



Della Hudson BSc FCA

Business Appointment: Speaker, writer, consultant Minerva Accountants

Personal introduction:

I'm the founder of two accountancy practices, author of two books, and mother of two teens.

I grew up around the world as part of a forces family and spent seven years on a maths scholarship at a school in Somerset. After university I trained in a small London firm before moving to the Midlands where I made the move into "industry". Most of my career was spent using my language skills and looking after anything that wasn't sales or distribution in the UK subsidiaries of multinational companies. Like many FDs I've been responsible for not just the finance department but IT, HR, quality assurance, environmental audits, and building maintenance.

Then I had two wonderful children and decided that I wanted to spend more time around them so I set up my own practice working from home, Hudson Business Accountants and Advisers. It was only meant to be me but, with my background in running businesses, it soon grew to a small team, all on flexible working contracts, and we moved to larger premises in Nailsea.

In 2017 I successfully sold my business, did an ironman triathlon and wrote my first, award-winning book 'The Numbers Business: how to build a successful cloud accountancy practice'

Now I speak, write and consult for accountants, fintechs and other businesses.

In the middle of lockdown I set up Minerva Accountants in order to help all the small businesses struggling for advice.

This puts me in the position of having worked with both practice and industry at the same time as well as having spent significant amounts of time on both sides myself.

As well as my own two books on running businesses I also co-author the Bloomsbury Tax Planning publication.

You can learn more about my background on Linked In

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dellahudsonfca/>

You can learn more about me as a person and what I get up to by following me on Twitter.

@DellaHudsonFCA

Your involvement with ICAEW

I am an active member of the SW region and have represented ICAEW as a business adviser at local events such as The Pitch and Enterprise Nation. As a professional speaker I am often invited to speak at ICAEW training events including chairing the ICAEW practice conference in London in 2018.

As a sole practitioner with a young family I was previously unable to commit more time to ICAEW and I believe that this sort of time pressure leads to a lack of representation of small firms and women within ICAEW so that they then feel poorly served by their Institute.

Motivation and ability to be a member of Council

My motivation to be a member of the Council is to help to redress this balance a little by representing those who do not have the time to do it for themselves. Since selling my first practice I now have more time to give back to my Institute.

Strategic focus

I see two overriding issues at the moment:

Diversity: our student intake is approximately half and half male and female and has been since I joined the profession over 30 years ago. But this reduces to around just a quarter female later on. In the twenty-first century having babies is no longer sufficient excuse for this drop off which is not as extreme in other accountancy organisations. The Institute has an image, internally as well as externally, of being mainly white males above a certain age and it is time for us to change both the facts and the image. We need a mixture of backgrounds and experience to provide the best service to businesses.

There is a second strand to the diversity. This is the diversity of work that we do. I was surprised when I learned recently that the majority of our members are in business rather than in practice. There is more that we can do to promote the value of our members as Finance Directors (and similar) as well as competent qualified accounts and advisers in practice. As a member with a foot in both the business and practice sides of the profession I feel able to reconcile the needs of our different members.

Modernisation: the profession is changing at an ever increasing pace. As somebody who has grown a successful cloud accountancy practice, and even written a book about it, I want to help members in practice and in industry to move forwards in 6 specific areas that affect many of them:

1. People – businesses are struggling with a shortfall of experienced staff. There is a push towards flexible working to encourage members to accommodate work and other commitments. Having run a successful business that embraced this, I hope to use this experience to contribute to the future development of our profession. The ICAEW does more to support women returners than it used to but this now needs to be more widely communicated and there is, of course, plenty more that we could do. Covid has shown that it is those who embraced the technology for remote working that thrived whilst others lost out.
2. Geography – we have transport issues in the cities due to lack of space and other transport issues in our rural areas due to the low density of the population there. Rural broadband is limited and delays the move to the cloud with all the associated benefits. Our profession should be lobbying locally and nationally to improve this for ourselves and our clients so that we can make the best use of technology and communications.

3. MTD – this is the time consuming issue at the moment for those in practice and, as a small practice owner, I now speak and write for various accounting and bookkeeping groups about how they can prepare themselves and their clients. As a profession we can collaborate to ensure that we are all supporting our clients and businesses to do this as easily as possible.
4. Brexit – leaders of both campaigns now acknowledge that we will be economically worse off as a results of Brexit. No matter what our politics our clients and those within our businesses will look to us to lead them through the forthcoming changes.
5. Advisory v compliance – there is a push for accountants to provide more than just compliance. Whilst there will always be a need for compliance, and practitioners who prefer this type of work, we should also be training those who wish to make the move into the advisory side of accountancy. We are competing against business coaches, advisers, and sometimes even software companies, with less understanding of the underlying numbers. It is time for some to take the step into an advisory or virtual FD role or any of the many additional ways we can really help businesses. Our Institute already provides this through those in industry and we can bring these skills to those in practice as well as doing more to promote our Business Advice Service.
6. New practitioners – with technology lowering the barriers to starting up a practice this is becoming more common and we will see an ever increasing number of “younger“ firms as members set up with the minimum period of post-qualification experience and with no senior partner on hand to support them. As an Institute we need to support these new practitioners to run their modern practices to the high standards expected of current professionals.

Communication with members in your constituency

Face to face communication is always best and I am looking forward to getting back out there and seeing you in person. As a professional speaker I am often invited to accounting and tech conferences which gives me the opportunity to pass on your views to fintechs and others who serve our industry. It is important that you talk to me and tell me what you need from your Institute so that I am not just representing myself.

Even once we are able to get out and about I am very active on social media, recently ranking 4th in the Economia 50 list of top financial influencers and even speaking on the subject at Accountex. I am currently ranking in the top 20 of Avalara's 'Accounting Top 100' which represents a worldwide perspective.

What this means is that I am accessible to you on Linked In and Twitter most days and I find that many accountants prefer to communicate in writing like this.

Nominators

Michael Winkelmann
Timothy Ball
Kate Clarke
Jessica Pillow
Natalie Binstead

Declaration of interests which are relevant to the business of ICAEW

Membership of, or interests in, formal bodies or groups, including other professional bodies ⁱ :	<p>I am a full member of the Professional Speaking association and Regional President for the South West until December 2020.</p> <p>I am a member of ICPA, a professional organisation that supports accountants in small practices in a way that I believe the ICAEW should do.</p>
Membership of ICAEW Council, ICAEW Boards and other ICAEW committees:	None
Partnerships, Directorships or beneficial interests in companies:	I am sole director and shareholder of Hudson Business Advice Ltd
Professional or social relationships with individuals who have business relationships or who compete with the ICAEW:	<p>I have business relationships with other professional accountancy and bookkeeping bodies through my work as a professional speaker. With 30+ years in accountancy I have built up many social relationships with members of other professional bodies.</p> <p>I am a member of ICPA.</p> <p>I do not believe that any of these relationships conflict with my membership of ICAEW and the collaboration allows us to improve standards across the profession as a whole.</p>
Any other matters you feel should be identified:	None

ⁱ This includes employment by a professional body.