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**Michael L. Brown, CPA, ABV, CFF – 34**

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I believe that succession is the greatest challenge that will be faced by firms over the next decade. As older (Baby Boomer) partners retire, younger partners (Gen X and Gen Y) must absorb their workload. To some extent efficiencies can be realized through advances in technology; however, developing young leaders to help shoulder the load is imperative.

**To what extent have you and your practice/company embraced cloud computing?**

Cloud solutions can provide great benefits with respect to accessibility, scalability, and, at times, cost. Our firm has utilized cloud solutions where it provides superior cost or accessibility benefits over non-cloud solutions.

**In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it a better place?**

I have good relationships with all departments within my firm. When I was a senior manager, I helped start and lead our firm's recruiting and retention committee. I also assisted with a small group of managers to implement practice development initiatives, which also included a re-branding of the firm. I am also participating in the ongoing strategic plan implementation at the firm.

**In what ways do you participate in either the professional community or your local community to help others?**

In addition to volunteering with professional associations, I also volunteer with community organizations. I serve on an advisory council for the Waco Foundation, which is a community foundation that assists local non-profits. Also, Downtown Waco is currently experiencing a resurgence. One of the organizations contributing to the revitalization of Downtown Waco is the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute. I have served on the board of this organization for several years, and I am currently the President-Elect. I enjoy giving back to my community through these organizations.

## What major changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near

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I believe it is the responsibility of the individual to contribute to the betterment of their profession. I have crafted my professional involvement based on this responsibility, and I have pursued the opportunities that have presented themselves. I intend to continue this philosophy and continue my involvement in professional organizations. I can't predict where this will lead me. However, I am interested in continuing to strengthen our profession and working to create a culture of community among CPAs. We are stronger when we work together toward common goals than we are when we stand alone.

### What is your career philosophy?

“Luck happens when hard work meets opportunity” – Fortune Cookie

### Not including your current employer, what company do you most admire and why?

I admire Apple because they have re-invented themselves by developing a market niche for consumer products that are innovative, well designed and are constructed with high quality materials. Consumers are willing to pay a premium for Apple products that perform the same tasks and operations as other, cheaper devices. However, the consistency in excellence with respect to functionality, design, materials and construction has created a large following among consumers.

CPAs perform many services that can also be performed by non-CPAs. However, customers come to a CPA for these services because they are looking for excellence in work product and client service. As CPAs, we need to continue to advance our brand to differentiate the quality of service we provide to clients from our non-CPA competitors in the varied markets we serve.

**Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that**

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profession.

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