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FIRM MANAGEMENT

Sally Glick, MBA – 2014 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

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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?

Women are going to play an increasingly important role in the accounting profession going forward. As more women either own their own business or become major decision makers in their company, they will turn to women advisors for insights and guidance. Family business succession plans no longer result automatically in a son taking over – generational transitions now include daughters as well. I believe women business advisors, including CPAs, will be in great demand as more women are deeply involved in decision making and leadership roles.

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

RETAINING WOMEN: Firms that want to attract the brightest and best workers, most particularly women, will have to be more flexible in their scheduling and more responsive to employees’ needs. With all the available technology, many projects and assignments can be done remotely – and teams can meet using Skype or other tools to maintain camaraderie and communication. Regardless of the actual details, job sharing, office sharing and remote access will make the profession more attractive to women who have to juggle family obligations and a meaningful career. The brick and mortar office may someday disappear – but the client contact and the interpersonal interaction between staff will remain. It will just look different!

ADVANCING WOMEN: When considering staff promotions of the future, the formula may have to be based on new measures that more accurately reflect the true contributions being made by each person. Some of the traditional standards

may be discarded because they are no longer a relevant yardstick for advancement. Qualified women want to be challenged, they want interesting work and they want the opportunity to work in a flexible world where they are treated and respected as equals who are recognized for their quality work – but not singled out as ‘women’ in the workplace.

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 wish I believed that we are gender neutral but I am still personally not seeing a balance between men and women at the highest levels of management. Even if more women are becoming partners today, far fewer women than men are managing partners and far fewer women than men are on the executive committees and the compensation committees. Even when attending networking events where CPAs abound, a room that is 70-30% men versus women more typically reflects the demographics of most firms. There are, of course, exceptions – but I am not seeing an overwhelming trend that places women in the top leadership spots. Not yet!

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

The profession is demanding and the hours can be long. I juggled my career and my role as a single parent by taking a lot of work home at night to finish up after bedtime. So as often as I could I left in time for Little League or ice skating or track meets; and I completed my day’s work later. I didn’t want to miss anything regarding the kids because I knew that those days don’t last forever. I truly enjoyed everything I could – and I also reminded myself that the quality of our time together was more important than the quantity of time we spent. I really focused on the kids when I was with them. That’s harder today because we are so distracted by our smart phones and the continuous emails we receive. Sometimes we are there, but we are not really present. I knew it was important to pay attention to them when I could and that paid off. I also did some community work and sat on a few nonprofit boards but somehow it all worked out.

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

The availability of laptops, smart phones and iPad bring the office home in an efficient manner. I work many evenings and early mornings on the weekends just

because I can. This can help cut down on time spent in the office and increases time spent at home but there is the drawback of being available 24 hrs a day. At some point you need to establish parameters and within reason, draw a line in the sand that says, “Now it is time for me; or my family; or my dog; or my favorite organization.” You cannot let your accessibility rule you. You need to manage the process to your advantage not to your disadvantage.

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

I could not live without my smart phone. I love that I can check emails while waiting for my lunch appointment, or return quick messages after finishing a board meeting. I am able to be very responsive and yet I can get so much done. The connectivity is critical for me and enables me to be productive and efficient. That’s the good news. But there is not much down time when I try to use every spare moment to keep the flow of work moving along. That’s the tough part.

7. What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why? I don’t really have a favorite business app; but if I had to pick one, I like CardMunch because now I never lose a business card nor do I have to go through the trouble of entering the information. I am constantly out in the community and I meet a lot of wonderful new people, CardMunch helps me keep track of what I am doing.

I also love having Twitter on my iPhone. I promise the nonprofit community a stream of nonprofit tips and ideas and having access all day long from anywhere helps me keep that promise.

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