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professionals have announced an annual list of the nation's best accounting firm's for women professionals.

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Two professional groups focused on promoting the success of women accounting professionals have announced an annual list of the nation's best accounting firm's for women professionals.

The 2013 Accounting MOVE Project list of Best Public Accounting Firms for Women is drawn from the 37 firms that participated in the third cycle of this benchmarking project.

Firms were ranked on the range, depth and success of programs and workplace culture proven to remove barriers to women's success, especially at midlevel and above, and scored using the trademarked MOVE parity scale. The MOVE methodology pivots on four factors – Money, Opportunity, Vital supports for work/life and Entrepreneurship – proven to advance women in the workplace. In keeping with the 2013 Accounting MOVE Project theme of retaining rising women leaders, this year's list also reflects innovation in communicating career paths and leveraging work-life supports to advance women to partnership.

Here's what the best firms have in common:

- A firm grip on the business case for advancing women;
- A commitment to continually improving programs and elements of culture proven to equip women for firm partnership; and
- An open approach to adopting new ways to advance women in sync with changing business conditions and generational expectations.

These firms, in alphabetical order, are the 2013 Best Public Accounting Firms for

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the story behind the firm's growth, disclosing billing and cost structure, including investments in mergers and other growth strategies. Leadership and growth is presented as a whole package. As early-career associates see the opportunities they might pursue, they also gain insight into potential compensation.

Clark Nuber, Bellevue, WA: Clark Nuber's "expectations grid" and "achievement teams" keep employees of both genders apprised of their status in the partnership pipeline. When firm leaders detect skills gaps, they swiftly bring in coaches and other resources to ensure employees have every resource for continual advancement. Supports for working mothers, such as a dedicated lactation room and phased return from parental leave, set the standard for local firms.

Johanson & Yau Accountancy Corporation, San Jose, CA: A highly accountable entrepreneurial culture mixed with consistent coaching and accurate insights into women's career aspirations results in a work environment without barriers. It's working: Women account for at least 50% of every management level.

Kerkering Barberio, Sarasota, FL: Kerkering's advancement of women levitates above the crowd. It is the only firm in the MOVE Project to have achieved parity (50%) at every management level, peaking with managers (89% women). More than half (55%) of the firm's partners and principals are women.

Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Company, LLP, Minneapolis, MN: Performance feedback is hard-wired into Lurie's calendar, ensuring that every employee can make continual course corrections. A referral service for backup childcare, new last year, lets employees quickly recover from interruptions in family care, keeping team projects on track. And, a third of the firm's management committee are women.

Moss Adams LLP, Seattle, WA: Persistence pays off! The proportion of women partners rose to 24% this year, from 21% in 2010. The synchronized focus of the firm's

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Rothstein Kass, Roseland, N.J.: Women know from the start that Rothstein Kass expects them to rise to partner. The firm makes a concerted effort to give rising staffers hands-on operational, budgeting and client-development experience. Meanwhile, its renowned Rainmakers Roundtable now reaches deeper in the talent pipeline to include senior staffers. Rothstein's new backup childcare benefit coincided with the ultimate test — Superstorm Sandy – and kept 16 projects on track.

Rehmann, Saginaw, MI: Aligning with local women's business groups means developing relationships with one of the fastest-growing small business segments. Rehmann also has a remarkably consistent pipeline of women that is accelerating its progress in advancing women to partner.

Windham Brannon, Atlanta: Windham Brannon flexes career paths to support women professionals' growth within the firm. In turn, several women have transitioned from alternative career paths to a full-time schedule and have accelerated to principal and partner, building business-development capabilities along the way. The result: women comprise 43% of the firm's partners.

Firms were ranked on the range, depth and success of programs and workplace culture proven to remove barriers to women's success, especially at midlevel and above. A key factor is the proportion of women partners. The 2013 Accounting MOVE reported that women comprised 19% of the partners in its aggregate results. Firms with higher proportions of women partners had an edge in making the list. The MOVE methodology pivots on four factors – money, opportunity, vital supports for work/life and entrepreneurship – known to advance women in the workplace.

“This year, the MOVE Project examined how firms can retain women senior staff and

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Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance executive director.

“Firms are forever looking for those differentiators when it comes to work-life innovation, not just following best practices of work-life balance. It's imperative that firms today are looking to be innovative and thought provoking in order to advance the firm's reputation. The AWSCPA is constantly being asked about firms' reputations in the area of work-life balance and we work with members and their firms to stress the importance of being ahead of the curve,” said Kim Fantaci, executive director of the American Woman's Society of CPAs.

The Best Firms were among the 37 that participated in the 2013 Accounting MOVE Project. Through the project and its sponsoring associations, the Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance and the American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants, the profession can consistently measure the status of women and collaborate on proven and promising practices that advance and retain women. The 2013 report of the Accounting MOVE Project was made possible by charter sponsor Moss Adams LLP and national sponsor Rothstein Kass & Co. The Accounting MOVE Project research partner is Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., which has been measuring and supporting the advancement of women since 1998.

Key findings of the 2013 Accounting MOVE Project Executive Report:

- Midlevel women quietly disconnect from their ambitions for partnership, often relying primarily on peer relationships for career guidance
- Work-life concerns remain a primary barrier to women's ambitions to partnership
- Women senior staff want more insight into career paths
- Women managers wish women's initiatives and professional development was more closely integrated with gaining qualifications for partnership
- Several critical miscommunications derail women's career expectations at firms, and firms' expectations for their investment in rising women

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