Western Cape in September 2023, will result in enormous insurance and economic losses and prolonged business disruption.

Despite the flooding, the country is also not in the clear when it comes to water stress. The 2015–2018 Cape Town “Day Zero” drought was devastating for car wash businesses but a boon for borehole drillers. Day Zero may have been avoided, but there will be more droughts in the future.

All of these issues can lead to stock and agriculture failures, infrastructure collapse and process interruptions. A lack of water, for example, creates cleaning and hygiene issues as well as lower staff productivity. Insurers in SA have been reporting increasing weather losses and rising catastrophe claims, which will continue to feed through to higher premiums and excesses and tougher underwriting in high-risk zones.

You can only build a realistic plan once you understand exactly where your exposures lie.

Build a climate profile for your business

Once you understand the risk categories, create a profile detailing how they intersect with your company. You need to consider your location, your sector, your suppliers and your employees. A warehouse on a floodplain carries different risks from a retail store in a heat-stressed city. Manufacturing firms may depend on inputs that are vulnerable to drought or fire, and employees may struggle in adverse weather conditions. Many exposures sit within the supply chain, where a small disruption upstream can ripple through global markets. For example, higher than usual temperatures may result in crops failing, or greater costs for HVAC and cold logistics services. Have you factored in these costs being passed on to your business?

This profile should be updated regularly, as conditions, regulations, and technologies evolve and more is learnt about the severity of future weather patterns.

Segment your strategy

Not every part of your business will need the same response. While operations may require investments in resilient infrastructure or more efficient energy use, supply chains might need diversification or tighter contracts with suppliers to ensure continuity.

Products and services may need to change as customers shift their preferences toward sustainable options. Segmenting your approach enables you to focus on the areas that matter most.

Use data to drive decisions

Climate planning is most effective when it's based on evidence rather than assumptions. It is vital that any planning you do is based on the data from climate models, insurance assessments, and financial analyses. Tracking information like rising temperatures, energy costs, and new compliance regulations will turn climate risk from an abstract concern into a measurable factor in your strategy. In South Africa, municipal climate plans are being adjusted to redraw floodplain rules and heat-safety requirements. Is your business going to even be compliant when they come in?

Talk to your stakeholders

Your customers, employees, suppliers, and investors are able to offer different perspectives that could keep you ahead of any climate disasters. Customers can tell you what matters most in their purchasing decisions, employees may note practical changes to streamline daily operations and suppliers can share concerns that could highlight problems you had not foreseen. Talking to all of your stakeholders is more important than it's ever been.

Climate planning is an ongoing process

Preparing for climate change is not something you can set and forget. It requires regular review and adjustment as risks, regulations, and technologies change. Businesses that take structured action now don't just reduce their exposure – they'll also become more attractive to capital investment and build long-term resilience.

Climate change is already reshaping the way companies operate. The question is no longer whether it will affect your business but whether you are ready to respond.

Speak to us if you need help allocating budget for climate resilience strategies.

Management Accounts: A Strategic Tool for Business Success

***"Accounting is
the language of
business."
(Warren
Buffett)***

Increasingly, banks and other organisations are requiring businesses to submit up-to-date management accounts when applying for finance. This is because these compact financial reports enable business analysis even when the latest annual financial statements are not yet available.



Management accounts also offer owners and managers timely, accurate and actionable financial insights that facilitate performance evaluation, smart management decisions and informed planning – all of which can transform how your business operates and grows.

What are management accounts?

Management accounts are a set of summarised financial reports. They're similar to annual financial statements but they aren't as formal, and they're produced much more frequently – usually monthly or quarterly.

They're all about providing relevant financial data for informed business decision-making. As such, there's no fixed format. Instead, management accounts should summarise and combine the financial reports you need to make smarter decisions.

These financial reports might include some or all of the following.

What can be included in management accounts?	
Income Statement (Profit & Loss)	- Detailed breakdown of income and expenses - Measures performance over a specific period
Balance Sheet	Provides a snapshot of the financial position (assets, liabilities, and equity) at a specific point in time
Cash Flow Statement	- Tracks actual cash movements - Monitors what funds are available, incoming, and required for outflows
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Quick performance assessments
Trend Analysis	Comparisons with previous periods and industry standards
Variance Analysis	Compares actual figures against budgets
Other	- Debtors and creditors reports - Payroll reports - VAT and PAYE reconciliations - Departmental reports for individual business unit performance

What can management accounts tell you?	
Performance	• Comparisons with previous years and industry standards • Results analysed against KPIs • Are strategies working? • Early signs of negative trends • Areas for improvement
Cash Flow	• Early warnings of cash flow pressures • Avoid cash flow problems
Profitability	• Where is profitability strongest? • Where to boost margins or reduce costs • New business opportunities
Operational Insights	• Top-performing products and customers • Guide decisions about pricing, resources, and reward strategies
Control	• Monitor overheads and stock levels • Early detection of irregularities / fraud • Risk management and governance • Accurate, current records reduce audit fees and enable smarter tax planning
Planning & Decision-Making	• Up-to-date financial reports that support smart strategic decisions

The right set of management accounts can do more than record numbers – it can provide meaningful insights that help your business to perform better, plan ahead, and stay in control.

We can tailor your management accounts

We tailor management accounts to your company's exact reporting requirements, turning your financial data into actionable insights that can not only improve operational efficiency but also create a solid foundation for sustainable growth in your company.

Think your business could benefit from a management accounts overhaul? Drop us a line!

Your Tax Deadlines for October 2025

- 07 October – Monthly Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) submissions and payments
- 20 October – End of Filing Season 2025 for



Individual taxpayers

- 24 October – Value-Added Tax (VAT) manual submissions and payments
- 30 October – Excise Duty payments
- 31 October – VAT electronic submissions and payments and CIT Provisional Tax payments.

Note: Copyright in this publication and its contents vests in DotNews - see copyright notice below.



A Client Connection Service by [DotNews](#)

© DotNews. All Rights Reserved.

Disclaimer

The information provided herein should not be used or relied on as professional advice. No liability can be accepted for any errors or omissions nor for any loss or damage arising from reliance upon any information herein. Always contact us for professional, detailed and appropriate advice.