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## Women in Accounting

Jun. 12, 2019

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**Elizabeth Pittelkow Kittner, CPA.CITP, CGMA, DTM**

**2019 Most Powerful Women in Accounting**

**Head of Finance**

**[International Legal Technology Association](#)**

**B.S. Accountants, B.S. Finance, University of Illinois**

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

I recommend organizations focus on three key initiatives: inclusivity, mentorship, and feedback.

**Inclusivity:** Organizations should ensure its activities do not exclude women. A friend told me a story about a traditional cigar outing that needed to change since there were more women leaders in the organization who did not smoke cigars.

**Mentorship:** Women should be connected to mentors both inside and outside organizations to maximize their growth and encouragement. A mentor inside an organization can provide advice on topics like culture, performance reviews, and succession planning. A mentor outside can offer advice on career development and progression while offering a different perspective than someone from inside the organization. Some people also feel more comfortable asking for advice on how to change something at work when they are seeking support from an outside source.

**Feedback:** Ask for feedback from both your male and female leaders about what they need to be effective in their jobs. They may ask for more professional skills training, specific opportunities for advancement, and/or different flexibility in their work schedules.

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

Accounting has always felt like home to me, even when I was in school. I feel supported by my professional friends, and I enjoy the contributions I make to my

organizations and to the profession overall. I believe in the leadership of the

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I was gifted this book and love its simplicity; I smile when I read it: “Better Together: A Little Book of Inspiration” by Simon Sinek

In “Dare to Lead” by Brené Brown, integrity is defined as “Choosing courage over comfort; it’s choosing what’s right over what’s fun, fast, or easy; and it’s practicing your values, not just professing them.” This book encourages you to be brave in vulnerability while living BIG (meaning: having boundaries, integrity, and generosity).

### **Blogs/Websites:**

- AICPA Insights: <https://blog.aicpa.org/>
- *Journal of Accountancy*: <https://www.journalofaccountancy.com/>
- *CPA Practice Advisor*: <https://www.cpapracticeadvisor.com/>
- *Accounting Today*: <https://www.accountingtoday.com/>
- The Burrus Blog: <https://www.burrus.com/blog/>
- Truth on the Market: <https://truthonthemarket.com/>

### **Podcasts:**

- Go Beyond Disruption podcast by AICPA and CIMA: <https://beyonddisruption.libsyn.com/>
- Green Apple podcast: <https://therecoveringcpa.com/green-apple-podcast/>
- The Journey View podcast: <https://www.journeycpas.com/podcast>
- Thriveal podcast: <https://thriveal.com/podcast/>
- Cloud Accounting podcast: <https://www.blakeoliver.com/podcast>

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them.

As technology continues to enhance our work, we have a growing need for cybersecurity strength. We need to be comfortable with the security of our own systems and those of our clients.

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

I look forward to helping other professionals find their places in the profession and in meaningful volunteer roles. I will mentor and advocate for others, and I will continue to contribute to the advancement of strategic initiatives in the accounting profession. I will educate others on the importance of professional skills like effective communication and integrity in decision-making.

**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.**

Kathy Lockhart has been an important mentor to me for several years. We were matched by the AICPA based on our similar interests, and our mentorship has extended beyond professional mentorship and into life advice. She has been a reliable sounding board for my decision-making, and she has offered resources to help with setting and achieving my goals. Thank you, Kathy! You are a treasure!

**Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.**

- "Let us not grow weary of doing good."
- "One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."

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