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Dawn W. Brolin, MSA

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PROFESSOR PROGRAM.

Hobbies: Spending time with my family (Husband Kevin, Daughters Emily & Kayla), golfing, softball, watching sports.

**[Click here to see the other honorees of](#)
the 2012 “Most Powerful Women
in Accounting” awards.**

Q&A

Studies show that more women than ever are graduating with accounting degrees, but few are pursuing, or staying in, public practice careers. What do you think may be causing them to think public accounting careers are not as attractive as other careers?

The accounting industry seems to be changing on a regular basis. There can be interpretations of women vs. men in these leadership roles that are typically misconstrued. Women coming out of college may be seeing that intimidation as a deterrance. The hours required to build a career and/or reputation in the industry is a large commitment. The demanding work schedule while having a social/family life is not an easy balance to obtain and maintain in this economy.

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

I would tell college students in accounting to pursue their career in accounting if it is their

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recommendations on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

Young professional women want to know that they have a future not only in the workforce, but that they also have a future personally. Providing flexibility with regards to working remotely can be the biggest attraction for young women. With technology today, having a brick and mortar location is history. Yes, tax appointments will likely stay the same for another decade.

But young entrepreneurs want to be moving and on the go. They don't necessarily want to have to meet in person. So the bigger challenge is how to have a relationship with your clients because that is extremely important. Take them to a ball game.

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?

I am of the opinion that careers in accounting do not need to be the traditional large CPA firm experience. Yes, in order to become a CPA you need (2) years of experience in order to obtain an initial certificate. But, I find that being an independent firm or even an individual accountant can provide a similar successful experience. It is fair to say that large CPA firms tend to "own" young college graduates and put them on a salary with long hours.

What that commitment from a young graduate will do is give them a faster track to move into the senior management positions and partner levels. Nothing is for free, there is always a price to pay no matter which direction you take (private or public practice). I believe that the ceiling may be there, but only in the eyes of a passive, quite individual. If you are a go-getter and have a passion to climb to the top, you make your future, you make those decisions that make you rise to the top. It is up to you, not stereotype.

Do you think being a woman in the accounting profession has made career

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Technology maximization would be the key. You MUST embrace technology and use it to your advantage. So many small business owners find themselves working in their business during work hours and on their business in the evening. This doesn't have to be the norm. Use technology to run your business while you are in your business. You MUST make a clear separation between business and family time. Shut off that cell phone, computer, etc. Don't sacrifice the important relationships when it can be avoided by the use of technology. Times have changed, don't get left behind.

How mobile are you regarding your work? How have mobile devices and apps impacted your productivity and work-life balance? (Spending less time in the office?)

I have 100% mobility. No matter where I am, I can solve client problems, log onto client accounts, or answer questions in a moments notice. I call the desktop the REAL ball and chain...it used to be marriage or a partnership. Let the technology keep you mobile. The first to solve client questions and issues is the winner. Not answering client emails or calls timely will put you in the back of the pack. In addition, the need to have meetings in the office are becoming less and less. Working through remote technology solutions and web-based meeting conferences, the need to solely work locally has been eliminated. Be mobile, or be left behind.

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

I absolutely could not live without my iPhone. With the amazing number of mobile applications, long gone are the days of being tied to a desktop in order to keep the business moving forward, answer questions from clients, and simply manage my daily tasks.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

GoPayment from Intuit – This application allows me to collect payment anytime and anywhere. As a small business owner, I do not like to carry receivables, with GoPayment, I

can get paid from the client upon delivery of service.

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Technology

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