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Lindsay Stevenson, CPA, CGMA

2018 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

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community in understanding financial languages and serve as an educator in all things financial literacy. Top that off with the flexibility to choose the work schedule, environment and platform that fits your goals and you have a recipe for success. Women in accounting have a unique opportunity to redefine what “normal” is in the workforce, leading the way for more diverse and collaborative efforts.

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

Honestly, it starts on day 1. If you want the top talent in your executive management candidate pool, that pool needs to include women. So what is your organization doing from recruiting to hiring that communicates to these young women that you expect them to be in that pool. I am a huge fan of formal advocacy programs and early-career coaching. I also believe organizations should consider their overall work environment and determine if it inherently excludes women from thriving (expecting face-time, the belief that working full-time is the only way to add value, inadvertently holding women to a higher standard of performance, advocating more often for male candidates, etc.). Culture can either strangle an initiative or allow it to thrive so it is an important component to consider when determining what initiatives will work in the organization in its current state.

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

At first, I chose accounting because I was good at it. I also believed that it was a solid profession (I would always be able to find a job no matter what). After I graduated and started working in public accounting, I discovered that I found tremendous joy in solving puzzles and helping people thrive. As my career progressed, I was fortunate to meet other accountants and CPAs who were passionate and inspiring. As a result, I have found renewed purpose in my role within the profession and have stayed because I believe I can make a difference to

both the incredible accountants I have the pleasure of working with and the

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the way we have always done so we clearly continue to learn because we want to become experts in leveraging new technologies to provide decision makers with better, real-time access to information. I believe we will continue to be the translators of financial information, only in ways we can't yet imagine. We are a darn smart group of people so I envision we will be champions of innovation from traditional services to services we don't even know we plan to offer yet.

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

I am convinced by constantly asking ourselves "what's next?", we provide ourselves with the permission to think beyond what we are accomplishing today. By being a voice in the profession to challenge leaders by asking that question and by daring each of us to find our purpose and then live it in the way we perform our work, I believe I am participating in the way that suits me best. I will continue to volunteer my time and talents in ways that inspire our profession to ask (in the words of John O'Leary) "What More?" – what more can I do?

7. 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.

It is hard to only name one person as there have been so many mentors that were, and are, instrumental in my development as a professional! Since you are making me choose, there is a woman I met 5 years ago that has had a profound impact on the focus of my professional life. Her coaching and mentorship continually challenge me to connect all of my choices and goals to my "why" while providing me with unquestionable love no matter what happens. She believes in me so wholeheartedly that it is sometimes scary to think someone could have that much faith in little old me to reach my stars. By always encouraging me to seek the deepest meaning and allow myself to be who I really am, she inspires me regularly to be the best version of myself which has in turn let to the joy I find professionally. (If you are reading this Sarah, you are a total boss!)

8. Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

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