

# Putting a personal touch on auditing



EXECUTIVE SUITE

Emi Endo

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Marianne Van Duyne first got to know her father's accounting firm by working there during summer breaks in high school.

She worked at major accounting firm Deloitte & Touche in Manhattan before joining the family business, R.S. Abrams & Co. Llp, as an auditor in 1992.

Several years later, she became a partner of the audit business, which audits state and local governments, school districts and not-for-profit organizations. The firm, founded in 1934, also handles taxes for individuals and small businesses and has offices in Baldwin and Islandia.

Van Duyne, 48, serves on committees of the New York State Society of CPAs. She is married and has two sons.

## What qualities do you look for in hiring?

"I look for somebody who can communicate well with clients because we are very client-oriented. Somebody that's willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done. Somebody that has a positive attitude. I like to see people that are independent thinkers.

"We're very deadline-oriented, so you have to be able to not get stressed out — be able to handle time pressure. With auditing, you really have to be very organized. You could be working on 5 to 6 audits at once."

## What's your leadership style?

"I'm not the type to micromanage my staff. I like to give them as much freedom as possible because most employees like to have that independence. For the most part, our employees step up. They're able to excel because I give them that freedom. Most people that go into the accounting industry like to have a challenge.

"It's important for them to learn how to manage their own work so that eventually they can be a supervisor and then manage people underneath them. You have to tailor it to the employee. That's part of managing people — to learn their strengths, their weaknesses. I usually [get involved] in areas where they're weak to help them, and where I know they're strong, I tend to let them take on ownership."



Marianne Van Duyne, a partner at R.S. Abrams & Co. Llp, touts camaraderie and flexibility with her staff as part of her success in a deadline-oriented business.

PHOTO BY SAM LEVITAN

## CORPORATE SNAPSHOT

**NAME:** Marianne Van Duyne  
**TITLE:** Partner  
**COMPANY:** R.S. Abrams & Co. Llp  
**BUSINESS:** Accounting and audit firm  
**LOCATION:** Baldwin, Islandia  
**TYPE:** Private company  
**REVENUE:** \$4.5 million  
**EMPLOYEES:** 34

## What's the culture of the office?

"It's more of a family-type of organization, where we're very flexible." For employees caring for babies, she says, "I allow them to work from home for part of the time. We don't really require a lot of overtime during non-busy season hours so you definitely have a higher quality of life, spend time with your family.

"We provide lunch for employees every day. As we know, it's costly to eat on Long Island. It's a big expense for the company, but [managing partner Robert Abrams] feels that would enhance the camaraderie. It's an investment, but long-term I think it helps the company grow."

## What's your strategy for taking on the competition?

"The personal relationships are really important. I'm not in the office a lot. I'm always out at the clients' if they need any help. You develop relationships with them and they're happy that you're helping them during the whole process."

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