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**Jill Ward, MBA**

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**Educational Background:** Bachelor of Arts, Wellesley College and Master in Business Administration, Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth

**Professional Associations/Memberships:** Business Leadership Council of Wellesley College

**Hobbies:** Hiking, reading, everything outdoors

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the 2012 “Most Powerful Women  
in Accounting” awards.**

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## 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?**

*I think that trend will change. In the past, working in an accounting firm often meant being chained to a desk all day and most of the night, seven days a week, through and outside of tax season. This left little time for anything else – including hobbies, relationships and raising a family. As the accounting industry continues to evolve at a rapid pace, automation is replacing manual data collection and input and as a result, most routine and lower-valued accounting and tax tasks are being replaced by more efficient and time savings methods using mobile and cloud technology.*

*By enabling women, and all accounting professionals, to work anytime anywhere, it makes*

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*new levels of business agility and flexibility. Competition will intensify as new entrants to the industry, outsourcing, and automation displace the routine and lower-value services that accounts and tax professionals provide.*

*Over the next decade, the total number of small and personal businesses in the U.S. will increase by more than 7 million, and they'll need and want more than accounting professionals' traditional compliance services. Many of these businesses will be Web or mobile-based, with a global reach. At Intuit, we have already begun to see a significant shift in the adoption of mobile and Web-based offerings, with our GoPayment, Online Payroll and QuickBooks Online subscribers all growing double digits in fiscal year 2012.*

*As a result of the rapid adoption of these technologies, clients will require a broader range of services, such as assistance with foreign tax codes. In order to succeed, younger accounting professionals must take on new roles as consultants and advisors, providing performance management, decision support and similar services, with less emphasis on nuts-and-bolts functions such as computation and tax preparation.*

**If you were asked as a consultant to give advice to firms, would you have any recommendations on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?**

*To retain top talent, firms also need to make a commitment to women's needs in the workplace. Some of the formal programs that can address the upward mobility for women are flexible scheduling, childcare and mentoring.*

*New technologies are reinventing work and the workplace, allowing greater flexibility around when, where, and how work is done. While client service will remain of paramount importance, being onsite will become much less important, and technology will help workers be more productive and enable the employers to offer flexible schedules while not losing efficiencies.*



**Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior**

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*gender gap in earnings will narrow over the decade and approach parity by 2020 – and I hope they are right!*

**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 women in all professions benefit from working for great role models (male and female), tracking against clear goals for career and life, and always staying in “the learning zone” by trying new things/new work. So many women are great at building a solid network of family, friends, colleagues...and this is “wind in their sails” too.*

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

*Being clear on what is most important to get done, so work time is invested in “critical few” drivers of success for the business. Gaining flexibility by getting good at “work anywhere/anytime” through the use of trusty tools like my iPad! Tracking how I well I am achieving balance as I look back over 6-12 month periods. While a week might be unbalanced, hopefully the year is not!*

**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 take my iPad and laptop wherever I go. Thanks to its battery life, the iPad can pretty much work or for as long as I need it and having a device that is connected to the Internet no matter where I am is a huge advantage. Even when I'm doing something as simple as writing emails, I am working with files that are stored in the cloud, and so I appreciate having access to Dropbox and QuickBase to get at my current documents. With my iPhone,*

*I'm connected to email anytime, anywhere – which is both a great thing for efficiency and*

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*having on our customers to help them save time and better serve their clients. The feedback from users has been great and we're excited to keep innovating for them making their mobile devices even more powerful.*

*Intuit Online Payroll Mobile works with iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch and allows accounting professionals to manage their clients' payroll while out of the office. With just a few taps, users can enter employee hours, review, approve and instantly pay employees. All paycheck details are automatically reflected in the user's Intuit Online Payroll or Intuit Online Payroll for Accounting Professionals account.*

*Intuit Tax Online Mobile has a special place in my heart because it was the first commercial mobile app from our Accounting Professionals Division. It gives accounting professionals anytime, anywhere access to client's tax information. This shortens the process of answering clients' questions and checking an e-file status from one day to 30 seconds.*

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

*I like to visit far flung friends and family and do this frequently! I also enjoy the outdoors... any and all activities outside! Let's have meetings outside!*

Technology

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