

Voices of Influence: Perspectives from Women in Anchin's Consumer Products Group

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In honor of Women's History Month, we asked the incredible women of Anchin's Consumer Products Group to share their wisdom, experiences and sources of inspiration. We hope that you will share our deep appreciation for these women who make extraordinary contributions to support Anchin and its clients.

What does Women's History Month mean to you?



Riz Diva: To me, this month is a celebration of women's success and empowering them to inspire others by doing what they do best.

Elana Tamas: To me, it means that women are still categorized as a group of people who are marginalized and that awareness is required to understand the various and specific harmful implications of that fact.



I appreciate having a day to celebrate the women in our lives, personally and professionally, young and old, but it's easy for the pervasive and embedded societal issues to become decorated with parties and lunches. I think the true seriousness of the issues unique to women come up and are addressed not on designated holidays, but in real life, on any and every given day.

Onicka Oxford: I am reminded that as a woman, sometimes the room you want to be in feels crowded and you don't see familiar faces. Yet, I am reminded that I inherently possess the capabilities to shape that space. Instead of merely conforming, make the space your own.



Tanaz Shabtayi: Women's History Month is a chance to amplify the voices of women worldwide.



It's not just about celebrating achievements but also acknowledging the challenges and barriers that women still face. It's a time to advocate for gender parity, support each other, and inspire the next generation of female leaders. It's a reminder of the

strength and resilience of women throughout history and the importance of continuing the fight for equality.

What advice would you give young women looking to enter the industry?

Megan Klingbeil: It is possible to do everything! When people envision public accounting, they often associate it with the demanding hours of tax season.

While it's true that we do put in extra hours during our busiest times, public accounting actually provides a rewarding work/life balance. I have been able to grow in the firm to the partner level and still be very active in my children's lives, even to the extent of being their school "class mom". The post-covid corporate world has seen the benefits of hybrid work, and there is flexibility there.



Alisha Balbaugh: The most crucial advice for young women entering the industry is to have confidence.

Upon graduating, there's often pressure to possess all the answers, but no one does. What matters most is being confident in your ability to learn and adapt, while being humble in your attitude, working hard, and leveraging the fundamentals you've acquired.



Robyn Conte: Amazing things are possible with hard work and persistence, even if your journey doesn't start out in the way you expected.

Personally, I started my career in accounting on the private company side, wanting to be at a public accounting firm. I searched for a while before finding my home at Anchin, and since then I have worked tirelessly to hone both my technical skills and my client service skills, which led to career advancement. If I had gotten discouraged about being behind in my career, I wouldn't be on the path I am today. Keep going, even and especially in the face of adversity!



Onicka Oxford: Be prepared to not be prepared.

There are a lot of sacrifices along the way if you intend to be better than good, but it's experience and perseverance that get you to where you want or need to be, however you define that. Find the open-door policy holders and they will become your village, which will be critical to your elevation.



Josephine Lau: Be strategic about your development and start to build a support system.



Having a mentor who can offer advice and take you under their wing can make a huge difference in your career. Consider joining women's networking groups or associations, which can be especially beneficial in a male-dominated industry.

Are there specific qualities or skills you believe are crucial for female leaders in the industry?

Megan Klingbeil: In my view, effective female leaders in the industry demonstrate confidence, compassion, and a strong commitment to teamwork. Firstly, they are confident in the caliber of their ideas and opinions and are not afraid to speak up and share them. Compassion allows for empathy, understanding, and nurturing strong relationships with team members. Lastly, a dedication to teamwork ensures collaboration and mutual respect for the ideas and perspectives of others. This combination helps everyone feel valued, inspired and connected to the team's goals, ultimately helping to drive success within the organization.



Carolyn Naporlee-Cipolla: Have confidence in yourself, your ideas, the work that you have done, and the time you have invested to gain valuable experience. Know that if others try to make you feel inferior, that you are worthy and capable. When you walk into a room, don't be afraid to command the respect that you deserve!



What is one quote or phrase you refer to when you need inspiration?

Megan Klingbeil: When I need inspiration, I turn to a song called "This Is Me" from The Greatest Showman, performed by Kesha. There's a line in the chorus that I love: "Look out 'cause here I come, and I'm marching on to the beat I drum, I'm not scared to be seen, I make no apologies, this is me." It reminds me to embrace my uniqueness and forge my own path, especially in a field like accounting where women are still breaking barriers. Despite facing challenges, I've learned to gain confidence and make my voice heard by staying true to myself and not trying to be someone else.



Onicka Oxford: “Am I good enough? Yes, I am.” – Michelle Obama



Elana Tamas: I rely heavily on quotes for inspiration, and actually have a wall full of quotes and photos of various individuals that inspire me on my home office walls.

These remind me to be kind, brave, individualistic, and inspired as a state of being. It is so easy to lose oneself in everyday matters, and I find that being surrounded by reminders of my ideals and aspirations has a great impact on my sense of purpose, and sense of who I aspire to be when that imagery literally and figuratively surrounds me. Lately, I have been thinking of a quote from “A League of Their Own” pretty often; “Dottie: ‘It just got too hard.’ Jimmy: ‘It’s supposed to be hard. If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard is what makes it great.’”



Rachel Langenthal: “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” – Eleanor Roosevelt. This quote resonates with many women as it emphasizes the importance of self-belief and the pursuit of one’s aspirations. It encourages women to have confidence in their dreams and to actively work towards achieving them, regardless of any challenges they may face.



How do you empower yourself and those around you?

Jordan Venditto: Empowering yourself and others begins with recognizing and celebrating the wins around you. It is so important to cheer friends, family members, and colleagues on. When we genuinely support each other's achievements, we contribute to a collective sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.



How can we create more opportunities for women to thrive in their chosen fields?



Riz Diva: By leading through example and inspiring them in their pursuits.

I truly believe that you can achieve anything if you put your heart and mind to it. Let's encourage and support one another to reach and even surpass our goals.

Josephine Lau: Establishing mentorship programs where senior female leaders provide guidance and support to younger women in the organization has been highly effective in promoting career advancement and building confidence.



Ashley Cohen: To create an environment in which women can thrive, we can ensure that barriers and biases do not prevent anyone from gaining access to the

resources, opportunities, and support networks that they need to advance.

Each individual's circumstances are different, and so too are their needs in order to flourish. Such resources should include flexible work arrangements to help accommodate the needs of women, particularly those balancing career aspirations with caregiving responsibilities. We must also foster a culture of belonging and support. I believe that these combined efforts can help empower women to achieve their full potential in the workplace.



What's been the most rewarding aspect of your career, thus far?

Carolyn Naporlee-Cipolla: It's incredibly rewarding to directly engage with remarkable founders and owners and know that I play a role in their financial success and am a part of their team. I love seeing my clients' products in the stores and celebrating successes, big and small, along with them!



Elana Tamas: For me, there is a distinction between rewarding and satisfying.

I am extremely curious, and being in the pursuit of answers places me in my natural state. I love the puzzle that is taxation and get the most professional satisfaction when working on questions that seem foreboding, or conceptually difficult to apply. However, my career has been rewarding for me in the times that it enables me to be of service to others; when I have had opportunity to provide a small light during a dark time as a result of my professional contribution. A handful of times, I was able to help women that have been victimized, and by clarifying and highlighting tax issues relating to those circumstances, I alleviated some strain for them. In these times, I have felt something that transcends professional satisfaction. Those were the rewarding



moments of my career.

What women have you looked up to as role models or mentors?

Elana Tamas: All of us have something to teach one another.

I would say that my grandmother is my hero; but it is not just her. I like to look at not just women who have made historically notable changes and impacts, but on the courage of the everyday woman – the immigrant woman, the mother who shoulders work and the inequitable balance of care of the family, the woman who doesn't see herself as needing to satisfy the role that society expects of her, but rather the role that she expects herself to fill. The collection of dignified, brave, hard-working, persistent women is all collectively an inspiration to me. The stories that women tell me of what they went through to get a job, an education, a fair shake with the law, in relationships – every single one is my role model and mentor.

