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It is no surprise that women now dominate the accounting profession in terms of sheer numbers, just as they do the advertising, law and many other service professions. And while they are still under-represented at the partnership level, it is clear that this dominance by women will both continue and will fundamentally change how the profession conducts itself.

Updating its Quick Take on Women in Accounting for 2012, women's advocate organization Catalyst notes that:

- Women are 61.3% of all accountants and auditors in the United States.

- In a 2011 study, women were half of newly hired accounting graduates at CPA

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Since I haven't written anything in months to generate hate mail and controversy, permit me to advance a couple of ideas about why it is taking women longer to dominate the upper echelons of the profession. And I am not talking about the so-called "mommy track," in which women drop out of their careers in the middle to raise a family. Nor will I repeat any of the nonsense about women not being good with math and numbers.

The reason there are not more women at the top is that there are not more women at the top.

Women operate differently than men within an organization, and two key elements are helping one another succeed and using mentors. Men may have a masculine equivalent of the mentor, generally called a "Godfather" or "Rabbi," but it is not the same thing. The more mentors there are at the top of the profession, the more women will reach the top. It is happening, but it is a slow process. As more women break the "glass ceiling," they will mentor more women themselves.

Nonetheless, they are changing the profession, in ways that may be subtle but are nonetheless real. At least as real as my 21 years studying CPA firms for interviews and papers shows me. Here are the top three changes I see:

- **Less emphasis on tech consulting.** There are many terrific women in the IT ranks, but in truth they number far fewer than men. That is one of the reasons we see fewer firms touting their IT consulting departments these days, and more that tout their client communications, presentations and client relationships – all areas in which women excel.
- **Expansion into untapped markets.** Two of these come to mind – the 28 percent of US companies whose entrepreneurs are women, and the number of wealthy women who may prefer to network with other women for financial planning and

estate planning. Certainly, men do reach these markets. But not to the same degree,

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