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## Karen Abramson

CEO

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## **Q&A:**

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

It's a great profession, where you can have a very successful and fulfilling career. Accountants are at the very center of business and economies worldwide and with the transformation of the profession to a more consultative, strategic partnership focus on both individuals and businesses, I can't think of a more exciting time to be entering the profession.

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

The most successful firms going forward will be the ones that ensure deserving people, both women and men, have the opportunities to advance; are well supported by talent development programs; and are afforded the flexibility that they need at different points in their careers. This means firms likely need to make some changes. For example, firms can provide flexibility with cloud and mobile solutions that enable people to work and serve clients anywhere, anytime. They need to ensure that they are adopting new technologies, work processes and policies that support their employees in this way.

**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?**

While the representation of women at the senior leadership level still does not reflect

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**whether that includes family, etc?**

I have a very influential mentor in my life, who early in my career told me something that helped me greatly. She said that you need to balance your priorities one day at a time. Some days, your family priorities prevail, other days the most pressing issue may be a business issue. On an occasion, there will be a conflict, but when those around you understand that you are committed to both areas, you'll find that your family and peers will support you when a difficult choice has to be made.

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

I'm highly mobile. I really do work everywhere I go, which is great because there's no unwanted downtime. That accessibility and connectivity, however, can be a double-edged sword. It has dramatically improved my productivity, but as we all know, it's so easy for work to creep over into your personal life that you almost don't realize it. You really have to manage it well to ensure that when you want that downtime, you've got it.

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

The iPad because it supports my ability to work when and where I want to.

**What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?**

CCH Mobile. It's really important for me to stay current with new developments affecting the profession, and when it comes to timely tax news and information, there's simply nothing else that can compare to CCH Mobile.

**What do you like to do when you actually have free time without any obligations to work or family? (Examples: reading, wine and movies, tv, art, travel, exercise,**

cooking, etc).

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