

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

Lara Abrash, CPA

2023 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Deloitte & Touche LLP, US

How do you envision the accounting profession evolving in the foreseeable future for women?

The accounting profession is at a pivotal moment. Our profession will undergo more transformational change in the next five years than in the past 50 years. Transformation is key to our profession's continued success. At Deloitte, we are embracing new behaviors, new processes, new technologies, and new talent models, all while sustaining quality as assessed by our regulators. Specifically relating to audits, the audit of the future will (1) be delivered in real-time, (2) connect seamlessly, (3) leverage big data, and (4) support cognitive, digital, and automation technologies. The result – an audit that is no longer viewed as an obligation but as an opportunity. The audit of the future is agile and adapts ahead of change and helps turn what appears to be complex and unrelenting into something understood, in control, and will result in even higher quality audits.



However, we cannot perform the audits of the future without the right people. Diversity, equity, and inclusion play a significant role in the future of the accounting profession. A diverse workforce means more perspectives, more ideas to bring innovative solutions to clients, broader empathy and understanding of the impact of emerging events—all of which are critical to the success of organizations and,

ultimately, moving our economy and society forward. Particularly for women, we

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

individual circumstances. Lastly, we will find meaningful, impactful ways to connect either in-person or virtually. Our strategy is rooted in data and feedback from our people. They directly inform our refreshed set of cultural pillars and shape what actions we have of our leaders to make it a reality.

What advice would you give to women college students about preparing for a career in the accounting profession?

I have been very fortunate in my career as I had and still have amazing mentors who guided me to this position. Through my experience, I have the following three pieces of advice:

Connect with people – Each person has a unique perspective and communicates, leads, or collaborates and teams differently. Sharing our stories create valuable connections that build strong relationships. It is these strong relationships that we lean on during the difficult times and lift us up during the best of times. No one can succeed alone and identifying the people you connect with to take along the journey is vital.

Bring your authentic self – In the past, we would delineate what was office appropriate and what remained personal. In the current environment, it is even more important and appropriate to bring forth your authentic self. Whether that be sharing stories of your children or hardships with aging parents, it is our shared experiences that unite us.

Claim what you do – As women, we often think if we keep our head down and work hard that we'll be rewarded for our efforts. Time after time, we see and wonder why another person was recognized for work where we have contributed significantly or why we got passed over for an opportunity. It's okay to speak up and make it clear the areas you added value and that you are ready for the next challenge.

How would you advise accounting firms on how they can better attract, retain,

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

Champion advancement – A passion of mine is the advancement of professionals. I believe individuals deserve every opportunity to succeed. Women often approach a situation from a different lens and embracing and celebrating this unique perspective allows for a more diverse set of thoughts, which is vital for an organization's success. We need to be open to other ways of doing things than were done in the past. We need to listen to all points of view and put in the hard work to make sure women are advanced in the workplace.

Elevate women – The accounting field is not alone in the fact that there are disproportionately fewer women in leadership roles than men, let alone women of color. I knew at an early stage in my career that I wanted to be in a leadership role but when I looked around there were few women leaders. It was important to me to be a role model, coach, and sponsor to those women who came after me. Regardless of what your aspiration is, take ownership as a leader to make sure women have the ability and allies to realize their potential.

Alternative or flexible work arrangements – Understanding the needs of individuals is important. That said, women often have different needs and experiences due to societal norms, personal choices, and organizational culture. We need to be open to other ways of doing things than were done in the past. We need to listen to all points of view and put in the hard work to make sure women have a voice and flexibility regarding what works best for them in the workplace.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

LinkedIn is my favorite way to connect with clients, future clients, my colleagues, and with students. Especially during the pandemic, I used LinkedIn as a way to connect with these cohorts. I started to open up and share my personal stories and

the response has been phenomenal. It's been such a wonderful platform to reach a

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

What are your favorite podcasts?

Ever since I was a young girl, I have whole-heartedly loved absorbing information. I constantly want to better myself and learn. I seek information in a variety of different channels. I recently re-read Michelle Obama's *Becoming* before I read her new book and it turned me onto her podcast, *The Light Podcast*. I particularly liked the episode with Conan O'Brien and how she talked about growing up and feeling different. It's so important that we continue to talk about our different experiences and how we all should make one another feel included.

===-

[Read more about the Most Powerful Women in Accounting.](#)

Firm Management

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