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AICPA, Texas Society of CPAs

Hobbies: Boating/water skiing; cooking with my husband, travel, reading; Sudoku

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of the 2014 “Most Powerful Women
in Accounting” awards.**

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

I would certainly encourage college students to consider pursuing careers in accounting. There is so much to be learned in the profession. I particularly encourage students to seek opportunities to intern or ultimately work in large public accounting firms. Even if they don't ultimately stay in public accounting, the skills learned in those early years can lay a good foundation for many other career paths. I spent about 10 years in Big 4 public accounting, and it helped me lay the groundwork for the career I have today as an owner of a boutique state tax consulting firm.

Students need to keep in mind that a career in “accounting” can mean so many different options – even beyond audit or tax. It's about working with numbers, but also working with people, selling projects, and certainly marketing – yourself and your firm. Depending on a person's skillset or personality, there's something for everyone in this profession.

I also believe that public accounting firms are trying harder than ever to address the imbalance of women at the top as well as addressing the work/life balance issues for both genders. I hope that we will see a day where 50% of partners in firms are women, but the firms still have some work to do.

2. What advice would you give accounting firms on things they could do to better

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I also believe that firms should offer more leadership training earlier – including topics geared toward how to market oneself, public speaking, and sales techniques. People often label these as “soft skills” training, but these are often as hard (or harder) to master than technical accounting principles.

3. 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 think that the profession is mostly in a gender neutral state. But I think that women in the profession still have some challenges that are different from men and that's why there continue to be fewer women in top leadership positions. But that's not unique to public accounting. Look at the C-Suite in large public companies – there is definitely not a balance there either. The good news is that there continues to be discussion about gender issues and how to bridge some of these gaps.

4. How have you managed to balance your professional and personal life obligations, whether that includes family, etc?

I believe that work-life integration/balance is a very personal thing. It means different things to different people. If you ask me, I feel balanced overall. But on any given day, I might give more time and energy to my job vs. my family, or my community activities over my job, or my family over everything. I believe that if you measure it daily, you can go a little crazy. But if you measure it overall, big picture, and you feel balance, then you're good. I work very hard at my career, volunteer in the community, and serve on the boards of directors of my professional associations.

I am proud that I can contribute and grow in so many different areas. However,

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have responsibility for managing those 24 hours every day.

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

Since I am the President of my firm, I often work outside the office. As such, I have structured the office to have the resources that allow me to remotely access emails, client files, and internal tools. I couldn't do my job without them. Some people talk about being "tethered by" technology. I don't view it that way. Technology allows me to be in touch when I want to be and to be more efficient with my time. If I begin to feel tethered, I can choose to go off-line. But that's my decision.

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

That's easy – my I-Phone. I can't imagine life without it. What did we do before smartphones? It allows me to access my calendar, email, and, of course, it's a frequent source of news, sports scores, games, music, etc. I travel frequently, and the device keeps me connected to home, and helps me navigate unfamiliar territory when I'm away.

7. What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

Dragon Dictation – allows me to speak into a dictation app. I'm currently writing a book (I've started by writing paragraphs longhand because I like the feel of pen on paper), and this app has been a great timesaver when I need to get the words off the paper on into the computer!

8. What do you like to do when you actually have free time without any obligations to work or family? (Examples: reading, wine and movies, tv, art, travel, exercise, cooking, etc).

Every morning I like to walk my dog, a boxer named Zoey. It is quiet time before the craziness of the day begins, and we both enjoy the exercise! And on weekends,

my husband and I like to cook. We also love to travel. I do a lot of traveling for

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