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Danielle Supkis Cheek, CPA, CFE, CVA – 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Honoree

Employer: D. Supkis Cheek, PLLC

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Houston, TX (Dec.2005).

What opportunities do you feel women in accounting have now that they didn't have when you started in the profession?

My thoughts may not be too popular, but I am concerned that not enough has changed. When I started my accounting career it seems it was mainly a binary decision between having a family and staying in public accounting. Now, there are far more flexible arrangements and offerings, which is great. However, I am concerned that even with these "opportunities" there is still a stigma associated with using them and that a woman's career trajectory is significantly harmed if she uses them in some situations. I have also seen too many instances where men and women push their own ideas or ideals onto a particular woman for what she should do regarding her professional or personal life. Each woman's needs, desires, goals, etc. are different, and our profession needs to embrace those differences.

How important is work/life balance and what suggestions do you have for those who are struggling to attain this?

I don't think I know the "secret sauce" myself as I struggle to obtain any balance in my life. Recently, I have been working on letting the little things go (which is hard for the OCD CPA in me). I also keep a meticulous calendar that keeps me where I need to be and hopefully not forgetting anything. My 1-year old son also has his "own" Exchange calendar. I work on projecting out his calendar at least 4-6 months out so that I can work my business schedule around his care schedule. Last minute calendar changes happen almost daily, but at least with the detailed calendar I can rework the schedule on the fly as needed.

What is the most difficult part about being a women in the accounting

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What is the best part about being a woman in the accounting profession?

I think I have personally benefited from looking different than many of my counterparts. While the image and demographics of the profession have started to noticeably change, there is progress to be made. When I am sitting in a room of people that don't look like me, I choose to use that difference to my advantage to (hopefully) be heard rather than being worried about sticking out like a sore thumb.

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

I have been teaching students for a couple of years at the Rice University Business School. They recently relaunched their MAcc program, and I am excited to get to teach in that program. I fill my courses with a lot of real-world accounting and skills. I am hoping my students will come out with skill sets that can be used on day one and find accounting exciting and interesting.

Looking back at your career, what would you do differently given the knowledge you have today and how can women who are entering the benefit from that knowledge?

I am not sure I would have done too much differently. My mother was/is a key influence of mine and had a very successful career. I have had far fewer barriers in my career than my mother, but as a kid I did not see the barriers that she had to break through to have the career that she did (I was 1 when she made partner at her law firm). I thought her career path was normal. I was lucky because when I went into the professional world, I did not have as many stereotypes and perceptions of barriers. Since some barriers are often perceived due to upbringing, social norms, etc. and I never saw those, I didn't have as many perceived barriers, and I just kept going. Of course, I had barriers of all types along my way and will have many more

throughout my career—everyone does. For barriers we do face, my mother taught me

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