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Jennifer Warawa

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What advice would you give to female college students about the opportunities for women in the accounting profession?

My top piece of advice for female college students, going into the accounting profession, would be to forge substantive connections with colleagues and challenge themselves by actively participating, asking questions and staying curious. Relationship building goes hand in hand with personal and professional growth, regardless of industry. Collaboration and getting to know the people involved in this great profession are great stepping stones to generate more opportunities for a successful career path in this field.

Additionally, in today's age where diversity and inclusion are as critical as ever, there's definitely a need to push for gender parity across firms and organizations. Aspiring women in this industry must be vocal about opportunities they care about—from promotions to big projects or client engagement. It's also important to surround themselves with managers and teams who support their career growth and see them as a key asset to the firm, one who provides daily value to fellow employees and customers alike.

Finally, seek out mentorship and learn from others. It's very important for young female professionals to think about the goals for their career and the areas of expertise they're hoping to learn more about. From there, they can figure out the type of people they'd like to learn from along their professional journey.

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

For decades, the image and role of an accountant remained largely stagnant. Today, not only are there new faces, but new technologies, making it necessary for

accounting firms to diversify and evolve within an ever-changing profession. Despite

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Accounting firms need to continue levelling the playing field, by embracing talents regardless of gender and background, their ideas, and set the example for the industry of what it really means to empower both women and men working in this industry.

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

The accounting profession is on the leading edge of massive and pervasive change, from its ability to embrace groundbreaking technology applications to providing every-day impact in today's digital-first world. As the industry continues to evolve, there's enormous opportunity for this profession to redefine itself and drive significant changes in hiring practices, business services and attitudes toward emerging technologies across the globe. Working on the front lines to help move the profession forward is one of my key priorities and passion. The ability to empower our customers and allow them to thrive and succeed in their business is something I look forward to every single day. More often than not, we're the unsung heroes behind the scenes helping businesses forge ahead.

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

Accountants must embrace new technologies to stay relevant in today's changing business landscape. AI, automation and machine learning will continue to have significant impacts on the accounting profession as a whole. By automating parts of the business processes, AI grants accountants more time to serve as a strategic partner to clients and provide data-driven insights to inform business decisions.

How our community adapts and evolves with this emerging technology will set the

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

One of my goals is to continue to develop and help accountants implement new technologies like AI and automated technology into their practice. It's crucial that accountants are aware of and taking advantage of emerging technologies, learning new skills, finding tools to anticipate trends, and are committed to evolve their way of doing business. Our Sage partner channel is a key platform to help and guide firms to empower their accountants with the right tools and best practices so they can be successful in light of the changes happening in the industry.

I'm also a huge advocate for continuous learning and hope to continue sharing my experiences with the next generation of accounting leaders and work even harder to close the gender gap across accounting organizations.

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