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## Giving Back and Giving it My All — How One Restructuring Associate is Making the World Better

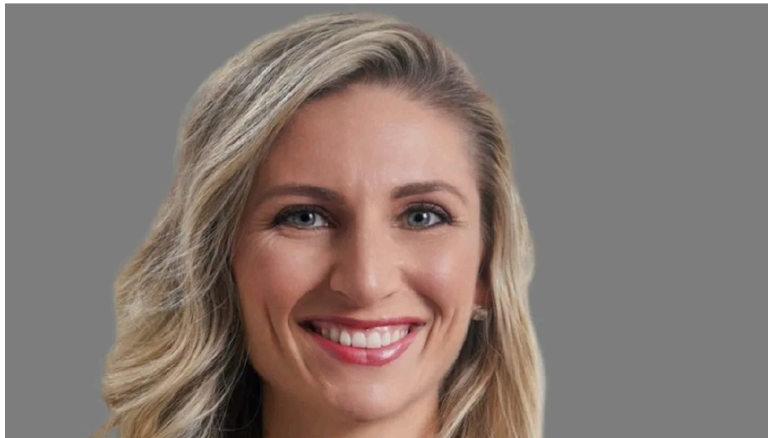


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None of us could have known how much of our lives would be restructured on every level starting in March 2020. Ironically, that's exactly when Katie Montague started her job as a Restructuring Associate with [Alvarez & Marsal](#). Katie was originally going to travel frequently, but due to the pandemic, she's been fully remote. Despite that, she's come to appreciate and embrace the collaborative and entrepreneurial culture found at A&M.

Since starting with the leading global professional services firm, she's also worked on finishing up an MBA, and was named by Michigan State University as an Executive MBA Program Honoree for 2021. So what does a Restructuring Associate do? Katie says it requires a lot of spreadsheets! She also told Fairygodboss about her belief in the power of networking, why it's important to give back, and why she finds A&M an exceptional place to work.

**Tell us a bit about your job. What's your current role, how long have you been in this role, and what were you doing previously?**

I'm an associate in Alvarez & Marsal's commercial restructuring group in Detroit. I started at A&M in March 2020, right at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. It was a strange time to start a new job that was, just two weeks prior in my interview, supposed to require significant travel. I have been fully remote since I started.

Despite being fully remote since starting with A&M, the team and atmosphere have been very collaborative. I have been able to develop working relationships and friendships over the last year with colleagues whom I've never met in person.

I was drawn to A&M because of the entrepreneurial and collaborative culture. I'm happy to say that the things I heard have come to fruition.

I started my career in public accounting as an auditor, briefly worked for an automotive supplier, and most recently worked at a boutique restructuring consulting firm doing similar work to my current role at A&M.

I've always had accounting and finance roles, although I worked at law firms in college and thought I wanted to be a lawyer until I took my first accounting class.

**In one sentence, tell us what you do every day.**

Every day, I accomplish things that better myself both professionally and personally (most of which happen in Microsoft Excel).

**If you had to describe Alvarez & Marsal's culture in 3 words, what would they be and why?**

Entrepreneurial: A&M has an entrepreneurial culture that allows its employees to build their own path to success while encouraging your growth along the way. A&M supports my professional development activities that are not directly client-related billable activities, like Turnaround Management Association (TMA) membership and my MBA.

Exceptional: The quality of professionals and the service we provide our clients is exceptional. I am beyond impressed with every person I have had the pleasure of working with since I began at A&M.

Collaborative: A&M's culture is very open and collaborative. Professionals across and within departments work together to provide the most informed advice to our clients and no one hesitates to help in any way they can.

**What made you first interested in wanting to give back to your business school?**

I'm currently in the final months of my MBA program at Michigan State University (MSU) and received my MS in accounting degree a few years ago, also from MSU. Last year, MSU's Accounting Department asked me to sit on its external advisory board.

MSU has opened so many doors for me thanks to the education and support I've received over the years. I want to give back by helping them continue to provide the same experience to incoming and current students.

It's important for those of us outside of academia to provide advice to universities regarding the skills and experiences that will best prepare students to be successful in their roles after graduation. I am happy to be one of those advisors to help MSU continue to be a top 10 accounting program nationwide.

MSU has recently named you their Executive MBA Program Honoree for 2021. What guidance will you give to the next generation of women leaders this year while serving in this role?

The biggest piece of advice I'd give to the next generation of professionals is to network. Business is all about building and maintaining relationships. You will often not be the smartest person in the room, but if you develop solid relationships with colleagues, clients, and competitors, you will have a strong network that you can tap into to help find the smartest person to help you through any situation. Put yourself out there, network, and go beyond showing up to work every day.

**What opportunities does Alvarez & Marsal provide to help you give back to your community?**

A&M has recently expanded its Giving Back program, in support of important social justice initiatives and partnering with various community outreach organizations like Kids in Need, Equal Justice Initiative and Big Brothers Big Sisters. This is an area I'm excited to get more involved in. A&M is a consulting firm and, while providing professional services to clients is why we were founded, it's important to use our resources beyond minimum expectations. I'm happy to work for a firm that believes in using resources beyond our principal mission and offers a platform for its employees to do so.

**What advice would you give to other career women who are interested in giving back?**

I think it's important to develop yourself outside of the minimum requirements of your job, whether that's through volunteering at a homeless shelter, getting involved with a professional organization, or pursuing degrees and certifications. All of the "extra" stuff is what helps develop your personal brand. There are tons of intelligent women, so go the extra mile and do things that set you apart.



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