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Danielle Supkis Cheek, CPA, CFE, CVA

2018 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

Director, [PKF Texas](#), CPAs and Professional Advisors

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whose vision aligns with yours, and who will work with you to create the career path that's best for you and the Firm.

What would you suggest to accounting firms that are interested in retaining and advancing more qualified female staff?

I have seen too many times when men and women push their own ideas or ideals onto a particular woman regarding what she should do for her professional or personal life. Each woman's needs, desires, goals, etc. are different from the next. There should not be a one size fits all approach to retaining and attracting women in the profession. Initiatives supporting the whole woman CPA and her individual needs, goals, etc. are imperative. That means flexibility in options, asking rather than assuming a particular career choice, and not stigmatizing women for the choices she makes in her career.

Why did you choose to work in – and stay in – the accounting field?

Because I love it! What other industry keeps you in an ever-changing environment with new challenges, yet has the stability that I am never worried if I will have a job or not? I will always be employable as a CPA. It all depends on what kind of CPA I want to be and there are so many options, I really do get to pick my niche.

What are you currently reading?

Daniel Pink's "A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future."

In short, it is no longer going to be enough to be technical, per Pink, we are past the information age and into the conceptual age. In the space I work in, it is a forgone conclusion you will have the technical skill set to be able to perform analysis of data. The differentiator will be the ability to interpret and communicate that analysis.

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

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We are seeing a shift in the new clients coming on board. As the Baby Boomers continue to retire at steady rates, the next generation of entrepreneurs are looking for service providers who mirror them. The clients are more diverse and have more wholistic needs. I believe I am part of the team that the next generation of clients can see a little part of themselves in. This also means demonstrating I will bring in the right team of accountants to meet their needs.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped shape the direction or focus of your professional life.

My mother was, and still is, a key influence in my life and had a very successful career as an attorney. I have had far fewer barriers in my career than my mother did, but as a kid I did not see the barriers that she had to break through to have the career success that she did (I was one 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 obstacles along my way and will have more throughout my career—everyone does. For the challenges we do face, my mother taught me to analyze a situation, assess the risks or benefits, plan, and—most importantly—have the courage to take the right action.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

I personally always think through priorities. Of course, my family always comes first, but after that is my professional integrity. Integrity is the foundation of the CPA profession and that is what someone wants (whether they realize it or not) when they hire a CPA. Many times, clients don't realize the implications of the situations

they are in and they need someone to not take advantage of them, have the tough

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