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Alina Nikishina, CPA

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Aside from the accounting websites, which blog/website do you consider a must-read?

I like to review the Wall Street Journal and Fortune when I have time in the morning. We also closely follow the online forum from the national organization (PASBA, later mentioned in more detail), where accountants that have similar firms to ours discuss various topics on how to improve their practices and complex accounting & tax issues.

In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it better?

Within a year of joining the team at Insperience, I was able to help streamline the workflows in our firm to improve efficiency. I now manage all of the onboarding of new clients, including taking care of any back work, so that our Senior Accountants that manage current clients can stay productive and then seamlessly build relationships with new clients without running into roadblocks. As a result, clients are happier and have a strong relationship with us from the start because they are given the attention they deserve.

I've also implemented technology tools to make us more efficient such as using Adobe for paperless workpapers, a cloud based tool for electronic signatures and professional documents, and information trackers and point sheets to help make tax-time more organized. We've also made a big push to learn and spread the knowledge of Quickbooks Online to our clients, which has greatly improved efficiency of bookkeeping preparation and allows us to serve more people.

Networking in the community has also proven to be very helpful for our firm because it has helped us build a network of very helpful professionals we can refer to our clients. Our goal is to be our clients' most trusted advisor and have resources available to them when they need assistance.

In what ways do you participate in the professional community to

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how to best educate ourselves to keep up with accounting trends and best serve our clients. I also meet with the Colorado chapter of this association on a monthly basis so that we can keep up with the current state accounting news & build close relationships with other small business accountants in our community.

My goal is to continue to be heavily involved within these groups to share and receive knowledge.

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

I make an effort to help others in the professional community that are seeking any kind of mentorship. I really enjoy listening to people talk about their goals, and it makes me feel good if I can do anything to help achieve them. For instance, I love being able to connect people with similar passions and interests through my network. I often meet young professionals through networking who are seeking guidance on which route to go in the accounting profession, and I really enjoy mentoring them when given the opportunity.

Currently I am also doing some pro-bono work for a new restaurant owner in town, who is devoted to supporting the homeless community through his non-profit, and who was at one time homeless himself. I can't wait to see him build a strong and successful business, and I'm happy to be there at the beginning to help him get started!

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

I foresee a shift in the types of services that traditional accounting firms provide and also an even greater need to keep up with current technology. Individuals (especially small business owners) are drawn to accountants who can provide them with

consultative type services that inspire and educate them to make their business more

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“Business Mastery” program for small business owners which will allow them to go through a 2 year training program to learn more about important, and often overlooked segments of business. We will coach business owners on several subjects for example: How to Read a Financial Statement, Financing Your Business Needs, Data Security/Fraud, and Importance of a Business Lawyer, etc.

I am also currently working with a development company to create an app for our firm! This will be something very unique to our industry, and it will be a great new way to communicate with our clients and prospects.

What is your career philosophy?

Be conscious to what's happening around you. There is always a learning opportunity that can be gained or shared. There could be a new idea or passion that you can evolve and bring to life. A relationship could develop that will help you reach greater heights. You could truly make a difference in someone's life!

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.

A very special mentor for me has been our firm owner, Sean Manning. One of Sean's passions is to provide opportunities for success to those around him, which is so inspiring. Prior to joining his practice, I did not have much experience with face-to-face client interaction, management, or serving clients in the small business realm. I was working in a large firm simply producing work, and I knew I could do more as young business professional given the right opportunity. Sean looked past this fact because he believed that the basic technical experience can be gained fairly quickly – it was a matter of whether my visions and goals matched up with where he wanted to take his practice. He has taught me that one can achieve, and even surpass goals when you build a great team around you and you all have a vision of where you want

to be. He consistently makes the effort to get me involved on any tasks that he thinks

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