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and ever.

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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?

While the profession as a whole has progressed over the past ten years, in terms of technology, business model, and culture, I think a lot of new grads still hold on to the traditional view of what it's like to work in the accounting field. There's a lingering residue of “old-school” that the profession has yet to shake off.

The truth is that the profession has come a long way and many firms have it right—using the most advanced technologies, supporting a mobile work environment, offering true flex schedules, and providing women with sound business advancement programs. It just isn't “your father's firm” anymore...it's more like “your momma's.” Today, it is a profession in which women can thrive.

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

I would tell them that the opportunities for career advancement are there. And not only in

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Qualified, progressive female professionals want the same things that their male counterparts do when it comes to the work environment. For me, it's advanced technology (mobile devices, Cloud applications), a positive work culture, supportive partners and staff, and the ability to create a flex schedule that works for the firm and me. If these elements are present, just try to get rid of me.

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?

Based on numbers only, that is males versus females in senior management and partner positions, one could say that the proverbial glass ceiling still exists in some firms. However, I believe that the profession is evolving into a more gender neutral state.

There have been a lot of studies conducted in recent years that look at why women leave the profession. A key finding is lack of proper business development as women move up the ladder. I see this changing in many firms, and as a result, women are advancing to executive positions and staying longer. I'm also encouraged by a few recent executive announcements from the vendor side. Just this year Teresa Mackintosh was named Executive VP and General Manager of Tax at CCH and Karen Abramson was named as CCH's president. Chicks rule!

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?

No, but I'm on the creative side. My areas of expertise include marketing, public relations, and branding, so I'm coming at it from a different angle. There also seems to be a relatively small cadre of professionals that exclusively serve the profession and possess creative

expertise and extensive experience working within the accounting profession. As such, I feel

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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 the ability to be all mobile, all the time. It's just so easy to work anywhere these days. I run two firms, but can still operate either without a hiccup, whether it's from the airport, a client's site, the Michigan or Indiana office, or my fav coffee shop. My #1 mobile device is my iPhone; next is the iPad. Cloud apps used daily are DropBox, Salesforce, Constant Contact, and Skype. I'm also on the Avaya soft phone. Absolutely no wires, baby!

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

I don't want to be dramatic, if I HAD to, I could find a way to live without any one piece of technology (I think). I will say that my iPhone is tethered to me. It's the only way I can keep up with emails when I'm out of the office. Plus, it's nice to pull up Angry Birds when you're waiting in the never-ending line at the DMV.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

Does Groupon count as a professional app? Probably not, right? So I would say Constant Contact. I'm always planning, developing, and releasing marketing email initiatives. I also use Facebook a lot to ensure I keep up with my professional posts.

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

I like to sit at my favorite table at the local coffee house with a Spanish latte (with whip!) and write all day. I'm currently working on the third book in my young-reader chapter book series.

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