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can take to ensure that all women CPAs can fully achieve their aspirations for their careers and drive firm growth in the process.

Jun. 06, 2019



2019 Accounting MOVE Project Report

Promotions, Plateaus and Possibilities

New Ways Forward for Women in Accounting



The **2019 Accounting MOVE Project** will delve into the perceptions and misperceptions that women and firms have about how and why women pursue partnership and other senior leadership positions. The report also outlines tactics that women, advocates for women, and firm leaders can take to ensure that all women CPAs can fully achieve their aspirations for their careers and drive firm growth in the process.

Highlights of the findings include:

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- ***Intervention Builds Retention:*** Women don't want to choose between coasting and quitting. Firms strengthen retention by cultivating multiple paths to senior positions, and by working with women before they reach the point of no return.

"Firms of all sizes are engineering new ways for women to excel. And when women excel, firms win new clients and grow their relationships with existing clients," said Joanne Cleaver, President of Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., the content strategy firm that manages the Accounting MOVE Project. "As well, the 2019 Accounting MOVE Project illustrates the power of re-investing in programs and culture proven to advance women. Firms that consistently participate in the Accounting MOVE Project promote more quickly. As a group, 28% of their partners and principals are women, ahead of even the high mark achievement this year of 27% women partners and principals, for all participating firms."

"The findings in this year's report emphasize how important it is to be transparent about career paths and opportunities within your firm. Having those honest conversations strengthens relationships and really creates a sticky factor," said Jennifer Wyne, executive director of human resources for Moss Adams, founding sponsor of the Accounting MOVE Project.

"Midcareer coaching offers the greatest return for investment in women, and the greatest opportunity for firms to drive immediate and long-term results from that investment. At CohnReznick, we are steadily capitalizing on the effects of retaining rising women," said Risa Lavine, Principal and chief of staff at CohnReznick. CohnReznick is the national sponsor of the Accounting MOVE Project. "This year's Accounting MOVE Project report shows strategies to help firms retool the pipeline."

An executive summary of the 2019 Accounting MOVE Project is available at the [Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance](https://www.afwa.org/move-project/) website. <https://www.afwa.org/move-project/>

“This year’s MOVE Report is especially important to AFWA,” said Cindy Stanley,

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Project. Registration will open in August 2019 at www.wilson-taylorassoc.com. The MOVE Project is supported by founding sponsor Moss Adams, national sponsor CohnReznick, and administrative fees from participating firms. [Registration](#) for the Accounting MOVE Project will be open through December 20, 2019.

MOVE is making a real difference in the profession and has positioned CPA firms as innovators in the business world. Look no further than [MOVE mentions](#) in *CPA Practice Advisor*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Financial Times*, *Parade* and other publications to see how MOVE Project firms are leading the national conversation about advancing women.

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2019 Accounting MOVE Project Best CPA Firms for Women

In alphabetical order

The Bonadio Group/Pittsford, NY

The Bonadio Group continues to maintain its focus on advancing women with 39% women partners and principals. The firm maintains a strong commitment to its mentoring programs that focus on professional growth areas.

BPM LLP/San Francisco

Women with diverse backgrounds are opening new markets for BPM, parlaying their knowledge of culture and specialized technical expertise to rapidly build relationships with new clients. BPM provides three-dimensional support in the form of business development skills; budget for special programs; and plenty of scheduling flexibility that fosters rapid client relationships.”

Brown Smith Wallace/St. Louis

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The interns recruit and vet potential interns, which gives potential interns a first-hand perspective and gives the firm more opportunities to reach students.

CohnReznick/New York

CohnReznick /Women compose a full third of CohnReznick's management committee. The firm stays a step ahead of national pay equity trends, proactively communicating its policies to all, and advocates for gender-diverse slates of speakers at events in which it participates.

Eide Bailly/Fargo

When Eide Bailly realized its pipeline had sprung a leak at the midlevel, it concentrated resources on a unique program that equips women with meeting facilitation skills. Because those skills build confidence in nearly all settings – from business development to one-on-one meetings – midlevel women gained traction..and stayed.

Elliott Davis, LLC/Greenville, SC

Deliberate, strategic, flexible work practices are reshaping Elliot Davis career paths and advancement for women, even in its travel-intense audit practice. Taking cues from prior MOVE Project winners, the firm's initiatives for women are rapidly accelerating, office by office.

Lurie LLP/Minneapolis

Women lead five lines of business at Lurie, demonstrating to all employees and to its business community that there are as many paths to leadership as there are women. 33.3% women partners & principals, for equity leadership list

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women. Women now represent 26% of the partnership and 55% of its executive committee.

Novogradac /San Francisco

Nobody can argue with this firm's resourceful, entrepreneurial approach to setting partners up for success – not when 40% of its partners and principals are women and 33% of its management committee are, too.

OUM & Co./San Francisco

OUM demonstrates how firms with fewer than 100 people can create robust programs that center around women and women in leadership. In the past year, the firm has invested and expanded its Women's Initiatives Network, which is powered by women, but inclusive to all; created customized leadership pathways; and instituted remote working policies so staff can manage their own schedules and time.

Plante Moran/Southfield, MI

The firm continues to create programs and policies to help women forge meaningful peer relationships that serve as a support system through life stages that often threaten career momentum.

Rehmann/Troy, MI

At Rehmann, career paths are customized for women. The firm is redoubling its investment in mid-level women by adding additional upper-level positions, such as subject matter experts that can be either career destinations or a step on the way to shareholder.

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Kerkering, Barberio & Co Kerkering, Barberio & Co. – 60%

Kerkering, Barberio & Co. has long had flexible work arrangements and found the main beneficiaries to have been women. The firm is majority female-owned, with three-quarters of its staff being women and nearly two-thirds of its top leaders serving as shareholders/partners at the firm.

KWC /Alexandria, VA – 60%

Women lead the audit practice, sparking innovation for the firm's other practices.

RoseRyan/Newark, CA – 60%

RoseRyan, whose employees work in seven states and in Malaysia, continually keeps its eyes on two goals: reasonable work/life balance for its people and outstanding work for clients. The firm was founded by two women in 1993.

Abbott, Stringham & Lynch/San Jose, Calif. – 50%

The snowball effect works, as proven by Abbott, Stringham & Lynch: Women are attracted to and trust firms where they see other women given positions of leadership and influence. ASL ensures that every staffer – not just managers and directors – has a mentor.

Clark Nuber PS/Bellevue, WA – 50% *

James Moore & Co./Gainesville, FL – 50%

James Moore & Co. has in Carol Villemare its first managing partner who's a woman. That gender equity is reflected in its partners, which are half women,

because of a focus on mentorship, career advising and a mindset of coming alongside

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the number of women in leadership and on staff throughout Jones and Roth.

HBE/Lincoln, NE – 45.5%

Gender equity is ingrained in the firm's culture but partners are also intentional about long-range succession planning, creating a multigenerational pipeline of female and male partners to ensure seamless leadership transition.

Johanson & Yau/ San Jose – 42.9%

Revamped pay equity and compensation training has brought the topic into the open at J&Y, reassuring women that the firm has their backs.

Novogradac/San Francisco – 40.4% *

The Bonadio Group/ Pittsford, NY – 39%*

Hood & Strong/San Francisco – 37.7%

In the last year, Hood and Strong elected its first woman managing partner. The firm integrates an advancement outlook discussion to the evaluation process of every employee that includes a pathway conversation on the skills and qualities people need to develop in order to reach their career goals.

MCM CPAs and Advisors/Louisville – 37.3%,*

BeachFleischman PC/Tucson – 37.5% Overhauling rules for the management committee was a chance to introduce rotating seats to draw in both women and young leaders.

Brown Smith Wallace/St. Louis – 36.6% *

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Cohn & Co. / San Francisco 33%

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About the Accounting MOVE Project

The Accounting MOVE Project is based on the MOVE methodology, developed by research partner Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., which investigates the factors proven to be essential to women's career success:

M – Money: fair pay practices;

O – Opportunity: advancement and leadership development;

V – Vital supports: work-life programs that remove barriers;

E – Entrepreneurship: operating experience for managing or business ownership

Methodology

Since 2010, the Accounting MOVE Project has measured and supported the advancement of women at accounting and consulting firms. MOVE is the only annual benchmarking project that both counts and advocates for women in the profession.

The MOVE Project advisory board includes leaders from association partner the Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance; founding sponsor Moss Adams; and national sponsor CohnReznick.

MOVE is made possible by support from its sponsors and by administrative fees paid by participating firms. Firms receive benchmarking reports based on the MOVE

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and recognizes firms with at least 33% women partners and principals, as 33% is widely recognized as the tipping point for members of any identity group to have individual impact. The Equity Leadership list recognizes firms that have achieved that milestone through any combination of culture, programs, initiatives and growth.

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