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# Sandi Smith Leyva, CPA, CMA

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of the 2014 “Most Powerful Women  
in Accounting” awards.

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

The accounting profession is made up of dozens of different professions – controller, CFO, auditor, tax preparer, sole proprietor, partner, advisor, planner, educator, and more – so there is a path for everyone. You can't beat accounting when it comes to gaining business savvy if you want to run your own business – it's the best.

**2. What advice would you give accounting firms on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?**

Give women motivators and rewards that are aligned with their values and not with men's. This means lots of time for family and a larger degree of independence. Allow them to compete against themselves and not others, and provide a sharing, collaborative environment that supports women's strengths and not men's.

**3. Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior management and partner levels, or that the profession has moved to a mostly gender neutral state?**

Yes, there is still a glass ceiling. No, the profession has not moved to a gender neutral state, and science shows we never will – we can't change the subconscious biases we're wired with. Brain science has a lot of answers that firm partners “don't know they don't know” when it comes to gender differences. Of course, I'm partial about that, but the answers are clearly there.

#### 4. How have you managed to balance your professional and personal life

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states and 7 countries, and 100% of our services are delivered via cloud apps. I am extremely reliant on cloud apps for training delivery, client orders, payment, project management, CRM, customer communication, and more. I can't say I use mobile technologies as much as others but we are moving in that direction.

#### 6. What single piece of technology could you absolutely not live without, and why?

I can't imagine living without the Internet, even though I spent 40 years without it. In addition to all the cloud apps I use, I love the ability to ask a question and get an instant answer on any and every subject. I write a lot, and it makes the research go fast.

#### 7. What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

CalenMob allows me to see my Google calendar on my phone. A close second is the group of social media apps I use: Twitter, Facebook, Hootsuite, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, and many more. I have them on both my iPhone and my iPad. We have clients in a Facebook group and a LinkedIn group and I like to keep up with what they post. When I am at conferences, I like to rev up my tweets.

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