

Darci Congrove
Managing Director
GBQ

Darci Congrove is responsible for overseeing a staff of 120 associates at GBQ, an accounting and business consulting firm, and was recently promoted from director to managing partner in 2009.

Elected by the GBQ partners to lead Columbus' largest local public accounting firm, Congrove is responsible for resource planning, firm financial performance, and the creation and implementation of short-term and long-term firm strategies.

She is actively involved in the central Ohio community; she serves on the advisory board for the Family Business Center of Central Ohio, is a board member of the Women's Fund of Central Ohio, and is on the United Way of Central Ohio's Women Leadership Council.

Growing up, did you always want to be an accountant? Accounting for me was a last-minute decision. Originally, I wanted to go into architecture, but I realized it was a long career path to follow. I wanted to follow a curriculum that would allow me to use my skills and grow quickly. I had a cousin who was a tax accountant; he was doing very well professionally, so I decided to pursue accounting at Miami University. I received my B.S. in business administration for accounting and finance and also went on to receive a master's in accounting from Miami. I wasted no time getting my degrees! I wanted to get into the professional world as soon as I could. As I graduated, it never occurred to me that there was anything I couldn't accomplish. **Sounds like being focused is a defining part of your character; who or what else has shaped you along the way?** My father was very influential. He worked three jobs while I was growing up and showed me the value of a strong work ethic. My high school didn't have a guidance counselor, so I had to figure out my educational curriculum, too. I was actually the first person in my family to go to college. I studied very hard during my time at Miami because it was important to me not to waste my parents' investment in my education. I wanted to make them proud and show them that I could and would work hard, too. **What has contributed to your success?** I knew if I were to succeed, I had to work inside and outside of my job. I became involved in the community and participated as a volunteer, a board member — whatever I could do. Through these interactions in the community, I made a lot of friends and business contacts. It is volunteer work that really influenced me as a professional; I learned to be a lot more comfortable networking and talking with people. **What makes you most proud in your career thus far?** I'm most proud of the development of my career. I started off at GBQ as a senior manager, and now I've been elected to managing partner. I can't say that I got to this role all by myself; I've met and worked with some amazing people along the way who have helped to shape the direction of my career. **Describe some things you've learned about your leadership style.** I've learned that I have very high expectations of myself and of others; I expect too much too fast. I have tried to coach myself to slow down and allow for other perspectives. I am trying hard to cultivate an environment of responsibility and accountability at GBQ. I want each person I work with to feel empowered to take ownership in their professional growth. I'm looking forward to continuing to shift toward this more progressive and accountable culture. I always tell my staff that I can't care more about their career than they do; it's important to me that they grow and be passionate about what they're doing. I get a great sense of pride when I see them working to accomplish their goals. **What inspires you or continues to give you energy?** Two things: Getting things done and taking care of people. I enjoy the relationship piece of the business much more than the technical side. That's why I love tax season! We spend so much time with our clients; it's honestly one of my favorite times of the year. I get to roll up my sleeves right along with them and help get things done and take care of their needs. **What advice do you have for professional women starting off in their career?** Do not ever underestimate your own ability. Whenever I see self-doubt in someone, I immediately think how limiting that can be to a person. Believe in your skills and use them.

