



“Start by doing
WHAT’S NECCESARY;
then do

WHAT’S POSSIBLE;
and suddenly
you are doing
THE IMPOSSIBLE.”

- Francis of Assisi

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Women Leaders in Accounting



Meet Jamie

My husband and I live in Hemlock and we have two beautiful children – Alyssa (9) and Dominic (7). I enjoy spending time with my family, camping, running and traveling. Alyssa participates in a competitive dance team, and Dominic likes to play soccer and T-ball. I am currently the treasurer of the Hemlock Board of Education and treasurer of the Hemlock/Ling Elementary PTO.

Tell us about your career with Yeo & Yeo

I chose accounting because when I was in high school, I had two accounting classes and found them to be challenging and fun. It was from those classes that I then decided to pursue a career in accounting.

I selected Yeo & Yeo for a few reasons. From my time at Northwood, I knew two people who were already working at Yeo & Yeo and both talked very highly about the people, clients, and experiences they had. I also remember my interview with one principal, who was very down-to-earth and I could tell he truly loved what he did.

Yeo & Yeo also allows you to bank your overtime and use it when you want. None of the other firms that I interviewed with had this option. It is nice to see the extra money in your paycheck when you are working 55 hours a week during busy season!

I specialize in government audits and I lead the government niche team. My goal is to one day work exclusively on government audits. If I had to pick one thing about my career that I love the most it would be the people - both my clients, and my co-workers. I have some great relationships with my co-workers and their families, as well as my clients, which makes coming to work every day fun.



Best advice you have ever received?

Learn from the mistakes made by others – remember those things that drove you nuts when you were a staff, senior, or in-charge and remember to not repeat those things with your staff, seniors or in-charges.

Jamie, describe a time where Yeo & Yeo's work/life flexibility positively impacted you.

When my son was nine months old, he was diagnosed with a rare white blood cell disease. His treatment plan was to get weekly chemotherapy infusions at U of M Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, every Friday, for ten weeks and then infusions every two weeks for another ten weeks. If everything looked good after that, we would keep spreading it out until we would eventually go once a month and this lasted for an entire year. This was the hardest thing I have ever been faced with.

I informed my managing principal, at the time, Tom Coulter, about Dominic's diagnosis and treatment plan. Tom told me to do whatever I needed to do and to let him know if there was anything he could do to help.

Without the flexibility of being able to work on the weekends and/or extra hours during the week, I would not have been able to take my son to U of M for all of his appointments, to hold him during his infusions or to be by his side during his multiple procedures and surgeries when they had no clue as to what he had.

How does Yeo & Yeo encourage the advancement of your career and how do you help develop future leaders within the firm?

As I was moving up in my career, my mentors were always encouraging me to take on new roles, step out of my comfort zone, get involved in the community, and to mentor others. There are some very good mentors at Yeo and Yeo who get behind you, encourage you and coach you to that next level.

Being a mom, and a new principal, I have quarterly mentor/coaching meetings with some of the new/first-time moms in the firm. I stress the importance of schedules and flexibility and finding what works best for them. For me, I like to be home to eat dinner with my family and to help the kids with their homework. I try to be home by 6:00 p.m. during busy season and after the kids go to bed, I will jump back on the computer and work. For others, this might mean coming in at 6:00 a.m.

I also have quarterly mentor/coaching lunches with other female future leaders in the firm as well. I remind them that they are important to the firm and that there is a "seat for them on the bus". I often pull up a chair with staff and sit next to them if they have a question. I make sure to take the time to show them, instead of just telling them.

What challenges have you faced as a woman in accounting and how have you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges I have faced is gaining respect from board members during audit presentations. I also am often asked, "how long have you been at the firm", as people think I am younger than I really am which, I have to admit I appreciate, but seniority is not my only defining characteristic in this firm.

My first year as principal I was paired with Dave Youngstrom to do a board presentation together. I was impressed by how great of a job he did at emphasizing the fact that I did the majority of the work and review of the file. He openly shared that he took an advisory role on this project. Anytime Dave is contacted instead of me, he is helpful in redirecting inquiries to me. He will send me the e-mail or voicemail so I am able to respond to the questions. This is key in being able to gain the trust of my clients and colleagues by sharing my knowledge and expertise with them.

What advice do you have for women new to the accounting profession?

You can be an accounting professional with a family (if you so desire) and be successful at Yeo & Yeo. You have to find a schedule that works best for you. Of course there are ups and downs, but consistency and hard work pays off. One rule I follow: Never cry at work. In my opinion, it doesn't matter if you are a male or female in this profession, there are endless opportunities to be successful.

Yeo & Yeo is among 10 firms named to the 2015 Accounting MOVE Project Best Public Accounting Firms for Women list, conducted by Wilson Taylor, www.wilson-taylorassoc.com. Follow Yeo & Yeo on LinkedIn and Facebook as we profile women leaders within our firm through September.