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from an accountant and client relationship. Accounts are becoming more of a connected advisor and can do their work from anywhere, anytime.

Amy Vetter • Jun. 23, 2016



Starting out as a young child working at my mother's business, I quickly observed the ups and downs of being a small business owner, and the importance of

understanding your company's finances. As a result, I ended up pursuing a career in

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Technology has opened the door to change the conversation about what's expected from an accountant and client relationship. Accountants are becoming more of a connected advisor and can do their work from anywhere, anytime. Specifically, I've seen technology allow women to have more flexible hours, work remotely, and even start their own practices. Software in the cloud can now do much of the heavy lifting and this creates more time for accountants to build strategic relationships with their clients.

Looking forward to this year, I see a new face of women in accounting emerging – it's a very significant time in the industry and one I am honored to be a part of. Right now, women make up almost half of employees at CPA firms but just **19 percent of partners and principals**, according to the American Institute of Public Accountants, but this will soon change. Here are several ways I see women raising the bar. Throughout my column this year, I'll dive further into each of these topics and more.

Find Your Niche: When I started out in accounting, it was more of a job than my passion. I considered creativity to be my strength when I was growing up, excelling in music and art. So, when I went to school to get my accounting degree for business and eventually earned my CPA license, I was not entirely fulfilled. Instead of just grinning and bearing it the rest of my career, I found a way to put my creativity to work in accounting and find an alternative path. My focus was to help small businesses succeed because of the background of growing up with business owners. Through technology, I was able to find a way to help entrepreneurs understand their businesses on a financial and personal level, and help them make better decisions. As an advisor I was able to be more involved in the business of their business and the information behind their numbers to help their business thrive.

Make it Personal: For a profession whose currency is numbers, accounting is a remarkably personal business—and should be. The firms I work with that are most successful are those that care about their clients on a human level and partner with

them to help them succeed. In today's accounting environment where personal

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companies with more women in senior management positions perform better. By learning about technology and what it can deploy for your practice, it will allow more women the opportunity to move upward in their firms, and better your practice. I was fortunate to catch onto this opportunity early in my accounting career and find the benefits of taking an alternative path in an accounting firm to Partner. Learning the technology and understanding how you can deploy it to make you more efficient and knowledgeable can give you the momentum, and freedom, in your career that you may be looking for. There has never been a time with more opportunity than now for women to make their mark in accounting.

At the end of the day, it's all about supporting one another – woman-to-woman, man-to-woman, colleague-to-colleague, boss-to-employee, and to encourage one another to be the best she can be. Find a great mentor, join a networking group or start one yourself, embrace new ways of doing things and engage your support system. Overall, be confident and trust in yourself, believe in what you can do and you'll become a trusted leader.

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