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Accounting

Jun. 12, 2019



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Partner, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, Dean, or Strategist are just a few of the opportunities that are available in the accounting profession. There are unlimited possibilities, yet in order to reap the benefits, men and women both must own their own journey and defy “the box” thinking. This is especially important for females as we are more subject to unconscious bias than our male colleagues. “The box” thinking is all about stereotypes and accepting no for an answer. We are beyond thinking outside “the box”. Instead, we have to not see “the box”. Defying “the box” requires taking chances, operating out of our comfort zones and saying yes to new opportunities even when we don't feel 100%. Seek mentors and coaches to hear lessons learned and strategies for success. These things have worked for my career and I believe they could for others as well.

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

Firms that are interested in retaining and advancing female staff should consider establishing Employee Resource Groups for Women and Allies. The Allies component is very important because a group for only women would not be as effective without the team members that manage and work with them. The Women and Allies Group should be open to all team members and would offer strategies on how to retain female staff, how to groom females for leadership, and how to motivate them to their fullest potential.

I would also suggest that every team member take ongoing Unconscious Bias training with managers (both men and women) taking more in-depth training that would also include leadership, mentorship, and retention training. Most organizations have performance improvement plans that potentially manage a team member out of the organization—why not Retention Plans when high performing talent is identified?

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

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includes every facet—Public Practice, Business/Industry, Not for Profit, Government, Education, and Consulting across every industry including Technology, Healthcare, Financial Services, Manufacturing, Retail, etc.—across organizations of all sizes around the world.

What book(s), blog(s), podcast(s) do you recommend?

There are many great books, blogs, and podcast and I skim and review materials on transformation, leadership, digital strategy, and disruptive technologies on a daily basis. These materials include the AICPA Journal of Accountancy, the Maryland CPA's Statement, Oracle's Modern Finance Blog, AICPA's Inclusion Solutions Blog and various podcasts.

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

The accounting profession will more fully embrace technologies including artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, blockchain, the internet of things and cyber security. The Future of Work, Finance and Auditing in the Future will present ongoing opportunities for accounting professionals to serve as trusted advisors.

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

As an Oracle leader in the Cloud Business Group, I have many opportunities to speak with Finance leaders across organizations of all sizes about their cloud journey, transformation initiatives, and change management strategies.

I will also continue to offer my lessons learned and perspectives as a keynote speaker and also as an instructor in Carnegie Mellon University's newly relaunched Chief Information Officer Certificate program.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how

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new opportunities, to step out of my comfort zone and to have confidence in my abilities.

I also have many “secret” mentors-meaning that they don't know that I consider them mentors. The term mentor would make them feel that there is something they should be doing like coffee on the 3rd Tuesday of the month when I am just happy to send them a text or ask a question when needed.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

I follow many principles but To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required is my primary directive. I am very appreciative of the stakeholders in my life and seek to Pay it Forward through various community service initiatives. It is important to me Lift as I Climb. And when I do—I receive far more than I could ever give. A win-win!

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