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Hobbies: Cooking

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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?

Both men and women entering the profession seek work/life balance as part of rewarding career opportunities. Public accounting can be challenging as young professionals navigate through early years of building a career & often, a family life simultaneously. In addition, the regulatory environment has made public accounting less desirable for some individuals, particularly those who work in the public company audit arena – that's not a gender issue. But women may be selecting alternative career paths in this field of accounting because of the environment.

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

This is a wonderful career for women. Firms and employers are embracing the need to be more flexible in order to meet the needs of professional women. The opportunities for finding interesting and challenging positions are wide ranging from large public accounting firms

to business & industry to nonprofits. Hang in there but be committed to working very hard

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policies, family leave and technology to meet the needs of both clients and professional colleagues. These policies need to be real – – policies on paper without real-live professionals actually utilizing the policies send a dangerous message to up-and-coming young women. So the firm needs to verify that the flexible workplace is a reality, not just a written policy waiting to happen.

Second, provide regular feedback to employees year-round. The once –a-year annual review won't cut it anymore. Quality feedback on a regular basis, chances to contribute to firm strategy discussions and opportunities for public service all have deep meaning to women of this next generation.

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?

Glass ceilings, unfortunately, continue to exist. We have made tremendous progress but the profession remains a work in progress. The barriers can be subtle but they persist.

Do you think being a woman in the accounting profession has made career advancement more challenging than it might have been for a male in the same situation?

I think we are past the point where such generalizations can be stated in this way. Navigating through a career in accounting is challenging for everyone these days. The pressures, regulations, time commitments hit everyone hard. Yes, subtle barriers exist and yes, work/life issues can be especially challenging for women. But I dislike making sweeping generalizations based on gender.

What solutions have you found successful in managing work-life integration. The balancing of your career with your personal, family and social life?

Throughout my career, I have traded off prioritizing work and family – different decisions

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Technology and the use of mobile devices has been wonderful in allowing me greater flexibility to work outside the office and lose the “9 –to-5” mentality that was better suited to “Mad Men” work environment than today’s flexible workplace and the mobile/global world in which we live.

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

iPad. iPhone. I can stay in touch anywhere, anytime except for when the #@!% signal doesn’t work.

What do you like to do when you actually have free time without any obligations to work or family?

I adore cooking and entertaining

Technology

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