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be with us in the new year, as well. Remote work, for example, isn't going anywhere. So organizations should be looking to proactively invest in tools and systems to...

Jodi Chavez • Dec. 29, 2020



Despite encouraging recent news on the vaccine front, it still isn't clear when the pandemic will be behind us. Sometimes, it feels like the real question is *if*, rather than *when*.

Yet even against a backdrop of massive disruption, there are important lessons to take away from 2020. Here are three big ones that will continue to shape the accounting and finance space in the year ahead.

Data Security is Everyone's Responsibility

Finance and accounting firms are no strangers to cybersecurity risks, needless to say.

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- Foster partnerships and ongoing collaboration between HR and IT teams.

One thing's for sure: At this point, staying abreast of the latest emerging threats — and ensuring appropriate preventative measures are in place — should be viewed as simply table stakes.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) *Must* Be Prioritized

It's worth reflecting on the fact that the social movement we now know as “Black Lives Matter” isn't just [the largest social movement in U.S. history](#), it's also backed by the majority of American adults [across every racial and ethnic group](#).

The conversations it spawned reverberated across society at all levels, creating a new mandate for companies to take meaningful action in turn. And while many [pledged to bring that vision to life in 2020](#), the focus in 2021 is going to be all about delivery. This is particularly important in the finance and accounting space, where the majority of professionals are white ([55 percent](#)) and male ([less than a quarter of accountants at the partnership level are women](#)).

In that vein, I also want to call out some great work that's already happening at the state level. Notably:

- The [Maryland Association of CPAs \(MACPA\)](#) recently took formal steps to signal its commitment to building a more diverse, equal and inclusive profession. Specifically, they've restructured their Education Foundation in order to put greater emphasis on issues of equality and representation.
- The [New Jersey Society of CPAs \(NJCPA\)](#) has issued guidelines on inclusion, including actionable strategies firms can use to improve the D&I of their workforce.

These are encouraging steps in the right direction, to be sure. But it's also clear that a

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Of course, tech is just one piece of the puzzle. The bigger picture takeaway is that it's time to get more comfortable with change. In any case, that's my resolution for the year ahead. What's yours?

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With more than 22 years' experience in the staffing industry, Jodi oversees the field organization and continues to transform [Tatum](#) into a data-driven organizational search and consulting firm. She has a proven track record of building high-performing teams and brings to engagements knowledge spanning strategic planning and execution, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), brand strategy, multi-generational leadership and more.

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