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Abby Dupree, CPA, CGMA

2018 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

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that leadership positions are not limited to the male population.

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

They must be flexible – and that really applies to retaining and advancing any qualified staff now. The firms that do not provide flexible schedules and good benefits are probably finding that their turnover is high and they are probably missing out on some very qualified people. Include staff in client meetings early in their career – they want to learn from their supervisors/managers/partners how to conduct a client meeting. Firms should also encourage their female staff to get involved with their state CPA society or other organizations that might appeal to them. Let them know what the path to advancement is and hopefully it includes allowing that female staff person to participate in things that aren't always work-related – such as family events, etc.

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

When I was in college, it was the first class that I was really interested in. I entered college as a math major (because I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do and that's what I was best at doing!). As I got closer to my junior year, I realized that I'd much prefer having some sort of business degree. It was after my first semester of basic business courses when I decided that I liked accounting and would major in accounting. After graduating, I applied to several local CPA firms and after a couple of offers, I decided that Carroll and Company was the best fit for me. I started at Carroll and Company in 1994, when I was still taking classes toward the 5th year requirement, and I have been there ever since. I love working with our clients and our staff. I am so fortunate to have landed a job with a firm that was growing very rapidly. I know a lot of people have the misconception that accountants are boring and that working in a public accounting firm is boring, but I would say quite the

opposite. You meet all kinds of people and you learn something new almost every

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research companies. When I do read a book, I have to admit that it is some sort of fictional mystery/romance novel that allows me to escape the real world.

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

I foresee that a lot of what we are currently doing will be automated. I believe there will be an increased need for accounting professionals that also have a good understanding of the IT environment. Very soon, the young accounting staff will come in to firms knowing more about computers and the software programs than those individuals who have been with the firm awhile. We need to recognize their talents and allow them to teach us new ways to do old things.

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

I am very passionate about encouraging accounting students to pursue the CPA designation. Many of the universities push their Master's of Accounting program and that is the only way an accounting student can obtain the additional courses needed to be eligible to take the CPA exam. The master's program is generally limited to the number of students and many programs require the student to take a full load. Most students don't have the time, money or the grades to be in the master's program, but they still have the desire to be a CPA. However, there is little encouragement provided to those students and those students end up graduating with their accounting degree, but have to enroll elsewhere in order to obtain the additional classes required for CPA exam eligibility. I wish I could say that I could have an impact with the accounting professors and accounting departments at universities, but more realistically, I see myself mentoring accounting students and helping them to see what they could do with their future.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that

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involved in our community and he led by example – he currently is and has always been very active in our community. Rick taught me how to lead a firm. We may not have the same management style, but he is the one who gave me the confidence that I could do the job. Rick sold the practice to the remaining partners at the end of 2016. He and I served as co-managing partners in 2015 and then I began my role as managing partner in his final year. Rick taught me the “right” and “wrong” way to lead and educated me as to why he operated the firm as he did. I appreciate still being able to lean on Rick for advice from time to time.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

I have a few –

- Everyone is different. Respect others' ideas and differing opinions. You will never grow and learn if you can't listen to what others have to say.
- Don't be afraid of change. Change is a good thing and people, especially accountants, shouldn't be afraid to try new things.
- Try to see the positive side of things and not focus on the negative.

[See the full list: 2018 AICPA / CPA Practice Advisor Most Powerful Women in Accounting.](#)

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