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Q&A:

What advice would you give to female college students about the opportunities for women in the accounting profession?

I would say without pause that the opportunities are vast. The accounting profession is no longer about being a 'technician.' While technical skills are important, there are so many other opportunities within firms, such as business advisory and consulting positions. There are also opportunities to take on business development and marketing roles within firms of all sizes. The opportunities for new grads range from technical to creative.

What advice would you give accounting firms on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

It's all about creating a career path. Qualified professionals need to see the opportunity for advancement. Firm leaders have to take the time to mentor, continually challenge staff with new opportunities, and put a clear path for advancement in place. This creates a sense of loyalty to the firm. When you know you are going somewhere in a practice, you are far more apt to stick around.

Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior management and partner levels, or that the profession has moved to a mostly gender neutral state?

Yes, there is, but the glass is getting thinner (on the verge of shattering is my forecast). I look at all the amazing women in the profession—there are so many that are established and respected thought leaders. Many of the "voices" that are leading change in the profession are women. You have C-level executives Karen Abramson and Teresa Mackintosh leading transformational change within CCH. Jennifer

Katrulya and Jennifer Wilson are everywhere in the profession, continually adding to

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Honestly, I have yet to create the right balance, but I continue to work on it. I've expanded my staff and continue to delegate assignments so that I can move into a more strategic role. Managing a business is time-consuming, especially when the focus is always on how to make the client experience better. I do make a commitment to knock off at a certain time on certain days to ensure I keep up on my family time. It's a test for me every time I turn off my phone, but a necessity to truly enjoy my nephews' swim meets, football games, and all the other stuff that matters most. You don't become a master tent builder and Ninjago Lego sage by working on your business all the time.

How mobile are you regarding your work? How have mobile devices and apps impacted your productivity and work-life balance?

I'm all mobile all the time. I have an office in Michigan, while managing another firm in Indiana. And the majority of my clients are out of state. I rely on Skype, email, online file management, my iPhone, and join.me to stay connected and operate at peak productivity. The upside is that I am always connected. The down side is that I am always connected! Living in a perpetual state of connectivity cuts into my personal time, but it's my own fault. No one is twisting my arm to answer emails at 1 a.m. or during the series finale of Dexter. I continue to work on creating balance. A girl just needs her HBO fix sometimes.

What single piece of technology could you absolutely not live without, and why?

My laptop (Mac). I love it. The security is stellar and the functionality second to none. I take it everywhere. Some people find it strange that I choose a laptop over a tablet, but I can't work on an iPad—it's a 'consumption' device. I need the full functionality of the computer because I'm always writing and editing.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

The RootWorks app. It lets me keep up with client conversations within our

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trippin' is the best way to discover the cool random stuff...like haunted hotels, antique shops, and cute little towns where the locals give you a "story" along with directions and host festivals that promote "road kill cook-offs" and serve dishes like the "grits and gravy bowl." If you're wondering, no, I didn't try either.

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