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Kelly Ward, CPA, CGMA, EA, MBA

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Aside from the accounting websites, which blog/website do you consider a must-read?

I love to watch the daily videos and read the blog at www.geoffwelch.com. Not only have I had the pleasure to have Geoff as a facilitator in a leadership program I graduated from, but he has also been a professional coach and friend. His blog and videos are short and sweet, but cover real life topics and situations where you feel like every one is written just for you!

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

I was lucky to find myself in a unique situation where I was able to take on leadership roles very early on within my firm. I am always looking towards the future and what we can do or offer to help our clients now and I think that helps in making us a better firm. Whether it is new technology options, training, or having resources more readily available, I am a proponent of helping others to help themselves be more efficient and effective in what they do. One of the things I enjoy most about my job is being able to have strong relationships with my clients where I am not only helping them in their business endeavors, but also get to see how that success touches their personal lives. Fostering those relationships not only helps the clients, but it also helps to set our firm apart with our dedication to client success.

In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?

I love what I do for a living which makes it easy to enjoy being involved in both my state society and the AICPA. Through my committee involvement, I have been able to give presentations to high school and college students on the accounting profession, career opportunities, and why the accounting profession is so important to the community, large and small businesses, and individuals. Being on the AICPA

Financial Literacy Commission has also awarded me opportunities to reach out to

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my professional involvement

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

I have been fortunate to be an Adjunct Instructor in Accounting for the UAF Community and Technical College for nearly 9 years where I get to work with students interested in being bookkeepers, accountants, or at least expanding their knowledge in those areas. In addition, I also present about 5 workshops a semester on different aspects of financial literacy to our local community through the UAF Cooperative Extension and Alaska Small Business Development Center. Classes such as debt and credit management, living within your means, and budgeting and cash flow planning are just a few topics that help individuals and small business owners to better understand the importance of their decisions and how they can take control of their financial situations. Being able to do in-house training for local professional organizations has also been a great way to reach out to our community.

What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?

There is no doubt technology will greatly influence change in our profession. From how bookkeeping and data input is handled to the communication of that information with clients, coworkers, and regulatory agencies, accountants will have to adapt and stay educated to stay relevant. But with that change brings opportunities for CPAs to help clients grow and prosper, which is an exciting position to be in.

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

I am lucky to be able to work with the future of the accounting profession through the variety of community and professional involvement I participate in. Through my

accounting courses at the community college to the presentations in local high

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financial future". I think this greatly aligns with my career philosophy. As I stated, I love what I do and the people that I work with and for. My desire is to help others to have a better understanding of their financial world and how their decisions affect that world. I want clients to see me as trusted advisor, to feel like they can ask the not so silly questions, and to leave with an understanding of how their finances work.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.

I would have to say that Amy Cooper has been an important mentor in my life. While she may have never technically taken on the role of mentor, she has greatly influenced me since I met her a few years ago. Amy is also a southern girl in Alaska and while we have that in common, her professional involvement in the AKCPA and AICPA has always motivated me to be a better CPA. Amy is not only a great instructor at UAF, she also loves what she does which her students see and thrive on. She is an integral part of the university, the state society, and the committees that she serves on with the AICPA. Through her leadership and dedication, she has helped influence others through CPE sessions at the EDGE Experience, has earned several awards and recognition, and impacts the profession in ways I know I do not even see. Before meeting Amy, I was not really involved professionally or in the community in regards to our profession. Seeing the influence that she had as a young professional through her love for what she does made me realize we are never too young to create or be the change. She helped motivate me to get more involved locally and through the AICPA and continues to inspire me to always strive for better!

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