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median figures in their industry, but in order to unlock all that extra earning power, you need to first create an environment that puts women in the right positions to ...

Jodi Chavez • Aug. 22, 2019



We've made some great strides as far as women in the workplace are concerned, but women still only make up about **22 percent of the partners** in CPA firms and **pay is still lagging**. It's clear there's plenty of work left to do. While cultivating an inclusive environment and supporting women in the workplace should be a year-round endeavor, now is a good time to implement new policies or initiatives to support your female staff.

Companies that prioritize gender diversity are [15 percent more profitable](#) than the

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might muster in a company-wide diversity & inclusion training. This can be from the C-level all the way down to small team leads, but whatever form it takes, it's clear that one of the best ways to empower women in the workplace is to actually empower them.

Handing over the reigns on new projects, initiatives or strategic priorities is a concrete vote of confidence that's impossible to ignore, sending a clear signal to women and their colleagues that your firm cares about contributions from all. Putting women in leadership roles has a positive ripple effect beyond just the encouraging optics, too. More women at the top mean more meetings being held by women, more performance reviews being given by women and more promotions being made by women, effectively reducing bias and paving the way for further female advancement.

2. Train, develop and mentor

You can't promote everyone all the time, so when no new opportunities for advancement are present, you can prioritize training and development. Connecting women with opportunities to hone their skills or explore new areas of expertise is the missing stepping stone to inspire novice professionals to take on future leadership roles. Also, doing so demonstrates your commitment to their continued career success in the here and now. One particular area to focus on is mentorships.

Women thrive professionally when they have access to [one-on-one guidance based on a continuing relationship](#) with an advisor more so than men. Create an in-house mentorship program to pair younger women with more experienced colleagues or leverage outside institutions like the [Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance](#) to ensure that all the women on your workforce have access to mentorship opportunities.

3. Rethink the daily work experience

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parental leave policies in place. But when those women come back to work, juggling home life and work-life can cause undue stress and hinder productivity.

Arrangements that allow women to work from home or outside normal business hours can help alleviate some of this burden and give them the added peace of mind that they have the flexibility needed to make sure all their responsibilities are met.

If you focus on these three suggestions and take the time to implement thoughtful policies and procedures, you will have already made a positive impact on the experience of women in your firm while inspiring young women to aspire for more within their accounting professions. With these principles of empowerment now put into action, you'll have a solid foundation of support to build upon long after August 26th has come and gone.

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