

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us



**Kelly Grier, CPA**

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

focus on the positive side of change, and use it as a catalyst for professional development.

Whether you're just beginning your career, or already far along in your professional journey, I encourage you to think beyond the linear career path. Seek out opportunities that give you exposure, as they will not only grow your experience, but without a doubt broaden your network and your understanding of the business and other potential opportunities that can inform your career trajectory.

Never be afraid to try something unconventional, especially if it takes you beyond your comfort zone, because you will learn far more from your mistakes than you will from your successes. In fact, if you're not failing, you're not trying hard enough.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of finding the right sponsorship. At the end of the day, there are doors that you may need opened for you, and I would recommend that anyone seeking to rise through the ranks at her own company leverage the wisdom of someone who has done it before.

Make sure you are having the right conversations to put you on the path to leadership, including constructive feedback to help you harness your strengths and improve upon your weaknesses. Be open about sharing your goals and where you'd like your career path to lead, as conversations like this can be pivotal to opening doors to new opportunities that you may not have encountered otherwise.

Recognize that each experience in your career builds upon the next. The key to a successful, fulfilling career is really about staying curious, broadening your perspective, living your values and purpose, continually learning, and wholeheartedly embracing change along the way.

**What steps would you offer to employers to be more effective in retaining and advancing women?**

It's imperative for leaders to create a culture of belonging – a culture where everyone

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

truly is aligned with our culture of belonging. It's fundamental that business leaders and their teams understand that it is their responsibility to pave the way for the next generation of leaders – and that we hold them accountable to make sure they're mentoring, sponsoring, and advocating for individuals accordingly.

One of the most impactful things an organization can do is involve men in mentoring and sponsorship programs to help cultivate a pipeline of high-performing women. Since women are often over-mentored and under-sponsored, it's incredibly important to ensure that we as leaders are intentional in both mentoring and sponsoring so that advancement opportunities persist.

Similarly, it's imperative to empower transformative leaders who can navigate the extraordinary times we're living in today and help reimagine the future forward. With their curiosity, agility, spirit of innovation, and commitment to continuous learning, transformative leaders are key differentiators that contribute to an organization's success. They are courageous, helping others to unlock their potential, and have the confidence to embrace rather than fear change – and they're not afraid to take risks, even if they fail.

Senior leadership must be continually focused on advancing equity and bringing up the next generation of leaders, because without the best talent across all dimensions of diversity, an organization simply can't be world class, no matter its business or industry.

**Why did you choose to work in – and stay in – an accounting related field?**

I joined EY right out of college, and I've stayed with the firm for nearly 30 years because I really do love what I do each day. I've had many opportunities to grow and develop and learn, and to do so with the most extraordinary people in business, all while serving the best clients in the industry. I've been fortunate to gain experience

and perspectives in a variety of different leadership roles across industries and

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

When we find ourselves on the others side of this crisis, we will continue to experience an extraordinary amount of change, and it's important that we capitalize on the rebound and transform with intention. I am focused on readying our firm to tackle these challenges, as they create enormous possibility and potential for the industry. It's exciting to embrace new ways of working and consider how we can reimagine our business models to better serve our clients and support our people's health and well-being. For many, change incites fear and anxiety, but I am someone who has always gravitated towards change – those daunting opportunities and threats on the horizon – and that's why I believe the future of our profession continues to be very bright.

**What book(s), blog(s), or podcast(s) do you recommend that have guided you on your journey?**

I am a voracious reader and a continuous learner, and I'm currently reading and learning as much as I can, particularly as it relates to the systemic racism that persists in our country. I'm among the many people who has read and found great insights in "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo.

**McKinsey & Company issued their [2020 Women in the Workplace study](#) that basically says that the current pandemic is starting to impact the strides women, especially women of color, have made in the profession. What advice would you give to employers to support women during this time so that the future of our workforce isn't negatively impacted?**

Supporting those in your organization that are disproportionately impacted by the current crises requires not only flexible working policies and resources focused on health and well-being, but also a very human approach to leadership.



Leaders have to be willing to listen first and recognize that some of their people's

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

When your people feel empowered to share the reality of their current experience and tell you exactly what they need most right now, you are far better equipped to serve them and support them through the crisis of the moment – and help them continue to progress and advance both personally and professionally.

**What advice would you share with young women CPAs striving to achieve similar success in this profession?**

I firmly believe the opportunities in this profession are limitless. The next generation of accountants will likely work in an environment where financial and non-financial information will be interwoven. To be prepared for the future, accountants should pay close attention to the growing demand for environmental, social and governance (ESG) information and practices among both investors and business leaders.

Similarly, the human aspect of the business, especially relationship building, will become increasingly important in this age of transformation and technological innovation as it really is the foundation of the industry. New technologies will also enable auditors to focus more on innovation and strategy, and less on the more mundane aspects that previously demanded their energy and attention, so these skills will be more important than ever in this profession.

To anyone pursuing a career in accounting, I encourage you to keep an open mind about your career trajectory, continue to build your network and gain new perspectives, and seek out opportunities that align with your passions – because often enough, you'll find incredible opportunities behind doors you would have never thought you could open.

**Describe one person who has been an important mentor and sponsor to you and**

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

opportunity to ascend in the firm as a young partner. This opportunity was a springboard into many different roles and experiences within EY that ultimately contributed to where I am today.

If everyone as a leader considers it their responsibility to bring up the next generation of leaders across all dimensions of diversity – that's where the magic happens. We have to be focused on ensuring that experience is consistent for all our people, and we have to recognize where there are gaps between our aspirations and our reality, and do everything in our power to close those gaps.

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

Listen more than you talk. I am a big believer in being informed by other people's perspectives, and it all starts with giving them a seat at the table.

Read more about the [2020-2021 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Winners](#).

Accounting • Auditing • ESG

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved