

Member Spotlight: Isabella Bertani, FCPA, FCA, MBA

Your trusted advisor for business expansion



Isabella Bertani is a Chartered Professional Accountant in Toronto, Canada. She has launched a unique boutique accounting and advisory firm focusing on clients both domestic and foreign with global interests.

Isabella is a graduate of York University's prestigious Schulich School of Business holding both a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting and a Master of Business Administration with a focus in policy and finance.

As a high profile CPA with a global practice, Isabella Bertani is a role model for young professionals striving for success in a highly competitive industry.

Over a 25-year career, Isabella has risen to the very top of her profession in Canada's largest city Toronto. She was recently bestowed the honour of Fellow by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario (CPA Ontario). The FCPA is the highest distinction that CPA Ontario confers on its members who have brought prestige and honour to the profession through significant achievements in their professional careers, volunteer involvement in the affairs of the accounting profession, and volunteer contributions to the community.

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This is an impressive accolade, and, as a result, she is particularly well qualified to be a mentor to young professionals, a role she takes on in her spare time, away from the office.

Her mentoring advice is characteristically succinct and clear. "Keep a good support network around you at all times and make the choice that's right for you, understanding that those choices will have ramifications, not only now, but 10 or 15 years from now because of the incredibly fast pace of change and disruption in the world. There is no wrong choice, but it is important to make that choice armed with knowledge and perspective."

Isabella's practice focuses on inbound foreign held companies and Canadian domestic companies with global interests. As a recognized leader in the area of foreign direct investment, Isabella frequently advises foreign corporations globally concerning expansion into the Canadian market and their Canadian operations. Her clients include numerous foreign subsidiaries of significant global entities. Isabella has presented member Spotlight: Isabella Bertani, January 2020 on topics relating to globalization including global trade and migration,

The Canada European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), global client management, and economic development.

Any business considering global expansion needs to have every possible advantage on its side.

This means starting with the right place. As a G7 country, Canada offers a skilled workforce and excellent infrastructure and telecommunications, and a high degree of public safety. Canada has a banking sector globally known for its stability, and a Top Ten ranking on Transparency International's anti-corruption scale.

Canada has become a popular gateway into North America because of its openness to trade and immigration as well as its competitive tax rates when compared to the United States. In addition, ease of immigration of workers has made it a popular choice for companies looking to set up North American headquarters. In some cases, difficulty in renewing H1 visas in the US have resulting in some of her clients moving their North American headquarters from the US to Canada. Advanced manufacturing and automotive engineering are two key industries in Ontario, particularly along with the Toronto region's technology corridor, which links into several world class universities to provide a highly educated and skilled workforce. Added to this are various government incentive programs for research and development (R&D), designed to attract hi-tech investment from overseas.

Canada also has complex assurance and tax regulations, legislation designed to prevent money laundering and fraud, detailed workplace legislation and requirements around payroll deductions for employees.

Accordingly, the potential upsides – and the potential hazards – mean that to succeed in Canada, organizations need support from advisors who are familiar with the issues they might face, and what to do about them.

Isabella's practice is already tapping into this potential, using the access to global expertise that IR Global's network provides to create a host of new opportunities to her clients. Isabella created a 'soft landing' program that pulls together a wide range of services, operating in a coordinated way to help businesses gain a smooth entry into the country.

Key to helping businesses succeed is working with someone who understands Canadian business, the needs of international organizations, and has significant experience helping those organizations achieve that smooth landing.

The global nature of modern business is something high on Isabella's agenda, given her focus on inward foreign investment. She references how she now often takes the role of a business advisor, going well beyond the traditional roles of assurance and audit, into strategic advice.

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She says: “With the changing geo-political climate in the world, companies must change and evolve constantly to meet the changes if they wish to continue to be competitive on the global stage. A key element of our job is assessing risk and the impact investment decisions will have on a business.”

While it is clear that Isabella continues to work hard, bringing her experience to bear in the service of grateful clients, she also takes tremendous pride in giving back to her local community and is dedicated to a number of charitable, professional and community organizations. She is most passionate about advocating for women in business and gender equality, holding several roles in women's leadership.. She has been honoured for her voice in championing women including in November 2017, by the global organization

Women Economic Forum in recognition of her global advocacy for women in business, and most recently, in she was awarded the 2019 Joanna Townsend Excellence Award for Leadership in International Trade by the Organization of Women in International Trade in Toronto.

Isabella says that in her career, she has received a great deal of help and support from mentors. She now does this herself – with a particular focus of helping young women succeed at the intersection of career, family and personal growth.

“The most rewarding experiences I have had come from my mentorship relationships to foster the next generation of leaders.”

“It is important to give back to our communities, and I'm proud to play an active part in this. In fact, the most rewarding experiences I have had come from my mentorship relationships to foster the next generation of leaders.”

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