



1666 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 207-9100
Facsimile: (202) 862-8433
www.pcaobus.org

Report on

2014 Inspection of Timothy Alan Coons (Headquartered in La Jolla, California)

Issued by the

Public Company Accounting Oversight Board

November 24, 2014

THIS IS A PUBLIC VERSION OF A PCAOB INSPECTION REPORT

**PORTIONS OF THE COMPLETE REPORT ARE OMITTED
FROM THIS DOCUMENT IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH
SECTIONS 104(g)(2) AND 105(b)(5)(A)
OF THE SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002**

PCAOB RELEASE NO. 104-2015-042

2014 INSPECTION OF TIMOTHY ALAN COONS

Preface

In 2014, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB" or "the Board") conducted an inspection of the registered public accounting firm Timothy Alan Coons ("the Firm") pursuant to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 ("the Act").

Inspections are designed and performed to provide a basis for assessing the degree of compliance by a firm with applicable requirements related to auditing issuers. For a description of the procedures the Board's inspectors may perform to fulfill this responsibility, see Part I.C of this report (which also contains additional information concerning PCAOB inspections generally). Overall, the inspection process included reviews of portions of selected issuer audits completed by the Firm. These reviews were intended to identify whether deficiencies existed in those portions of the inspected audits, and whether such deficiencies indicated defects or potential defects in the Firm's system of quality control over audits. In addition, the inspection included a review of policies and procedures related to certain quality control processes of the Firm that could be expected to affect audit quality.

The Board is issuing this report in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The Board is releasing to the public Part I of the report and portions of Part IV of the report. Part IV of the report consists of the Firm's comments, if any, on a draft of the report.- If the nonpublic portions of the report discuss criticisms of or potential defects in the firm's system of quality control, those discussions also could eventually be made public, but only to the extent the firm fails to address the criticisms to the Board's satisfaction within 12 months of the issuance of the report.-

PROFILE OF THE FIRM¹

Number of offices	2 (La Jolla and San Diego, California)
Ownership structure	Sole proprietorship
Number of partners	1
Number of professional staff ²	None
Number of issuer audit clients	None at the outset of the inspection; however, the Firm had issued at least one audit report with respect to an issuer since the Firm's registration with the PCAOB in 2010
Other names used in audit reports	Timothy A. Coons, CPA PhD

¹ The information presented here is as understood by the inspection team, generally as of the outset of the inspection, based on the Firm's self-reporting and the inspection team's review of certain information. Additional information, including additional detail on audit reports issued by the Firm, is available in the Firm's filings with the Board, available at http://pcaobus.org/Registration/rasr/Pages/RASR_Search.aspx.

² The number of partners and professional staff is provided here as an indication of the size of the Firm, and does not necessarily represent the number of the Firm's professionals who participate in audits of issuers.

PART I

INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS

Members of the Board's inspection staff ("the inspection team") conducted primary procedures for the inspection from January 27, 2014 to January 31, 2014.³

A. Review of Audit Engagements

The inspection procedures included a review of portions of two issuer audits performed by the Firm. The inspection team identified matters that it considered to be deficiencies in the performance of the work it reviewed.

The descriptions of the deficiencies in Part I.A of this report include, at the end of the description of each deficiency, references to specific paragraphs of the auditing standards that relate to those deficiencies. The text of those paragraphs is set forth in Appendix A to this report. The references in this sub-Part include only standards that primarily relate to the deficiencies; they do not present a comprehensive list of every auditing standard that applies to the deficiencies. Further, certain broadly applicable aspects of the auditing standards that may be relevant to a deficiency, such as provisions requiring due professional care, including the exercise of professional skepticism; the accumulation of sufficient appropriate audit evidence; and the performance of procedures that address risks, are not included in the references to any auditing standards in this sub-Part, unless the lack of compliance with these standards is the primary reason for the deficiency. These broadly applicable provisions are described in Part I.B of this report.

Certain of the deficiencies identified were of such significance that it appeared to the inspection team that the Firm, at the time it issued its audit report, had not obtained

³ For this purpose, "primary procedures" include field work, other review of audit work papers, and the evaluation of the Firm's quality control policies and procedures through review of documentation and interviews of Firm personnel. Primary procedures do not include (1) inspection planning, which is generally performed prior to primary procedures, and (2) inspection follow-up procedures, wrap-up, analysis of results, and the preparation of the inspection report, which generally extend beyond the primary procedures.

sufficient appropriate audit evidence to support its opinion that the financial statements were presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. In other words, in these audits, the auditor issued an opinion without satisfying its fundamental obligation to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements were free of material misstatement.

The fact that one or more deficiencies in an audit reach this level of significance does not necessarily indicate that the financial statements are misstated. It is often not possible for the inspection team, based only on the information available from the auditor, to reach a conclusion on those points.

Whether or not associated with a disclosed financial reporting misstatement, an auditor's failure to obtain the reasonable assurance that the auditor is required to obtain is a serious matter. It is a failure to accomplish the essential purpose of the audit, and it means that, based on the audit work performed, the audit opinion should not have been issued.⁴

The audit deficiencies that reached this level of significance are described below—

Issuer A

- (1) the Firm's failure to identify, or to address appropriately, departures from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP") that related to potentially material misstatements in the audited financial statements concerning the presentation of subscriptions receivable (AS No. 14 paragraph 30);

⁴ Inclusion in an inspection report does not mean that the deficiency remained unaddressed after the inspection team brought it to the Firm's attention. Depending upon the circumstances, compliance with PCAOB standards may require the Firm to perform additional audit procedures, or to inform a client of the need for changes to its financial statements or reporting on internal control, or to take steps to prevent reliance on its previously expressed audit opinions. The Board expects that firms will comply with these standards, and the inspections staff may include in its procedures monitoring or assessing a firm's compliance.

(2) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence, valuation, and presentation and disclosure of subscriptions receivable (AS No. 13, paragraphs 8 and 36); and

(3) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence, completeness, and presentation and disclosure of deferred offering costs and accounts payable, including the failure to resolve inconsistencies in information disclosed by the issuer (AS No. 13, paragraphs 8 and 36; AS No. 15, paragraph 29).

Issuer B

(1) the Firm's failure to identify, or to address appropriately, departures from GAAP that related to potentially material misstatements in the audited financial statements concerning the presentation of subscriptions receivable (AS No. 14 paragraph 30);

(2) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence, valuation, and presentation and disclosure of subscriptions receivable (AS No. 13, paragraphs 8 and 36);

(3) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence, completeness, and presentation and disclosure of deferred offering costs and accounts payable (AS No. 13, paragraphs 8 and 36); and

(4) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to evaluate the presentation and disclosure of related party transactions (AS No. 14, paragraph 31; AU 334 paragraphs .07, .08, and .11).

B. Auditing Standards

Each deficiency described above could relate to several applicable provisions of the standards that govern the conduct of audits, including both the paragraphs of the standards that are cited at the end of each description of the deficiency included in Part I.A of this report and one or more of the specific paragraphs discussed below.

Many audit deficiencies involve a lack of due professional care. AU 230, *Due Professional Care in the Performance of Work* ("AU 230"), paragraphs .02, .05, and .06, requires the independent auditor to plan and perform his or her work with due professional care and sets forth aspects of that requirement. AU 230, paragraphs .07 through .09, and Auditing Standard ("AS") No. 13, *The Auditor's Responses to the Risks of Material Misstatement* ("AS No. 13"), paragraph 7, specify that due professional care requires the exercise of professional skepticism. These standards state that professional skepticism is an attitude that includes a questioning mind and a critical assessment of the appropriateness and sufficiency of audit evidence.

AS No. 13, paragraphs 3, 5, and 8, requires the auditor to design and implement audit responses that address the risks of material misstatement, and AS No. 15, *Audit Evidence* ("AS No. 15"), paragraph 4, requires the auditor to plan and perform audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the audit opinion. Sufficiency is the measure of the quantity of audit evidence, and the quantity needed is affected by the risk of material misstatement (in the audit of financial statements) and the quality of the audit evidence obtained. The appropriateness of evidence is measured by its quality; to be appropriate, evidence must be both relevant and reliable in support of the related conclusions.

The table below lists the specific auditing standards that are referenced for each deficiency included in Part I.A of this report. See the descriptions of the deficiencies in Part I.A for identification of the specific paragraphs, in addition to those noted above, that relate to the individual deficiencies. Standards discussed above are cited again in the table only if the particular deficiency relates to aspects of the standard that are not discussed above.

PCAOB Auditing Standards	Issuers
AS No. 13, <i>The Auditor's Responses to the Risks of Material Misstatement</i>	A and B
AS No. 14, <i>Evaluating Audit Results</i>	A and B
AS No. 15, <i>Audit Evidence</i>	A
AU 334, <i>Related Parties</i>	B

C. Information Concerning PCAOB Inspections Generally Applicable to Triennially Inspected Firms

Board inspections include reviews of certain portions of selected audit work performed by the inspected firm and reviews of certain aspects of the firm's quality control system. The inspections are designed to identify deficiencies in audits and defects or potential defects in the Firm's system of quality control related to the Firm's audits. The focus on deficiencies, defects, and potential defects necessarily carries through to reports on inspections and, accordingly, Board inspection reports are not intended to serve as balanced report cards or overall rating tools. Further, the inclusion in an inspection report of certain deficiencies, defects, and potential defects should not be construed as an indication that the Board has made any determination about other aspects of the inspected firm's systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct not included within the report.

C.1. Reviews of Audit Work

Inspections include reviews of portions of selected audits of financial statements and, where applicable, audits of internal control over financial reporting ("ICFR"). For these audits, the inspection team selects certain portions of the audits for inspection, and it reviews the engagement team's work papers and interviews engagement personnel regarding those portions. If the inspection team identifies a potential issue that it is unable to resolve through discussion with the firm and any review of additional work papers or other documentation, the inspection team ordinarily provides the firm with a written comment form on the matter and the firm is allowed the opportunity to provide a written response to the comment form. If the response does not resolve the

inspection team's concerns, the matter is considered a deficiency and is evaluated for inclusion in the inspection report.

The inspection team selects the audits, and the specific portions of those audits, that it will review, and the inspected firm is not allowed an opportunity to limit or influence the selections. Audit deficiencies that the inspection team may identify include a firm's failure to identify, or to address appropriately, financial statement misstatements, including failures to comply with disclosure requirements,⁵ as well as a firm's failures to perform, or to perform sufficiently, certain necessary audit procedures. The inspection may not involve the review of all of a firm's audits, nor is it designed to identify every deficiency in the reviewed audits. Accordingly, a Board inspection report should not be understood to provide any assurance that a firm's audit work, or the relevant issuers' financial statements or reporting on ICFR, are free of any deficiencies not specifically described in an inspection report.

In some cases, the conclusion that a firm did not perform a procedure may be based on the absence of documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence, even if the firm claimed to have performed the procedure. AS No. 3, *Audit Documentation* ("AS No. 3"), provides that, in various circumstances including PCAOB inspections, a firm that has not adequately documented that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion must demonstrate with persuasive other evidence that it did so, and that oral assertions and explanations alone do not constitute persuasive other evidence. In reaching its conclusions, the inspection team considers whether audit documentation or any persuasive other evidence that a firm might provide to the inspection team supports a firm's contention that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion. In the case of every matter cited in the public portion of a final inspection report, the inspection team

⁵ When it comes to the Board's attention that an issuer's financial statements appear not to present fairly, in a material respect, the financial position, results of operations, or cash flows of the issuer in conformity with applicable accounting principles, the Board's practice is to report that information to the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "the Commission"), which has jurisdiction to determine proper accounting in issuers' financial statements. Any description in this report of financial statement misstatements or failures to comply with SEC disclosure requirements should not be understood as an indication that the SEC has considered or made any determination regarding these issues unless otherwise expressly stated.

has carefully considered any contention by the firm that it did so but just did not document its work, and the inspection team has concluded that the available evidence does not support the contention that the firm sufficiently performed the necessary work.

Identified deficiencies in the audit work that exceed a significance threshold (which is described in Part I.A of the inspection report) are summarized in the public portion of the inspection report.⁶

The Board cautions against extrapolating from the results presented in the public portion of a report to broader conclusions about the frequency of deficiencies throughout the firm's practice. Individual audits and areas of inspection focus are most often selected on a risk-weighted basis and not randomly. Areas of focus vary among selected audits, but often involve audit work on the most difficult or inherently uncertain areas of financial statements. Thus, the audit work is generally selected for inspection based on factors that, in the inspection team's view, heighten the possibility that auditing deficiencies are present, rather than through a process intended to identify a representative sample.

C.2. Review of a Firm's Quality Control System

QC 20, *System of Quality Control for a CPA Firm's Accounting and Auditing Practice* ("QC 20"), provides that an auditing firm has a responsibility to ensure that its personnel comply with the applicable professional standards. This standard specifies that a firm's system of quality control should encompass the following elements: (1) independence, integrity, and objectivity; (2) personnel management; (3) acceptance and continuance of issuer audit engagements; (4) engagement performance; and (5) monitoring.

⁶ The discussion in this report of any deficiency observed in a particular audit reflects information reported to the Board by the inspection team and does not reflect any determination by the Board as to whether the Firm has engaged in any conduct for which it could be sanctioned through the Board's disciplinary process. In addition, any references in this report to violations or potential violations of law, rules, or professional standards are not a result of an adversarial adjudicative process and do not constitute conclusive findings for purposes of imposing legal liability.

The inspection team's assessment of a firm's quality control system is derived both from the results of its procedures specifically focused on the firm's quality control policies and procedures, and also from inferences that can be drawn from deficiencies in the performance of individual audits. Audit deficiencies, whether alone or when aggregated, may indicate areas where a firm's system has failed to provide reasonable assurance of quality in the performance of audits. Even deficiencies that do not result in an insufficiently supported audit opinion may indicate a defect or potential defect in a firm's quality control system.⁷ If identified deficiencies, when accumulated and evaluated, indicate defects or potential defects in the firm's system of quality control, the nonpublic portion of this report would include a discussion of those issues. When evaluating whether identified deficiencies in individual audits indicate a defect or potential defect in a firm's system of quality control, the inspection team considers the nature, significance, and frequency of deficiencies;⁸ related firm methodology, guidance, and practices; and possible root causes.

Inspections also include a review of certain of the firm's practices, policies, and processes related to audit quality, which constitute a part of the firm's quality control system. This review addresses practices, policies, and procedures concerning audit performance, training, compliance with independence standards, client acceptance and retention, and the establishment of policies and procedures.

END OF PART I

⁷ Not every audit deficiency suggests a defect or potential defect in a firm's quality control system.

⁸ An evaluation of the frequency of a type of deficiency may include consideration of how often the inspection team reviewed audit work that presented the opportunity for similar deficiencies to occur. In some cases, even a type of deficiency that is observed infrequently in a particular inspection may, because of some combination of its nature, its significance, and the frequency with which it has been observed in previous inspections of the firm, be cause for concern about a quality control defect or potential defect.

PARTS II AND III OF THIS REPORT ARE NONPUBLIC
AND ARE OMITTED FROM THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT

PART IV

RESPONSE OF THE FIRM TO DRAFT INSPECTION REPORT

Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(a), the Board provided the Firm an opportunity to review and comment on a draft of this report. The Firm did not provide a written response.

APPENDIX A

AUDITING STANDARDS REFERENCED IN PART I

This Appendix provides the text of the auditing standard paragraphs that are referenced in Part I.A of this report. Footnotes that are included in this Appendix, and any other Notes, are from the original auditing standards that are referenced. While this Appendix contains the specific portions of the relevant standards cited with respect to the deficiencies in Part I.A of this report, other portions of the standards (including those described in Part I.B of this report) may provide additional context, descriptions, related requirements, or explanations; the complete standards are available on the PCAOB's website at <http://pcaobus.org/STANDARDS/Pages/default.aspx>.

AS No. 13, <i>The Auditor's Responses to the Risks of Material Misstatement</i>		
RESPONSES INVOLVING THE NATURE, TIMING, AND EXTENT OF AUDIT PROCEDURES		
AS No. 13.8	The auditor should design and perform audit procedures in a manner that addresses the assessed risks of material misstatement for each relevant assertion of each significant account and disclosure.	Issuers A and B
SUBSTANTIVE PROCEDURES		
AS No. 13.36	The auditor should perform substantive procedures for each relevant assertion of each significant account and disclosure, regardless of the assessed level of control risk.	Issuers A and B
AS No. 14, <i>Evaluating Audit Results</i>		
Evaluating the Presentation of the Financial Statements, Including the Disclosures		
AS No. 14.30	The auditor must evaluate whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework. Note: AU sec. 411, <i>The Meaning of Present Fairly in Conformity With Generally Accepted Accounting Principles</i>, establishes requirements for	Issuers A and B

	evaluating the presentation of the financial statements. Auditing Standard No. 6, <i>Evaluating Consistency of Financial Statements</i>, establishes requirements regarding evaluating the consistency of the accounting principles used in financial statements. Note: The auditor should look to the requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the company under audit with respect to the accounting principles applicable to that company.	
AS No. 14.31	As part of the evaluation of the presentation of the financial statements, the auditor should evaluate whether the financial statements contain the information essential for a fair presentation of the financial statements in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework. Evaluation of the information disclosed in the financial statements includes consideration of the form, arrangement, and content of the financial statements (including the accompanying notes), encompassing matters such as the terminology used, the amount of detail given, the classification of items in the statements, and the bases of amounts set forth. Note: According to AU sec. 508, if the financial statements, including the accompanying notes, fail to disclose information that is required by the applicable financial reporting framework, the auditor should express a qualified or adverse opinion and should provide the information in the report, if	Issuer B

	practicable, unless its omission from the report is recognized as appropriate by a specific auditing standard. ¹⁸	
<u>Footnote to AS 14.31</u>		
¹⁸ AU secs. 508.41-.44.		
AS No. 15, <i>Audit Evidence</i>		
INCONSISTENCY IN, OR DOUBTS ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF, AUDIT EVIDENCE		
AS No. 15.29	If audit evidence obtained from one source is inconsistent with that obtained from another, or if the auditor has doubts about the reliability of information to be used as audit evidence, the auditor should perform the audit procedures necessary to resolve the matter and should determine the effect, if any, on other aspects of the audit.	Issuer A
AU 334, <i>Related Parties</i>		
AUDIT PROCEDURES		
Determining the Existence of Related Parties		
AU 334.07	The auditor should place emphasis on testing material transactions with parties he knows are related to the reporting entity. Certain relationships, such as parent-subsidary or investor-investee, may be clearly evident. Determining the existence of others requires the application of specific audit procedures, which may include the following: a. Evaluate the company's	Issuer B

	procedures for identifying and properly accounting for related party transactions. b. Request from appropriate management personnel the names of all related parties and inquire whether there were any transactions with these parties during the period. c. Review filings by the reporting entity with the Securities and Exchange Commission and other regulatory agencies for the names of related parties and for other businesses in which officers and directors occupy directorship or management positions. d. Determine the names of all pension and other trusts established for the benefit of employees and the names of their officers and trustees.⁴ e. Review stockholder listings of closely held companies to identify principal stockholders. f. Review prior years' working papers for the names of known related parties. g. Inquire of predecessor, principal, or other auditors of related entities concerning their knowledge of existing relationships and the	
--	--	--

	extent of management involvement in material transactions. h. Review material investment transactions during the period under audit to determine whether the nature and extent of investments during the period create related parties.	
<u>Footnote 4 to AU 334.07</u> ⁴ According to FASB Statement No. 57, paragraph 24(f) [AC section R36.406] "trusts for the benefit of employees, such as pension and profit-sharing trusts that are managed by or under the trusteeship of management," are related parties.		
Identifying Transactions With Related Parties		
AU 334.08	The following procedures are intended to provide guidance for identifying material transactions with parties known to be related and for identifying material transactions that may be indicative of the existence of previously undetermined relationships: a. Provide audit personnel performing segments of the audit or auditing and reporting separately on the accounts of related components of the reporting entity with the names of known related parties so that they may become aware of transactions with such parties during their audits. b. Review the minutes of meetings of the board of directors and executive or operating committees for information about material	Issuer B

	transactions authorized or discussed at their meetings. c. Review proxy and other material filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission and comparable data filed with other regulatory agencies for information about material transactions with related parties. d. Review conflict-of-interests statements obtained by the company from its management.⁵ e. Review the extent and nature of business transacted with major customers, suppliers, borrowers, and lenders for indications of previously undisclosed relationships. f. Consider whether transactions are occurring, but are not being given accounting recognition, such as receiving or providing accounting, management or other services at no charge or a major stockholder absorbing corporate expenses. g. Review accounting records for large, unusual, or nonrecurring transactions or balances, paying particular attention to transactions recognized at or near the end of the reporting period. h. Review confirmations of	
--	---	--

	compensating balance arrangements for indications that balances are or were maintained for or by related parties. i. Review invoices from law firms that have performed regular or special services for the company for indications of the existence of related parties or related party transactions. j. Review confirmations of loans receivable and payable for indications of guarantees. When guarantees are indicated, determine their nature and the relationships, if any, of the guarantors to the reporting entity.	
<u>Footnote 5 to AU 334.08</u> ⁵ Conflict-of-interests statements are intended to provide the board of directors with information about the existence or nonexistence of relationships between the reporting persons and parties with whom the company transacts business.		
Disclosure		
AU 334.11	For each material related party transaction (or aggregation of similar transactions) or common ownership or management control relationship for which FASB Statement No. 57 [AC section R36] requires disclosure, the auditor should consider whether he has obtained sufficient appropriate evidential matter to understand the relationship of the parties and, for related party transactions, the effects of the transaction on the financial statements. He should then	Issuer B

	evaluate all the information available to him concerning the related party transaction or control relationship and satisfy himself on the basis of his professional judgment that it is adequately disclosed in the financial statements. ⁸	
<u>Footnote 8 to AU 334.11</u> ⁸ The disclosure standards are contained in FASB Statement No. 57, paragraphs 2 through 4 [AC section R36.102-.104]. Also, see paragraph 31 of Auditing Standard No. 14, <i>Evaluating Audit Results</i> .		