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Samantha Mansfield

2019 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

Director of Professional Development & Community

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Ask yourself, what inspires you? Are you energized by helping a client? Do you prefer digging into the numbers and analyzing the story they tell? Do you enjoy applying the technology to accounting processes and needs? Get exposure to various avenues you have open to you, and don't be intimidated by the unknown.

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

Push them! It seems women don't tend to self-promote well. Surveys have revealed women will also tend to feel they must be doing the next job (have every skill set needed) before they will consider applying for the next level position. Some of the very best mentors I had encouraged and pushed me to move way outside my comfort zone. These moves led to a career I would have never envisioned from the beginning yet is absolutely true to who I am and what excites me (sharing knowledge and teaching). Help them find satisfaction and growth by stretching. Mentorship is powerful and shows a commitment and investment in them.

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

I knew two things were true upon graduating college: technology would only grow in importance in our lives, and the needs for those proficient in accounting would not waver. What kept me in the tax and accounting technology field was I get to incorporate my deep seeded love for teaching and apply it to a profession that makes a significant impact. I find accountants wonderful to work with, they are generous in their willingness to share knowledge, failures, and genuinely care for their clients. Being part of this profession has been a fantastic career; it is constantly evolving so always more to learn and best practices to hone.

What are you currently reading?

Due to a recent move I now have 2 hours a day in the car, so I love Audible all that

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We are at such a pivotal point with technology's influence, regulatory changes taking place, and dynamics in our culture, I see opportunity for many changes in the accounting profession. There will be multiple career paths for professional accountants, beyond: tax, audit, accounting or corporate finance. With a growing comfort in letting technology do more of the compliance/ transactional work, and as that sentiment continues to settle in, we will see the communication between the accountant client/ colleague change. There will be increased emphasis on the need for soft skills for professional accountants, as well as, their technical knowledge. We will see those that really enjoy working with numbers and data, finding careers in data analytics, data scientists, and whatever new positions develop like these in the next 5 years. I also think there will be more of a tie between accountants and technology knowledge; new services are going to arise out of all of this, we are seeing it in limited cases today. The other piece I hope we see is more mentoring taking place, not just for junior staff, but accountant to client. Professional accountants have a wealth of knowledge that is not leveraged to the extent it can, so the profession needs to shift the level of discussion that takes place and assist in the future of their associated businesses.

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

In my role, I have the opportunity to share knowledge with practitioners in public accounting. It is easy to get into the daily grind and not see what else is happening across the profession, and sometimes even in the office next door. Throughout the year I get to work on curriculum for trainings, conferences, certificates, and teach many of these sessions, to bring best practices, insights from many perspectives while helping develop strategies to implement all these changes. I greatly appreciate the fact I get to work with firms of virtually every size and they are all making a

difference in their communities and regions. In this digital age we are not in need of

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am today was a director I worked for. He was direct in his message, critical in his feedback, but helped each of us see the unique talent we possessed. It was hard to hear his critique at times, but I would think of what he would say, "the day I stop giving you critique is the day to really get nervous." He held high expectations and you needed to rise to the challenge. For me, this was instrumental in directing me to a course I lacked the confidence to go for; I knew he was there to catch me, but it was nerve racking on that ledge. To this day I am grateful for that push.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

Take every opportunity to ask questions and find what you can learn from every interaction and experience. To ensure I'm continually learning, for the last 3 years I have had a goal to try 5 new things a month. This started as a result of getting to the end of the year and realizing how many 1st experiences I had at the age of 35! It left me feeling excited and wanting to do more. If I find myself in a situation where I am not gaining new knowledge I checkout and boredom sets in; there is too many choices that can be made to let that happen.

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[Learn more about the 2019 Most Powerful Women in Accounting.](#)

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