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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

Samantha Mansfield – 2016 20 Under 40 Superstars Honoree

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Q&A:

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

- I do a lot of my reading on my phone, and Twitter is a must read source for me. Twitter offers me a chance to quickly review a number of sources I want to gather information from. This way I can stay abreast of technology updates, current events and what is happening in the profession. It also helps me keep a pulse on topics being discussed through blogs and news articles.
- **In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it better?**
- During my three years at CPA.com I have participated in many initiatives for the organization from senior team meeting planning to day to day process improvements. I have employed leadership training I received to start a coaching regime with my team; this is outside normal one on one meetings, but where we really focus on their goals and development to assist them in their growth and contribution. With CPA.com having offices in 4 states, I have focused on streamlining processes and communications within my areas of oversight. We have been able to enhance the sharing of knowledge and reduced costs in various areas. We have an abundance of tools at our finger tips, so we place emphasis on ensuring we learn more about how they work so we work smarter, not harder.
- **In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?**
- Education is the key to my contribution to the professional community. Over the last 16 years I have taught classes, developed workshops, collaborated on conference agendas and helped line up experts to share their knowledge. I am on multiple conference committees, and participating in the creation of new professional certificates for emerging areas in the accounting profession. Social media has become a key source of learning and I, and our team, leverage these channels to share pertinent information to keep us aware. I feel honored to be on these committees and work with the professionals I do, to help prepare the accountants for the future.
- **In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?**
- The way I participate in the community is somewhat unique. For ten years I have been part of a living history non-profit organization. During that time, I have served as a board member, given presentations for associations and participated in

reenacting events. It is fulfilling watching children and adults get a new appreciation and enthusiasm for history! I also volunteer with the Salvation Army to help raise funds and participate in outreach they do in the community.

- **What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?**
- Technology is will continue to be a steady force of change in practices. When looking at the growth rates of cloud technology adoption, I would predict the majority of the profession will be running their practices from native cloud-based applications in the next 3-5 years. We will see this changing workload compression, with things like automated data collection for audits reducing the amount of time in the field and sales and use tax workflow automation (especially given growing complexities in this area). Automation has been improving in practices for years, but through the continuing advancement firms will be able to put their knowledge to work. Students of accounting should have a new view of what a career in accounting looks like.
- **How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?**
- The future of accounting has many opportunities to evolve, so I see my role as helping bring those innovative ideas to light. We began and innovative practitioner award which has brought to light compelling stories happening in firms of all sizes. It is easy to be silo'd in your own firm's daily activities, that I appreciate having the opportunity of meeting firms across the nation and helping them share their vision of accounting services and transforming their practices. I don't miss an opportunity to also talk to students about what a career in accounting looks like in the future.
- **What is your career philosophy?**
- Your career is a journey, and one that requires continual learning and personal development. I am a firm believer you can and should learn from everyone you work with, as well as, be observant of what adds to their success.
- **Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.**

- When I reflect on what got me to where I am today in my career there are 3 people that played pivotal roles. Surprising based on the sheer amount of public speaking I do today I used to be deathly afraid of it. Dr. Blackstock, college professor, sat me down, provided constructive feedback and encouraged me to pursue opportunities in public speaking; without that objective feedback and encouragement I would never have had the courage to raise my hand when opportunities arose early in my career. Candy Cross and Greg LaFollette are two others that without their coaching, encouragement and sage advice over many years I would not be where I am today. I am truly grateful to all the support and advice these intelligent, professionals offered me.
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