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accounting firms are women despite making up about sixty percent of the ...

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Firms that promote **gender diversity** have higher rates of engagement, productivity, and stronger financials than non-inclusive firms. Yet, only **24 percent** of partners in accounting firms are women despite making up about sixty percent of the field in the United States.

That's not to say women do not grow in the industry, whether it's achieving senior manager status at firms, moving to corporate positions, or **starting their own firms**—many do. But they are still underrepresented in those top roles at firms.

Firms must commit to the acquisition, retention, and development of top female

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Engaging with female talent early and often about their career goals and performance is essential. This is a great opportunity to identify skills and experiences needed to advance to higher leadership positions. **Professional development** initiatives should focus on developing career plans and mentorship opportunities, gaining experiences or skills candidates may lack, and providing access to interaction with higher-ups. This type of guidance will help take women to the next level and ultimately make their firms more sustainable.

“Verify that your compensation and training policies support these goals as opposed to undermining them, and consider creating an employee resource group (ERG) designed to enhance skills development of your female talent,” Seeger said.

According to Seeger, Kreischer Miller also supports its high-potential female candidates by including them in all company succession planning. This is a clear example of a company committed to the development of female leaders.

Women who decide to establish their own practice are often **motivated** by work-life balance, flexibility, and devoting more time to their family. While many women want to be challenged and fulfilled by the work that they do, they still want to remain connected and involved with their family and friends.

Firms that offer options create significant value for female employees and their male counterparts as well. One way to even the playing field is by encouraging **paternity leave** or establishing a gender-neutral parental leave policy.

Flexible hours and alternative work arrangements are also benefits that help firms stand out from the competition during a job search. Not only do these help employers differentiate themselves, they also aid in retention as employees move through different life stages.

A [study](#) from Bentley University showed that younger people actively look for jobs

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Establishing business plans and following through on them will lead to a more diverse and successful workforce. Though these changes won't happen overnight, there are many [more ways](#) for firms to establish a more positive firm culture, like taking action against sexism, examining your pay and promotion practices, having external auditors to examine and approve the fairness of your practices, and engaging and educating male allies.

Leaders must take a clear [stance](#) and make it public knowledge that they are dedicated to promoting gender equality and implementing programs that invite women to influence the workplace culture. All in all, firms must take steps to understand how to leverage the unparalleled strengths of a diverse leadership team, and make changes that will prove beneficial in the long-run.

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