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Misty Megia

Director

The Sleeter Group

www.Sleeter.com

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“Most Powerful Women in Accounting” awards.

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

My advice to female college students is to not be afraid to tackle things that you do not know, as your capacity for learning will far outweigh your fear. I have been in a variety of careers, and I've always had to reinvent myself and study the industry or profession until late hours of the night. With that determination, I have grown beyond what my college education taught me and further than I had dreamed. Becoming an expert in something is a lifelong pursuit in education, so don't be afraid when you don't know something. Be willing to learn it, dive deep into it and you will go far.

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

There are a lot of different ways that firms can better retain and advance more qualified females. The first way is providing opportunities for women. I believe that

providing mentor programs as well, to those interested, will help candidates learn,

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Even for a part of the team, no matter the age, great ideas come from being empowered to speak our minds and share our ideas, no matter how silly they may seem at first. I've had some crazy brainstorming sessions with my team and in the end, we always narrow it down to something uniquely us. But everyone has had their voice heard, and we are stronger for it.

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

I work with the Sleeter Group, which has an amazing community of accountants and bookkeepers. My mission is to bring together the people who create today's technologies with the accounting professionals who need them, who need these innovations to help their clients every day. As a previous small business owner, I know you don't have the time or the money to buy and test every product that might help me be more efficient. I didn't have time to make my business a guinea pig on a product that may or may not work. Having a company like the Sleeter Group, a company who will dive into the products and outline the differences, as a resource makes everyone's path to success more streamlined. We are independent because we value being honest about what works and what doesn't, because we know that adoption of a poor product, or even just the wrong product for a certain business, could mean the difference between successes and closing the doors for a small business.

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

The power of a strong local community is limitless, and everyone has something unique they can bring to the table to enrich their community. I donate my time participating in musical theatre. I direct and choreograph, and the outlet provides me additional opportunities to have fun, be creative and help people relieve stress. While it seems like a stretch from the accounting world, I am a firm believer that a

healthy local community is another way of bringing people together for greater

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for the accounting profession shift and change just as rapidly. I have found that clients want professionals who understand technology, not just accounting. The amount of technology you would need to be an expert in would be vast if you don't specialize and build a niche you can thrive in. Therefore, I feel like the shift to the specialist that focuses on a particular vertical will be the next big move. Instead of more general accounting services, I think professionals will learn to hone in on specific verticals they can really become the expert for. This will concentrate their efforts and their target market, but it also opens up their ability to become a true authority and leader for their clients. Those professionals who are already moving in this direction are finding strong success. You just have to be wise in the verticals you select.

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

Sometimes the accounting profession can seem—to the outside world—stodgy. Yes. Sorry, I said it. However, if you get to know the accounting professionals I know, you'll find a wild group filled with funny, engaging people who are creative beyond measure. The stories we hear are wonderful and heartwarming, and I feel one of my roles is to break down the stereotypes and the misconceptions of the accounting professional. We can show the world these *amazing* people behind the title, people who are more than incredibly smart—they are caring. They got into this business to make a difference.

People do business with people, so taking down the walls of business so we can connect to each other in a human way is not only imperative but necessary if we wish to have deeper business relationships. I hope my influence and absolute belief urges people to be themselves, to not live down to some preconceived version of what a professional should be, but instead live up to who they truly are, to their fullest

potential. Only then will the right clients gravitate to you as they will “get” you,

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invaluable support and guidance has been Doug and Sherrill Sleeter. They have both been so giving of themselves, their time and their knowledge. The passion they have for the accounting world is palpable and I strive to make them proud. I am so pleased that our paths crossed and blessed because of it.

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