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Sarah Johnson Dobek

President and Founder

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read?

I am a big fan of the **Harvard Business Review.** I like to see what others outside of the profession are doing. I also read the Huffington Post, Forbes and Entrepreneur.

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

As founder of Inovautus, the best thing I have contributed beyond starting my company from scratch is hiring great people that add value to our clients. As the newly named President for CPAsNET, I have used my role to establish new programs that enhance value for our members. One of these programs is a New Managing Partners Group, designed to help support leaders who are transitioning in their firms. I have also established a soft skills-based training program for managers and supervisors in our member firms; both are making a huge impact for our member firms.

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

When I was younger I wanted to be a teacher. Today, I am a regular speaker at most of the accounting conferences. While it requires a large amount of time, I eagerly do it because of my passion for educating. I am also one of the founding members of the CPA Consultants Alliance. I, along with many others, formed this group 4 years ago to help further leadership in the accounting profession. Over a dozen thought leaders in the accounting profession collaborate on an annual basis to leverage our experience and educate leaders and up-and-coming rainmakers for free.

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

I enjoy mentoring young leaders and business owners. I am often contacted when someone is thinking about starting a business and has questions. I am honored to be

a resource for these people. I have also spent time mentoring college students at

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services (tax and audit), I am confident that this will allow CPAs to spend time acting as that trusted advisor. In turn, this will force firms to look beyond only offering compliance services and gain an imagination on how to deliver more value-added services, which I believe will come in the form of consulting services. Second, I see an upcoming shift in the model of how firms operate. Technology and a changing global economy combined with a talent shortage will require firms to operate within a more virtual setting. We are already seeing firms embrace remote workers so I believe this practice will become more commonplace. Third and last, over the next 5-10 years I think we will begin to see a dramatic shift in how firm ownership is structured. Many firms are facinging significant challenges with buyouts and there aren't enough people to replace exiting partners in a 1 to 1 ratio. I believe we will begin to see more inverted pyramids and corporate structures in these firms. I believe this change will help the profession.

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

I already see myself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession and I will continue to shape the profession through the work we do at Inovautus, CPAsNET and the CPACA. The best thing I can do is educate people and open their minds to new ways of thinking. I feel fortunate that I have had the opportunity to do that every day in our work.

What is your career philosophy?

Do what you love, do it really well and follow your heart. When I graduated from college I thought I might like to be a consultant one day. I wasn't sure how I would get there or what I would consult on. Instead, I took a job doing marketing for an accounting firm and found a mentor in the partners that supported me. They saw more potential in me that I saw in myself and they were the ones that helped me get

into consulting. I made very few career moves, but each time I did I followed my gut.

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way. She came from a military background and instilled the culture of working for everything and never being handed anything. I have carried that with me throughout my life and it has always served me well. Second, *go after your dreams*. My mother did that when she was young. She had two kids under two, worked full time and obtained a Masters in Special Education. She taught me that your dreams don't come at opportune moments. I started my business when my mother had only a few months to live. The timing was terrible, but she got to see me go after my dream and that was the most rewarding thing ever. Third, she taught me to *never settle for second best and always give it your all*. You don't always need to be number one but you have to put it all on the table and leave nothing behind!

Learn more about this year's 40 Under 40 Honorees.

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