

# WOMEN IN TAX

## Q Has your career in tax been rewarding and what further accomplishments would you like to achieve?

Most definitely. When I started my career as an attorney in a large law firm I never imagined that I would be leaving the legal profession and specialising in tax. I have never once regretted this decision. My career in corporate tax consulting has been intellectually stimulating and varied. I have travelled to many countries around the world, worked with amazing colleagues and have worked on ground-breaking transactions. All this with the flexibility of raising a family. Going forward I would like to contribute to thought leadership and policy – I do believe that the right tax policies can help grow the country and decrease unemployment.

## Q As a woman, do you feel that all doors are now fully open in the tax profession or do you think there are a few doors that still need to be cracked?

I don't think it's the tax profession specifically that is keeping women off the top table, so to speak. I think it's across all professions. Things are definitely improving in that there is a conscious awareness but I still believe that men get the "benefit of the doubt" a lot more than women. As a partner in my firm I see it as part of my job to counter unconscious biases and ensure that women are provided with equal opportunities to men to advance their careers.

## Q What advice would you give young women who are starting in the tax profession?

To tackle every task (no matter how minor it may seem) to the very best of their ability. This is how you gain the trust of the people you report to and will lead to bigger opportunities. Also, to keep an open mind. Tax is varied and exciting. Get exposure to all fields before you decide to specialise. Tax is also a very marketable skill.



**Roula Hadjipaschalas**

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## Q Has your career in tax been rewarding and what further accomplishments would you like to achieve?

Given the chance, I would do it all over again. I enjoy solving problems and get tremendous satisfaction from making a difference to my clients' businesses. Imagine the difference it would make to a medium-sized business if a customs penalty is reduced from R20 million to R20 000. Or to a multinational where a penalty is reduced from 1 billion to 40 000. The impact of such numbers can be staggering.

## Q As a woman, do you feel that all doors are now fully open in the tax profession or do you think there are a few doors that still need to be cracked?

I think that, as in any profession, your career is what you make of it. Don't settle for less. If you believe that you deserve better exposure, more challenging experiences or more promising career prospects, take your career into your own hands and look for opportunities for yourself.

The tax profession has come a long way, there are some very experienced women in key positions. It is important that we lift others as we grow.

## Q What advice would you give young women who are starting in the tax profession?

Whatever you decide to be, make sure you are the best at it. It is never too early to start specialising. Tax is too vast and complex for anyone to claim to know everything. Pick an area and make it your niche.

