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There are huge opportunities in all industries of accounting for women,. However, there are enormous opportunities to own your own business in the small public accounting business sector. It is important to make a place for yourself at the leadership table. You need to learn how the business works and make sure you are the best in the necessary areas for advancement. You have to be willing to work hard, be innovative patient and take risks. I used technology to elevate my advancement at my Firm. You have to be willing to take on projects that maybe you do not believe you have all of the qualifications to complete. You do not have to know everything, you just have to be willing to roll up your sleeves and figure it out. Your ethnicity, hair color, or the fact you have tattoos does not define who you are. It is your knowledge, the way you treat others and your willingness to succeed that defines who you are. You belong at the table and I know you can do it!

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

Women need to be given access to leadership roles and shown the way for success. There needs to be knowledge sharing from the top down and also advancement cannot just be about billable time. There should be rewards and incentives for innovation and efficiencies.

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

I chose public accounting because I wanted to help people understand financial statements and grow their businesses. I chose to stay at a small firm because I wanted to continue to educate client's on financial statements and help them leverage technology to make their lives better. We are all so busy and our client's keep using outdated systems which are not efficient and they do not know where to

begin. To remain a trusted adviser we must listen to what keeps our client's up at

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attitude of "Can do "and Optimism. The people I follow: Barry Melancon, CEO AICPA, Tom Hood CEO MACPA, and Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, Past AICPA Chair, Sophia the Robot, Tom Peters. Organizations that follow: AICPA, CPA.com, FASB, IRS, MACPA, MindBridgeAI, Thriveal CPA Network

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

This is the innovation revolution and anything that can be automated will be automated. We will elevate our staff to higher levels of customer service and provide much more meaningful work. We will use technology to provide better audits and reduce the amount of fraud in organizations. The accounting/auditing/tax professions will all be transformed by the innovations in technology.

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

I have embraced technology during my career and now have access to Artificial Intelligence (AI). I will be part of the transformation of how audits are performed and evolving AI for other non-audit services. I will also leverage technology to change the structure of how small public accounting firms are organized and how they serve their clients.

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.

This is a challenging question because I have been mentored by the leadership at the MACPA for my entire CPA career. If I had to pick one person who was the most important mentor it would be my husband, David. He is the one person that always believed in me and pushed me when I had self-doubt. He stood by me when I failed the CPA exam the first time and listened (tirelessly...I'm sure) to the countless ideas

and brainstorming during my career. He spent a lot of time alone (and still does) as I

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“Kindness speaks volumes.” Always listen and treat those better than you could ever imagine being treated.

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