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aren't sure if there will ever be an opportunity for them at the partner level. I don't think anyone should put limitations on their capabilities, contributions or potential based on their sex. There really are endless opportunities out there for women in accounting, but in some cases it just takes someone breaking the existing mold.

What advice would you give accounting firms on ways in which they can better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

All employees (including women) want to know their potential career opportunities wherever they work. It's important for firm leaders to communicate through two-way conversations with their staff, ensuring every individual knows where their career could go within that firm and exactly what they need to do to get there. This is especially important if the firm leadership is primarily (or entirely) men. Women want to know if they have a chance at the top.

What is the name of one book that has been a great influence to you?

I constantly have at least one or two books on the go, but one of my favorites that I have gone back to many times through the years is "Success Principles" by Jack Canfield. I believe everyone is capable of greatness and this book's promise of teaching people to live with passion and purpose, realizing all your ambitions, is delivered.

In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?

I have always made staying close to the market a priority. There is no better way to ensure Sage delivers solutions that will truly have an impact than spending time with accountants and CPAs at conferences, trade shows, and at their firm location. I am also a frequent speaker at conferences and I put a great deal of time and thought in to my content to ensure participants will take something away that can have an

immediate, lasting impact. I love it when I run into someone that has heard me speak

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husband and I became foster parents and currently have two foster children, ages nine and ten. We are committed to being active participants in Georgia's foster care program by recruiting and supporting new foster families, which is a huge community need. In addition, I volunteer with Family Promise, an organization committed to helping homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response.

What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?

I still see the rapid pace of change as one of the greatest changes we are seeing in the accounting profession, and one I think will continue to be seen for a while. Rapid pace of change isn't limited to technology, but also how firms react to it. For a long time, accountants felt they couldn't keep up with new technology, and now they're seeing changing expectations from their clients that also factor in to their need to react and adapt.

Clients are starting to demand increased engagement from their accountant, as well as deeper insights and action plans. Basically, they see value in partnering with their accountant on a more frequent basis to help them navigate their business direction. In order to keep up, a firm will need to adapt their business model. How do they do this?

First, they need to identify how they can add increased value to their clients and secondly, evaluate how they need to change their firm's business model to support delivering on that value. It's about positioning themselves as not just as a trusted business advisor, but a trusted, **valued** business advisor. Being a 'trusted advisor' isn't a competitive differentiator in a profession full of the same; it is becoming more about the value add the accountant can bring to their client relationships.

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their clients, ultimately being able to make a greater contribution to the success of small and medium businesses.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped shape the direction or focus of your professional life.

I grew up immersed in an environment of entrepreneurship thanks to my step-father Bert. He was a business owner for his entire career and taught me not just through his advice and guidance, but by how he lived his life and ran his business, which I believe makes someone the ultimate mentor. Through Bert I learned the fundamentals of being a successful business owner from A-Z and growing up working in a family business in a male-dominated industry (manufacturing) played a major role in who I am today. Everything I learned in those 15+ years being closely involved in his business is applied on a daily basis in my leadership role at Sage and I am extremely grateful for his mentorship and the opportunity to be part of his business.

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