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## **Edi Osborne, CSPM, CPVA, CPBA**

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## **Q&A:**

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

The future of the profession will be less compliance focused and more reliance oriented; reliance refers to the nature of the trusted business advisor relationship between accountants and their clients. Reliance oriented relationships are built on a foundation of trust and high emotional intelligence. These are two characteristics that women, in general, excel at. I believe you are going to see a lot more women rising to the top of the profession and/or launching their own firms capitalizing on these strengths.

**What advice would you give accounting firms on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?**

My advice to firm leaders is to leverage the talents of their young staff, in general, and women in particular by giving them greater opportunity to work with clients earlier in their professional development. So often firms keep their young people in the back office until they are ready for client responsibilities. "Ready" is not a destination, it is a process. I would argue that the sooner you engage young accountants in client interactions, the faster their interpersonal skills and business acumen develop. And the faster their skills develop, and their careers advance, the more likely they are to stay at the firm (and in the profession.)

**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 believe with such a large segment of firm leadership facing retirement over the next

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accepting that there are trade-offs with every choice we make. For me, balance comes from focusing on the best use of my time and letting go of, and saying no to, any and everything that doesn't serve my overall goals (which include being a good wife and mother to my four children. I'm a good at it all the time? No, but I'm working on it.

**How mobile are you regarding your work? How have mobile devices and apps impacted your productivity and work-life balance?**

I am very portable. A good internet connection and a few key apps provide all the infrastructure I need to effectively run my practice.

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

My laptop and internet access fuel the progress of my company.

**What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?**

I love Evernote. It is my virtual filing system for all the research I do. I hardly ever bookmark anything on the internet. If it is important enough to bookmark, I save it to my Evernote app, apply the appropriate tags, and then I can retrieve it based on any number of filters I apply. I also keep a "journal" of all my important client discussions in Evernote. Let's face it, it's hard to remember every conversation so I've gotten really good at using the key word search feature to pull up important details when I need them. Plus it's FREE!

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

We live on 10 acres in the country so I love all that comes with that; chickens, dogs, cats, fish, etc. We are focused on sustainable farming practices and viticulture. I am an artist so anytime I can squirrel away a few hours or days you'll find me in my

quilting room or my painting/glassworks studio. I also love music and family time.

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