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Jennifer Warawa

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I believe the opportunities in the accounting profession are the best they've ever been for both women and men. Now is the time for women in accounting to break the glass ceiling and realize the sky is the limit when it comes to their career choices if they are willing to chase their dream. My advice? Dream big, work hard and don't settle.

What would you suggest to accounting firms that are interested in retaining and advancing more qualified female staff?

All employees (including women) want to know their career opportunities and options wherever they work. It's important for firm leaders to communicate through two-way conversations with their staff, ensuring every individual knows where their career could go within that firm and exactly what they need to do to get there. This is especially important if the firm leadership is primarily (or entirely) men. Women want to know they have a chance at the top.

Why did you choose to work in – and stay in – the accounting field?

I love the accounting field and believe it's one of professions with the greatest opportunity for transformation and innovation. From technology to business processes, the accounting profession is on the leading edge of change, and with change comes enormous business opportunity.

What are you currently reading?

One of the books I have on the go right now is Flash Foresight by Daniel Burrus. I love the principles of the book; transforming the impossible into the possible, revealing hidden opportunities and allowing you to solve your biggest problems before they happen.

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

In the next 3-5 years I believe technology will continue to allow accountants to more

effectively complete their lower value tasks, freeing up their time to focus on more

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Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped shape the direction or focus of your professional life.

I grew up immersed in an environment of entrepreneurship thanks to my step-father Bert. He was a business owner for his entire career and taught me not just through his advice and guidance, but by how he lived his life and ran his business, which I believe makes someone the ultimate mentor. Through Bert I learned the fundamentals of being a successful business owner from A-Z and growing up working in a family business in a male-dominated industry (manufacturing) played a major role in who I am today. Everything I learned in those 15+ years being closely involved in his business is applied on a daily basis in my leadership role at Sage and I am extremely grateful for his mentorship and the opportunity to be part of his business.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

A principle I live by is that the likelihood for an individual or company to be successful is largely dependent on their ability to differentiate themselves from others.

[See the other recipients of the 2016 Most Powerful Women in Accounting award.](#)

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