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

My advice to women wanting to go into the accounting profession is to get as wide of an education as possible. yes, you will need finance classes, but take the history classes, and the political science classes, and the ethics classes. Being an educated human being brings so much to the table, and the more breadth you have on your education the better prepared you are to deal with the challenges of life.

Accounting is a profession in the US that actually has a lot of women, although leadership in top accounting firms is still primarily male. Reach for the stars, and don't let anyone tell you you can't become a partner, or start your own business. See the opportunities in accounting and seize them.

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

Start by recruiting more women for leadership tracks. Understand the right way to offer flexibility and a better life balance, without compromising your firm's quality or opportunity to grow. Accounting is usually something that can be done virtually, and at odd times – if necessary, so find a way to give working women (particularly moms) the opportunity to excel and have a flexible work schedule. Flexibility does not need to mean less work, just literally the ability to do work at the place and time that works for a working woman.

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

There are so many great books to read. I encourage everyone to keep reading, and keep books and ideas in their life. Recently I read the Steve Jobs biography. It made a big impact to read about how much of a jerk Steve Jobs could be, whilst doing it in

the name of quality and perfection. There are traits that he had that I find so

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the accounting profession. I give free educational seminars (free cash seminars, although i do those as well), helping accountants learn to become strategic advisers. I educate accountants and business consultants on how to help small businesses create strategic forecasts, and why managing financials to a forecast is good for all small businesses. I truly believe that accountants have the power to change the survivability of small businesses, and that if we all help small business owners be more successful the US will be a better place. All boats rise with the tide.

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

My husband says I have a problem saying "No." I strongly believe in putting your money where your mouth is, and not just complaining about problems in your community, but volunteering and helping make a difference. Some of the ways I give back in my community:

- I'm on the board of the local Eugene Chamber of Commerce
- I'm on the Eugene School District Budget Committee and Bond Review Committee
- I am the treasurer and keep the books for the my sons' school PTO organization
- I am on the board of the Swim Team my sons' swim on and am the treasurer, also helping keep the books and produce budgets and reports
- I'm on the board of the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network of the Willamette Valley
- I'm on the board of the Oregon Community Foundation. OCF manages more than 1.6 billion dollars and in 2014 gave out more than 72 million in grants and scholarships to Oregon non profits and Oregon students.
- I'm on the board of the Princeton Entrepreneurs Network

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

I think the biggest changes that are coming to the accounting profession are going to

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Accountants need to embrace proactive working, and they need to bring value to their clients. They can no longer just offer hourly services for taxes and bookkeeping, because if they do they will see pressure to lower their hourly rates and begin to feel squeezed financially.

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

I want to give all accountants and bookkeepers the tools to help small businesses thrive. I want them to learn and be comfortable becoming the strategic financial advisor to their client, and take advantage (in a good way) of the trust their small business clients have already given them. Learn to keep your small business clients fiscally healthy by offering strategic financial analysis and advise that truly helps them keep on track, and keep cash in the bank.

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.

My husband has been an important mentor to me. He and I met in college and 21 years later and three kids later, the rest is history. But he has been an important part of my professional career. He and I have worked together for 16 years, and every step of the way he has not only encouraged me, supported me, and been part of my success, and has made sure that we approach work life as partners. He does just as much childcare as I do, and in fact he is the one who stays with three kids on his own when I have to travel for business. He is the first one to give me critical feedback, but then be there to support me and cheer me on. He makes me think a little harder about decisions by asking great questions, and always makes me slow down and evaluate all options in front of me as a CEO. We all know that behind a great man is a great woman, but behind this woman is a great man, husband, dad, and professional.

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