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Rebecca Ryan

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of the 2013 “Most Powerful Women
in Accounting” awards.

Q&A:

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

First, go for it! This is an exciting time to join the profession, because it's changing (due to IFRS, globalization, etc.) and that means it will require fresh thinking.

Second, and more importantly, research shows that many young women join the profession, work their faces off, get promoted and then stall because they don't work as hard on nurturing their professional network. Young women focus so much on doing great work that they forego things like additional networking opportunities, etc. To become partner you have to be technically proficient AND have a strong network of people inside and outside the firm who know you and want to do business with you.

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

Help them understand how to juggle/balance being technically awesome AND being great at business development.

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?

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whether that includes family, etc?

I have a terrific partner who is terrific at taking care of the “back office” – the house, the company’s finances, business correspondence, etc. That gives me greater freedom to be on the road working with clients. We really are a working team.

Personally, there are three non-negotiables: sleep, water, and diet. Beyond that, different things have worked for me in different stages of my life and career. Right now, I am working more from home and taking more walks with my dogs.

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

I am completely mobile: MacBook Air and iPhone are my only devices and when our lease is up, we won't have a dedicated office. We'll probably rent office space as needed in a co-working space. Apps are getting better and better; I use them for everything from tracking my sleep and activity (Jawbone UP band) to serving as a virtual assistant (see below.)

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

My MacBook Air. Although I can execute everything on my iPhone, I prefer the Air for client research, email, etc. And the weight! It's so light; I don't need to visit the chiropractor after I come home from a work trip.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

FancyHands. For \$65/month, I get a virtual assistant who helps me with up to 15 tasks. Last week, it scheduled my dentist and doctor's checkups and had flowers delivered to two people.

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