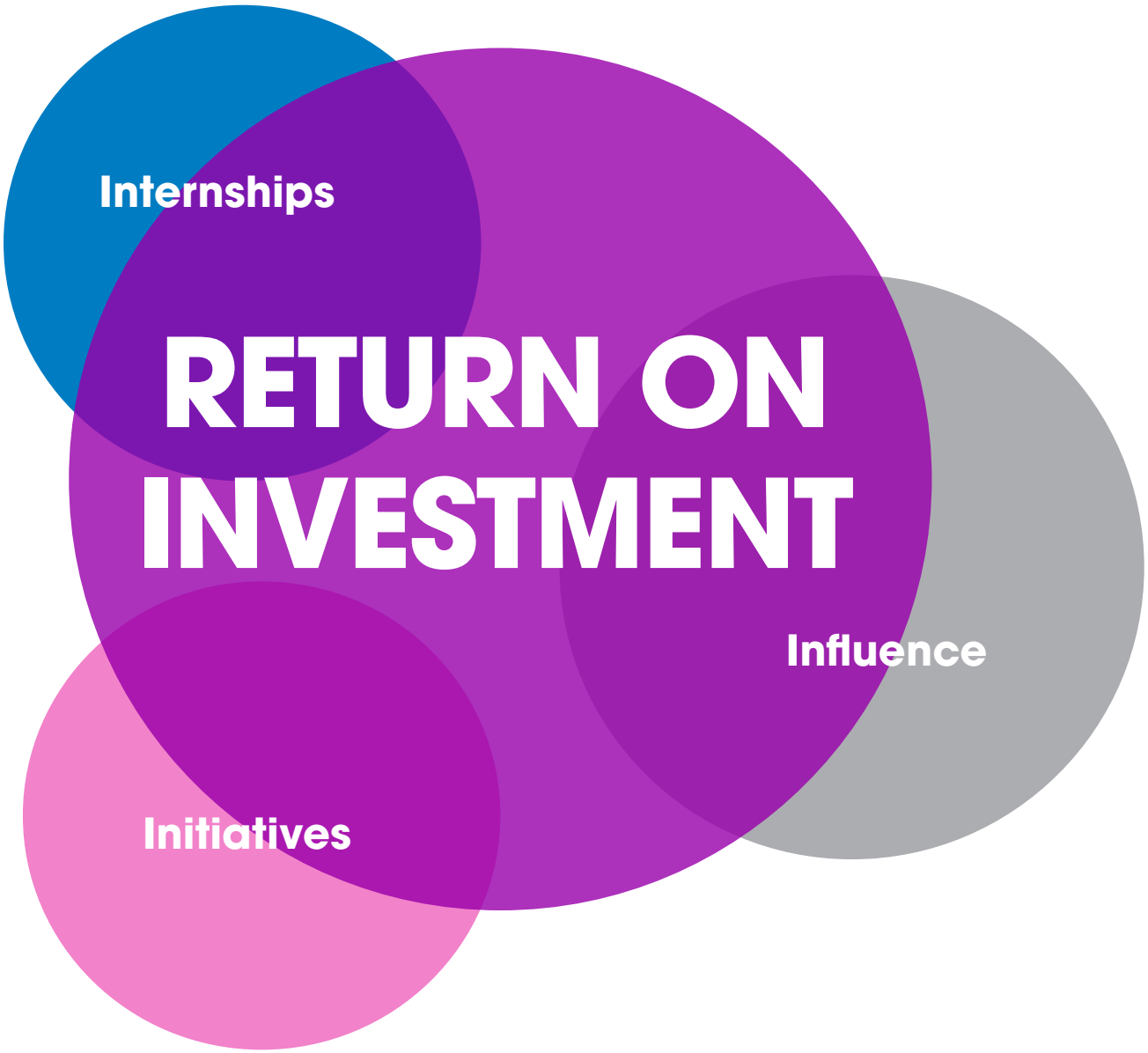
2014 Accounting MOVE Project Report

Women's development is business development. Well-structured initiatives grow firms and careers. Internships set early expectations and leadership influence delivers on that promise. Here's how women and public accounting firms can make the most of initiatives, internships and influence.



Women's Development Is Business Development

What's the business case?"

That's what public accounting firm leaders want to know.

If they invest money, time, effort, and attention in a women's initiative, how will they know it was worth it?

The traditional measure is the retention of women, presumably in the partnership pipeline. But as this and prior year's MOVE Project results show, 'presumably' doesn't work. Women comprise 51% of firm employees; 44% of senior managers; but have plateaued at 19% of firm partners and principals.

Targeted, focused women's initiatives make a measurable difference. Women comprise 21% of partners and principals at the ten firms on the 2014 MOVE Best Public Accounting Firms for Women list. One key factor is that these firms marshal extra resources to develop and retain women most likely to move into leadership. That's the 'silver bullet' metric. Focus on that, and more women will build business and qualify.

Internships set those expectations early. And the influence of women leaders delivers returns to firm reputation, authority and credibility. Internships, initiatives and influence are on a continuum. That is why we parse the return of each in this fifth cycle of the Accounting MOVE Project.

This research is made possible by the generous sponsorship and guidance of Founding Sponsor Moss Adams and National Sponsor Rothstein Kass.

Wilson-Taylor Associates

Joanne Y Cleaver
President, Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc.

MOVE Forward Faster!

These additional MOVE tools can help your firm recoup its investment in women and rising leaders.

MOVE Scorecard

In-depth recommendations and comprehensive benchmarks on all MOVE factors enable your firm to invest in programs, practices and culture that actually work. Insight scales with your firm's size and growth objectives.

MOVE Presentations and Workshops

Attend MOVE workshops at the Women's Accounting and Leadership Conference, hosted by the American Woman's Society of CPAs, and at the Annual Conference of the Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance.

Wilson-Taylor Associates communication workshops for partners and rising managers equip them with insight and tactics to convey firm stories that engage key audiences.

Return on Internships

Don't lose your starting advantage.

Women currently make up 48% of all accounting graduates and 47% of new CPA hires, according to the most-recent American Institute of CPAs 2013 Trends Report. That's a steep drop from a decade ago, when women made up 56% of accounting graduates and half of new hires.

With women comprising nearly half of new CPA firm employees, simple math dictates that women comprise about half of the talent pipeline. But as the profession has learned, that early momentum rarely continues.

Now more than ever, the profession needs to retain incoming talent for the long haul. By 2020, three-quarters of the members of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants will be eligible for retirement.

Internships launch career expectations – in fact, what an intern does and who she meets are among the most important factors when she considers job offers, according to the Public Accounting Report 32nd Annual Professors Survey (released in 2013).

High Hopes

Today's students are sophisticated. For the first time, students now list "quality of life and an employee-friendly environment" over pay, benefits, firm location and other factors when choosing an employer, according to the 2013 Public Accounting Report Annual Professors Survey.

81% of MOVE firms offer paid internships.

Your firm's internship program sets first impressions of potential recruits. To be effective, the program needs to deliver what students need for a strong professional start: skills to bolster a resume, the prospect of a job offer, networking opportunities and more.

Eighty-one percent of firms participating in the 2014 MOVE Project offer paid internship programs. Many of those firms are adapting internship programs not only to meet interns' needs but also to fulfill succession-planning droughts.

Winning tactics:

- Recruit for partner potential and infuse internships with experiences that whet career expectations.
- Train interns in basic business etiquette such as client dinners.
- Use evaluations and assessments that give interns meaningful performance metrics.
- Outline career paths and possibilities to help interns envision how they will grow at your firm.
- Track the conversion of interns to associates, and the subsequent career progression of former interns to detect what early programs pay off.

Internships as Investment

The foundation of Eide Bailly's award-winning internship program begins with recruitment. Each of the firm's 22 offices in 10 states does its own recruiting. (The firm is based in Fargo, North Dakota.) But they've learned to break out of the career-fair box in a number of ways, including an innovative Summer Leadership Program in several offices that's a feeder for the best crop of interns. Their front-end effort pays off: A large number of Eide Bailly interns get job offers with the firm and most mesh so well with the firm's culture, they stay there for years.

Through the Summer Leadership Program recruitment efforts, Eide Bailly attracts students with high GPAs and stellar community service to its ranks, students who often would have been lured away by bigger firms, says Lauri Dahlberg, the firm's recruitment manager.

"Our goal on a campus is not just to do on-campus interviews and career fairs and meet-the-firm events we're invited to, but also to get into a classroom or accounting club meeting … and do presentations on things that will help the student. Things like resume-writing tips, interviewing tips, presentations, dining etiquette," Dahlberg says.

The intern-recruiting process is "very thorough," Dahlberg says. "We want to set them up to succeed."

Women comprise 48% of accounting bachelor's and master's graduates.

Selected high-performing college sophomores, juniors and seniors with GPAs of 3.5 or higher (as well as demonstrated leadership skills and community involvement) can participate in the firm's Summer Leadership Program, which is held each May. Eide Bailly invests about $500 per student (typically there are eight to 20 per event, fairly equally split on gender lines) to put the participants up in a hotel, take them to dinner with partners and staff, engage in leadership activities, and invite them to a breakfast discussion with a panel of clients who discuss what they expect from their accountants.

The students do a community-service project and create accounting presentations before enjoying some lighter times in the Eide Bailly Olympics (think hula hoop contests). SLP participants are guaranteed an on-campus interview for an internship or fulltime position. If selected, they will intern during their junior or senior year.

"We get to know these people," Dahlberg says. "Those who are phenomenal are called the same day they leave and receive an offer for an internship … In the past we never had access to them, because the Big Four always had first dibs on them."

Once interns are on board, they're treated exactly like new hires. They go through orientation and training. They're given the same work as fulltime employees. They're assigned a buddy – a go-to person in case of questions. Their work is reviewed and supervisors monitor how well they take what they've learned and apply it to the next project.

The firm also hosts an annual "Meet Eide Bailly Day" during busy season. The event is promoted on campus for weeks and is open to all accounting students and professors. All interested accounting students can get an inside look at public accounting through tours, panel discussions, and one-on-one meetings with partners. Every year, the firm chooses a pop-culture friendly theme for the day. Last year's was "The Accounting Games" (based off "The Hunger Games").

Is it worth the investment?

"Absolutely," Dahlberg says, adding that this year's intern crop in Minneapolis includes three Summer Leadership Program alums.

Win Long-term Results

How to reap return on internship dollars?

- Build relationships with local colleges and universities, not just on career-fair day, but by volunteering as speakers and as helpers with class projects throughout the year, says Kim Fantaci, executive director of the American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants. Public Accounting Report's 2013 Professors Survey found that guest lectures and class presentations by firm professionals are "among the most effective and attractive recruiting activities."

- Pair female interns with women mentors to get a better sense of work-life balance, Fantaci says.

- Give interns a broad range of real-life tasks with a variety of supervisors, as well as a special project to own, says Catherine Mulder, national president of the Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance.

Partner Expectations

Intern classes typically have near-equal gender representation. If interns can witness early on that there's a place at the partner table for them, the firm will be more likely to retain these high-performers.

Michelle Goss, now a partner at the East Lansing office of Southfield, Michigan-based Plante Moran, began as a winter tax intern at the firm in 1996. She returned to school at Central Michigan University and got a job offer from Plante Moran. She also received an offer from a Big Four firm and felt tremendous pressure from her college to accept. But she resisted, knowing the culture wouldn't be a good fit. Goss grew up in a small blue-collar town in Michigan and didn't envision herself living in Detroit. At Plante Moran, she says, "They really seemed genuine and they cared."

Goss had only taken one taxation class before her internship, but says she learned from the on-the-job training at Plante Moran. The interns sat in the same large cubicle, so they could learn from each other as well as their supervisors.

She was one of four interns, all of whom were hired full-time.

Now, she helps show young women they can be just as assertive as the men.

"I am pretty heavily involved with our intern recruiting and interviewing in my current position," Goss says. "I tell each candidate I interview, 'Where do you see yourself?' We really look at fit."

Goss, who has three children, made partner in 2011. She has not reduced her hours, but does make use of flexible scheduling.

"I try to lead by example," she says. "My calendar is visible to anybody in the firm. I carpool for my daughter's travel soccer team. I drive a couple of times a month. My son is also into soccer. My other daughter is in Girl Scouts. I put all my personal stuff on the calendar and I stick to it."

What Works for Millennials … and for Firms

Although internship programs have existed at some firms for decades, many offices are shaking up traditional practices to net even greater results.
Clark Nuber of Bellevue, Washington, has a secret recruiting weapon at Seattle University: Cassie Stanford. An intern since the summer following her sophomore year, and set to join the firm in October 2014, her on-campus part-time job is getting the word out to students that a local firm is interested in meeting them.

She has a fully loaded Starbucks card for treating other students to coffee, courtesy of Clark Nuber. She gives away water bottles and pens. She represents the firm at accounting honor society events and during autumn recruiting season, helps other students talk through their accounting career options, based on her stints in audit and tax.

"I think that I could get all the way to the top," she says of her expectations for her career at Clark Nuber. "It's exciting to start to invest in a firm where you'll be and in clients you think you should get. Now, when I take my accounting classes, I'm thinking about big- picture things, instead of just debits and credits."

Internship best practices at other firms include:

- At Johanson & Yau, based in Santa Clara, California, nearly two-thirds of the firm's employees are women and about half are women of color. "We know that our commitment to diversity makes a strong impression among prospective student interns when the firm is recruiting on campus," said Director of Administration Jon D'Agostino. "We are proud to involve our most diverse colleagues in the recruiting process to show off the firm's greatest asset – its people. "

- An internship feeder program, such as the two-day IMPACT leadership session at Brown Smith Wallace of St. Louis, Missouri, snares 20 top-performing second- and third-year students in the firm's recruiting net before

they can be scooped up by other firms. IMPACT refers to both the effect the program will have on participants' future accounting careers, as well as their impact on the firm, says talent acquisition specialist, Bridget Bernstetter. Top-performing IMPACT participants have been offered internships and even, in some cases, full-time positions.

• Concentrate intern recruitment at universities whose cultures mirror that of your firm. Miami's Kaufman, Rossin & Co. strikes gold with local schools whose students expect to settle in Miami, Florida.

• Partner with other small firms to compete for interns, like the Accounting Intern Scholarship Program, which shares an intern pool among multiple firms and is able to offer educational seminars and other perks they couldn't do solo. The program was started by CPA Allen Bolnick of Weltman Bernfield and now includes six other Chicago, Illinois-area firms.

• Offer interns a flexible schedule like the one at Jones & Roth of Eugene, Oregon, where students can continue their class load while working at the firm 24 hours per week.

• The Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance recently started its first student chapter, at the University of Florida, and has much interest from other campuses around the country, says AFWA Vice President Linda Harris. AFWA hopes to build its membership ranks by engaging potential members early on and is actively seeking more colleges with which to partner, Harris says. The organization is also ramping up a program to list internship programs on its web site, with an eye toward encouraging nontraditional students (as well as small, regional firms) to see the benefit of internship programs. "There could be, especially in smaller communities, an opportunity for women who have CPA firms to explore bringing an intern in and doing some one-on-one mentoring in a small-firm environment," she says.

For more hands-on tips on building the most-effective accounting internship program - such as leveraging the power of small firms and the importance of tracking the retention of former interns please see the 2014 MOVE Accounting Project Scorecard Extra, available upon request from Wilson-Taylor Associates.

ROI x 3 Internships Initiatives Influence

Return on Internships

Practically at parity from the start: women comprise 48% of accounting graduates, so firms' challenge is to tee up retention. Early success helps interns envision career satisfaction and advancement.

Scope of potential careers in accounting

Organize peer mentoring networks that grow with interns

Firms start with gender-balanced interns

Create early leadership experiences

Integrate interns and new hires into women's initiatives

Give line of sight for a career here

Source: Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc. http://wilson-taylorassoc.com/move/accounting

Return on Initiatives

Rothstein Kass captured a $6 million return on Rainmakers Roundtable.

Getting back more than what you put in: that's the whole point of investing. Rothstein Kass & Co., based in Roseland, New Jersey, has gained $6 million in new business in the three years it has run its Rainmakers Roundtable program, its multi-phase women's business development program.

But a funny thing happened on the way to that number: the very process of tracking results opened the firm's eyes to 'softer' returns, such as growing confidence in its rising women, a deepened awareness of retaining women, and a stronger engagement with work-life programs, which benefit everyone at the firm.

"It has paid for itself," says principal-in-charge Rosalie Mandel of the women's initiative. The program cycles women through a tightly coordinated set of skills-development training, networking and coaching to accelerate their ability to win new clients.

When a firm launches a women's initiative, the only thing it can track is activity: how many events were held, who came, how many mentors and sponsors were signing on, and how many women were being mentored and sponsored.

Initiatives that are intrinsic to a firm's succession and growth plans naturally feed its partnership pipeline, and just as naturally, support the next level of measurement: the retention and advancement of potential women leaders. Initiatives that are not essential to a firm's succession and growth plans falter. Women don't gain career-enhancing skills and relationships … and so attendance declines. Loyalty erodes and the business case crumbles. Participation erodes and disappointed founders wonder where things went wrong.

MOVE firms with successful initiatives expect metrics to evolve from participation to retention to higher numbers of women partners.

The three most effective tactics for winning return from a women's initiative are:

- **Integrate the initiative into overall business goals, hold office and practice leaders accountable, measure results, evolve accordingly and repeat regularly.**
- **Measure one or two key metrics tied to succession planning and business growth and track them relentlessly.**
- **Delineate alternative career paths from flexible-work programs.**

Measure, Innovate, Repeat

"What gets measured, gets done," is a longstanding truism of women's initiatives across all industries.

But what to measure? How? And when?

Measure the wrong things, and you'll get more of what you quickly learn you don't want. Premature pressure to measure has squeezed the life out of many women's initiatives.

Yet, metrics are essential, for they prove that the business case for advancing women is yielding tangible business results. Design your initiative with these priorities:

- Measure from the very beginning.
- Scale metrics and accountability with program maturity and growth.
- Integrate the advancement of women with the firm's overall business growth and profitability goals. Some growth metrics can be adapted to measure initiative results.

Evolving Metrics

Activity and participation are the only two factors that can be measured for the first couple of years of a new initiative. As the women's initiative becomes more established at the Chicago-based Baker Tilly, for example, its leaders are accelerating their reach of the GROW (Growth and Retention of Women) initiative and creating more measurable results, explains principal Kim Herlitzka, who oversees the program. Baker Tilly is also creating an advocacy program that is designed to match high-performing, high-potential women in the firm with experienced partners in leadership roles who can serve as their career advocates. The program is structured to amplify the established Baker Tilly leadership development programs.

71% of MOVE firms offer women's initiatives.

"At the moment, the GROW committee tracks the number of women participating, their retention, and performance rankings," Herlitzka says. "As the inaugural group of women joins the advocacy program and assumes other leadership roles within the firm, the committee will track the promotion rate of program participants as they ascend."

Meanwhile, simply outlining current and expected metrics has already changed both the conversation and expectations for the program. As the GROW committee discussed the project with top Baker Tilly leaders, "We were encouraged to set the bar a bit higher and to ask more of our leaders to get there a bit faster," says Herlitzka.

Targeted networking yields fast results

Women's networking groups are a first step, especially for introducing young staffers to the basics of building a meaningful professional network. But generic luncheons will not distinguish your firm from its competitors and do not connect the dots that result in new clients. Seattle-based Moss Adams has created a "bull's-eye model" by tailoring its approach to Forum W networking events to give networking opportunities to all women.

- Women at all levels are invited to general networking events sponsored by their office's Forum W (Moss Adams Forum for Women) network.

- Partners and senior manager women invite current and potential clients to invitation-only events, often pivoting around events benefiting organizations supporting women and girls in their communities.

- Finally, a select group of women participate in a business development partnership with a bank, business insurance agency, and law firm with whom Moss Adams has longstanding relationships. For example, one hour every other month, women from all four organizations meet specifically to make and get referrals.

The Most Important Metric

If you track one thing, make it the attrition of high-potential women, says Melissa McClenaghan Martin, president of M3 Strategic Alliances based in New York City and a consultant to the Rothstein Kass "Rainmakers Roundtable" program.

82% of MOVE firms offer leadership training through *internal* programs.

As she works with a spectrum of professional service and financial firms on initiatives that blend women's business-development skills with leadership skills that qualify them for partner, she has detected a pattern: employers rarely track "regretted losses " - that is, losses of high-potential women.

"Until you understand when and why you are losing top-performing women, you don't know what problem you are solving," says Martin.

Martin's top recommendations:

- Measure the attrition of high-potential women at every level.

- Project the trendline from each level to see the predictable results on the pool of potential partners.

- Structure mentoring, sponsorship and training programs.

93% of MOVE firms offer leadership training through *external* programs.

"Informal" programs cannot be measured, and, by definition, yield inconsistent results. The career challenges for the rising generation are significantly

different from the career options and economic conditions navigated by today's partners. Although stories from senior partners are helpful for role modeling, it's essential to have structured training programs to ensure that rising leaders receive the skills and experiences they need for tomorrow, given the continually evolving business landscape.

What to Measure, When, and How

When designing a women's initiative:

- Build metrics into your plan from the start.
- Include results of initiative participation in formal performance reviews. Benchmark your starting point in terms of key demographics (see the section below"Use MOVE to Track Key Metrics").

To accelerate shared responsibility for advancing women:

- Track retention of high-potential women by office, by practice area and by program/initiative.
- Aim for gender-balanced slates for high-visibility and stretch assignments.
- Provide demographic scorecards for office and practice partners so they can see how they are contributing to the firm's goals for advancing women.
- Create templates for personal career development so individuals can see how programs fit with their own professional growth plans.

To integrate the advancement of women into business growth and succession planning:

Tie women's initiatives to the firm's growth goals.

- Track new business generated by partner, by practice and by office; break out by gender.
- Look for outliers - women and offices that exceed expectations - and analyze their success factors to guide program development
- Pilot innovation by office and/or practice area.
- Track the proportion of women and, separately, minorities of both genders in the "fully qualified" candidate pool for key positions.
- Track the proportion of women and, separately, minorities, in the "fully qualified" candidate pool for partner preparation.
- Track the proportion of women and, separately, minorities, as early as possible for those with partner-track individual development plans.
- Track the proportion of women and, separately, minorities with mentors.

- Track the proportion of women and, separately, minorities with sponsors.

- Translate the business case for advancing women to the firm's market valuation.

- Translate the business case for advancing women to the ability of senior partners to retire and/or sell equity to the rising generation.

Synchronize the women's initiative goals with succession planning and firm culture transformation

- Baseline your firm's culture and managers' points of view to be aware of unconscious bias; conduct coaching as needed.

- Evaluate top performers against success factors tied to firm culture to eradicate gender bias.

Align women's initiative programs with experiences that qualify women for leadership.

- Tie women's initiative and business-development programs to concentrate resources on potential women partners.

- Identify logistical, cultural and business-model barriers to women's advancement and mitigate through targeted work-life and business development programs (see the O, V and E sections of this report for case studies).

- Measure the change in women leadership candidates using metrics most relevant to your firm's culture and growth.

- Analyze rate of change and factors; adjust programs, bias eradication and firm culture accordingly.

Use MOVE to Track Key Metrics

The annual MOVE survey is designed as a standalone tracking tool. As you compile data for each MOVE cycle, you will detect changes in your firm's metrics from prior years. And, the MOVE scorecards and snapshots benchmark your firm against itself and against similarly sized firms, as well as those on the MOVE Best Firms list.

Here's how to use MOVE as the basis to get the most important data for forecasting the gender balance of your partner pipeline.

First, create a method for flagging leader-potential women at every level.

Each December, calculate the percent of women high-potentials at each level. Count the number of women at each level. Also count the number of partner- or leadership-potential women at each level.

- Each December, repeat this process as you complete the MOVE survey.

- Calculate the rate of attrition for women and men at each level.

• Calculate the rate of attrition for high-potential women and men at each level.

• Identify what levels have gender disparities in attrition rates and the "danger zones;" those level/s where you lose more high-potential women than men.

• Concentrate retention and career-development efforts at the level/s immediately preceding the "danger zones."

Everyone's Accountable

Until this year, most employers advocating for women's advancement have collected kudos for high-profile, C-level champions.

Executive endorsement sets the direction, but momentum typically sputters out at the midlevel. Only 22% of employers who claim to champion diversity actually translate it effectively to the company's culture, according to a 2012 report by McKinsey & Co. If the business case doesn't translate to an operational advantage for practice managers and team leaders, the highest-minded advocacy will fail.

This year, CPA firm accountability has gone democratic. At firms such as Moss Adams and Baker Tilly, both the process and results of advancing women have been driven to those whose daily decisions make a reality of top-level advocacy.

Shared responsibility has arrived.

Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, CEO of consulting firm 20-First, wrote in the Harvard Business School management blog that advancing women must "be convincingly led by the CEO, be owned by all managers who, in turn, lead by example and who are able to communicate effectively why it is important to the business. This is hardly revolutionary. And yet relatively few companies have applied this sensible change management approach to the issue of gender."

A long-term study conducted by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, and Harvard, found key correlations that the two universal factors for advancing women and ethnic minorities were clearly outlined accountability that translated diversity plans to daily actions, and consistent measurement.

To quote management guru Peter Drucker, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Integrating internships, initiatives and influence translates good intentions into a workplace that attracts and retains and women.

Return on Initiatives

Braid succession planning with programs that equip women with key business development, leadership and confidence-building skills.

Firm

Track retention of high-potential women

Staff / Managers

Cultivate leadership, mentoring, networking through focused programs

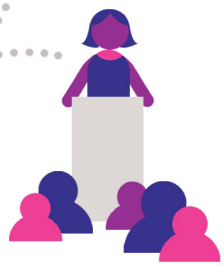
Retain with work/life programs

Foster sponsorship

Champion women for high-profile assignments

Expand experience with alternative career paths

Fine-tune leadership abilities



Build business development skills to become stakeholders

Source: Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc. http://wilson-taylorassoc.com/move/accounting

Return on Influence

Getting back more than what you put in: that's the whole point of investing.

On the same day, Stacey Hekkert delivered her third child and was named a partner. Very shortly thereafter, she had to cycle out of daily responsibilities to attend to and manage a physical challenge facing her newborn.

Influence is the currency of growth.

She didn't return for two years, not until she had seen the baby safely through his treatment. Now, as managing partner of Denver-based Anton Collins Mitchell LLP., Hekkert uses that intense convergence of the personal and the professional to help young staffers understand the powerful payoffs for persevering to partner.

"We have far more flexibility than other professions. Our work is project based, and you can scale those projects to meet different needs and different times of your life," says Hekkert.

"I don't think people have a wide enough lens to see different possibilities," says Hekkert. "When they're young, they have to be able to see alternatives…whether or not they opt in to that alternative, they have to be able to see it."

With 100 employees, ACM relies less on programs and more on formal career 'touchpoints' to ensure that women see how to mark steady progress towards partnership and other career goals. "Women want the reassurance that they are making good, solid, long term decisions," says Hekkert.

Rising women rarely can envision the personal and professional payoff for staying on the path to partner. Assuming that partnership is simply more of the same (though perhaps with a raise), they self-select out of public accounting.

But influence is the currency of growth. Influential women partners and principals wield outsize power in winning new clients, building the reputation of their firms, and cultivating peer networks that can lead change in their firms, communities and profession.

When they can envision the holistic rewards for achieving partner, rising women are much more likely to stay the course, even if their progress sometimes is slowed by scaled hours and responsibilities.

What Is Influence, Anyway?

As softer-edged influence and collaboration replace the traditional power structure of command and control, leaders at all levels might trip over the meaning of these common terms. It is essential to define influence, power and authority in terms of your firm's culture and growth goals so that everyone shares a common understanding of what it means to be a successful partner or principal.

"Influence is the ability to move people toward a commitment that supports a specific business outcome," says Tacy Byham, an industrial psychologist and senior vice president of Leadership Solutions for Development Dimensions International (DDI) based in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania. "When you use influence, you exert personal power, not position power."

Teamwork requires peer influence. Managers are responsible for results and control - in theory, anyway - the resources to deliver those results. "You have both personal power and position power when you're at the top," says Byham.

Influence Ascendant

Influence is just one of the "traditionally female" leadership qualities that has replaced the "traditionally male" command-and-control model.

A 2014 survey, "Americans Crave a New Kind of Leader – and Women Are Ready to Deliver," sponsored by Pershing and BNY Mellon, attaches hard numbers to an accelerating trend.

The most-admired "traditionally male" leadership quality - "command and control" in the workplace - was handily beat (by 16 percentage points) by the least-admired "traditionally female" leadership quality - "service to others."

The three most preferred leadership qualities, according to the Pershing/BNY report, were all attributed to the new, or "traditionally female" style:

- 81% - Coaching, facilitating, generating commitment
- 79% - Innovation through creativity and lifelong learning
- 78% - Listening and consulting

Most telling, the preference for the "traditionally female" leadership style strengthened with work experience. Men and women who had been working the longest were the biggest champions of the new style.

The Influence Inherent in Partnership Changes Everything

When rising women understand how influence will help them achieve personal and professional goals, they start to grasp the many payoffs for staying the course to partner or principal. Firms need to help them understand that they will have the power and position to:

- Encourage and inspire women at all levels and millennials of both genders
- Win business and drive firm growth
- Build key alliances, especially with like-minded clients and organizations
- Control their own schedules and invest in personal priorities

As powerful as influence is, it grows with experience and needs to be explicitly cultivated," said psychologist Anne Perschel, president of Germane Consulting, a women's leadership-development consultancy based in Worcester, Massachusetts. "Most people go to that next career level as though it's just more of the same. But it's like climbing a mountain and arriving at a new plateau. You breathe differently. It's a different view with different scenery. It's not more of the same," she said. "You have to know in advance that something different will happen here."

Techniques Perschel uses to acclimate rising women to senior responsibilities:

Cultivate influence as a leadership skill.

- Allow 12 to 18 months to integrate into the new role. It takes that long, on average, for externally hired executives to integrate and perform to standards. The time frame is likely to be similar for senior managers who are promoted to partner, as the new role is substantively different.

- Assign new partners "integration mentors" who are just a step ahead and who can serve as sounding boards. In Perschel's experience, those who've recently navigated key transitions are the best at helping those coming along.

- Integrate "each one mentor one" short-term mentoring groups and sessions to instill mentoring skills in midlevel women

Byham recommends assessments and career advising after each promotion to gain integrated understanding of influence and power."You need a purposeful recognition of the skill of influence in the rise from manager to partner," she says. Just as staff women often talk themselves off the ladder, partner-track women can talk themselves up the ladder.

Deb Levinson, a partner with CohnReznick, champions young women from the moment they start in her office - New York - and practice area - commercial real estate. She outlines the options for getting connected within the sprawling industry and how she winnows the range of possibilities to those that are most productive. Then, she invites women staffers to those groups' events "even though they don't have a lot to say or contribute. It's to help them get comfortable," she says. Because other senior women in the industry do the same, CohnReznick staffers have the chance to cultivate peer networks that can grow along with their careers.

As women advance, Levinson draws them into higher-altitude events, including invitation-only groups. And she shifts her advocacy focus from mentoring to sponsorship, continuing even for newly appointed partners. "You need a career advocate, someone who is respected in the firm who looks at what's going on with advancement so you get assignments that are relevant to growth and development," she says.

Levinson has detected a shift in attitude among baby boomer women. In the past, some have resisted using their hard-won reputations to help rising women, arguing that all advancement should be gender-blind and based only on results. But now, well established boomer women "realize that somebody did help them get where they are, and they are helping younger women," says Levinson.

Adversary to Advocate:
How A New Understanding of Influence Changed One Partner's Mind about Advocating for Rising Women

Once a woman achieves partner, it can take a while for her to realize the power of her emerging influence. Rebecca Pomering, CEO of Moss Adams Wealth Advisors, did not quite realize that she had crossed the line from needing role models to being a role model until she had several key discussions with other firm leaders.

As Pomering took charge of several high-profile Moss Adams projects, including InfluenceHer, a regional Boys and Girls Club leadership program, she noticed a difference between the celebrity power brokers and other, lesser-known people whose reputations, insights, and relationships catalyzed deep change.

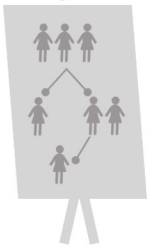
In turn, that realization reversed her position on the best way to advance women at Moss Adams. At the time, Moss Adams was just launching Forum W, its culture change initiative. Pomering had been quietly non-supportive. "I thought we were putting in a program that would lower the bar of women to be successful, and I thought it would undermine the accomplishments of women who already had been successful," she says now. But as her perception of true influence shifted, and as she gained more understanding about the dynamics of Forum W, she started to see that it wasn't about lowering the bar, but about helping more women clear the bar.

"I learned the business case and within a month I was taking a lead in conveying the business case to other people," says Pomering. "I went from being reluctant to being a huge supporter. Sometimes your gender is part of your skill set and your team is enhanced by who you are."

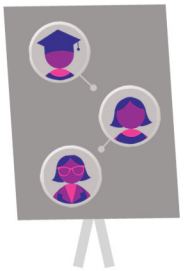
Return on Influence

Senior women leaders have authority with clients and the community - and the power to shift firm culture to open more opportunities for rising women.

Firm



Demonstrate multiple styles and paths to partnership

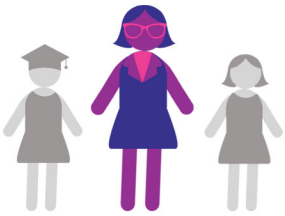


Share the story

Grow reputation and authority, enhancing firm image

Partner/Principal

Win and keep clients that share firm's values



Mentor and sponsor rising women

Advocate for next crop of female leaders

Source: Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc. http://wilson-taylorassoc.com/move/accounting

MOVE Statistical Summary

An Eroding Advantage

All Firms Women Employees Managers As a Proportion of ALL	Year to Year Comparison				
	MOVE CPA Firms 2014	MOVE CPA Firms 2013	MOVE CPA Firms 2012	MOVE CPA Firms 2011	MOVE CPA Firms 2010
% Women Full-Time U.S. Employees	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%
% Women New Hires	48%	50%	51%	49%	49%
% Women Associates	48%	53%	52%	51%	48%
% Women Supervisors/Senior Staff	48%	48%	49%	48%	51%
% Women Professionals	45%	45%	44%	46%	46%
% Women Career Professionals	54%	48%	62%	56%	53%
% Women Managers	51%	51%	52%	46%	49%
% Women Senior Managers	44%	44%	40%	38%	40%
% Women Directors	41%	43%	27%	25%	34%
% Women Partners & Principals	19%	19%	17%	17%	17%
% Women on Management Committee	19%	20%	23%	17%	16%
% Women Information Technology Employee	24%	25%	24%	23%	15%
% Women Information Technology Project Managers & Team Managers	27%	32%	29%	31%	20%
% Women Information Techhnology Principals/Partners Corp. Dept	19%	14%	31%	7%	10%

Source: Wilson-Taylor Associates, www.wilson-taylorassoc.com

Ten years ago, 56% of accounting grads were women.

Now, 48% of grads are women, according to the most recent AICPA Trends Report.

Firms are working harder than ever to win women recruits….and keep them. But yesterday's tactics no longer work, as the numbers attest. The 2014 Accounting MOVE Project delivers welcome good news and innovations that work in today's economy.

MOVE firms hire in the exact same proportion as the profession overall, with women comprising 48% of new hires. But women are gaining significantly in the leadership pipeline since 2010, when the Accounting MOVE Project began:

- Women now represent 19% of partners and principals, up from 17%

- The proportion of women directors is holding nearly steady at 41%, up from 34%

• The proportion of women senior managers is also steady at 44%, compared to 40%

• While there are more women partners/principals and women senior managers, the "defection rate" has not budged. This year, there are still half as many women partners/principals as there are women managers. This underscores the importance of retaining women in the critical transition from manager to partner.

M MONEY

How does your firm assure pay equity through policies, practices and accountability?

The 2014 Accounting MOVE Project found:

• Pay equity legislation is rapidly advancing in states and municipalities.

• Pay equity innovators analyze equity for part-time staff.

• 48% of MOVE firms conduct pay equity analysis of base pay plus bonuses.

At 64% of MOVE firms, managers' pay decisions are reviewed by at least one supervisor or human resource staffer.

Even partners sometimes discover that they can't overlook pay equity.

KPMG partner Nancy Calderon, who chairs the New York-based firm's Women's Advisory Board, shared her moment of surprise with a room full of women at the AICPA Women's Global Leadership Summit in October 2013. Shortly after taking on a new international assignment, her career coach challenged her on a major oversight: Calderon had received "a great raise," as she says now, but had not benchmarked her new pay rate either internally or against market trends. "Women tend to accept the offer too quickly," she says. "Always have a market comparison point."

That's good advice for firms, too. Pressure to validate pay equity is not going to let up. Employees have more tools and information than ever to benchmark their pay levels with others they believe do the same job, just as well.

In 2013, 11 states introduced equal-pay legislation. New Jersey, for instance, adopted a rule that protects employees who share salary information with peers, in the belief that the right to gain insight into compensation trends informs employees with evidence for salary negotiations.

Relentless media coverage, fueled by new research, keeps the topic front and center, and not just for entry and mid-level workers. Financial news service Bloomberg analyzed CEO pay and found that women CEO's in the S&P 500 were paid, in aggregate, 18% less than male counterparts.

And federal regulators reiterated their pledge to hold contractors accountable for pay equity.

A few cities have similar efforts. In Boston, for example, a consortium of academics and business leaders, led by the mayor, are framing a concentrated effort to close the wage gap.

Already, 200 employers have agreed to confidentially submit confidential compensation so that the city can measure change. This trend means that accounting firms must both track and comply with a variety of fair-pay requirements, reporting and transparency in the states and cities where they operate. Firms might consider adopting pay equity policies and practices that meet or exceed the most demanding state standard, to create a standard that is consistent across all firm offices.

The federal Office of Contract Compliance is ratcheting up pay equity accountability, having conducted 19,000 employer audits since 2009. But employers that plan ahead, are proactive, and that inculcate accountability for pay equity throughout their organizations have much less to worry about, according to OFCCP director Patricia Shiu. (Some experts advise conducting pay equity audits and making subsequent corrections under the cloak of attorney-client privilege.)

And, the dynamics of pay equity are complicated. Top-line ratios may not reflect genuine disparities. For example, one recent study found that as much as 10% of the gap between the salaries earned by men and women in various professions was due to the number of hours those professionals worked. Employees with part-time schedules and scaled workloads earn less overall, requiring analysis of earnings of men and women on comparable schedules.

Equitable Analysis

Baker Tilly, a national leader in equitable pay practices and accountability, realizes that alternative work schedules directly affect compensation - and morale.

In 2013, Baker Tilly conducted a firm-wide survey of all employees using a flexible work arrangement. As well as collecting feedback on the logistics of flexwork, the firm also asked employees how well they understood how their pay rates were scaled to reflect their workload. The firm used the responses to shape a communication out reach that explained to part time workers how their compensation is calculated on an annualized, full time basis that ensures they are on par with full-time peers.

As well, managers received a one-page summary of the part-time pay methodology. "We wanted to tell people that there was an exercise behind the number," explains Katie Anglim, senior manager of human resources for Chicago and Milwaukee.

Especially when considering candidates for midcareer and lateral hires, pay discrepancies can be mitigated from the start by using several tactics, says Katie Donovan. She has a 360-degree background in employment that includes working for a staffing firm, an applicant-tracking developer, and a trade association. She now runs consulting firm Equal Pay Negotiations LLC based in Boston, Massachusetts. Her recommendations:

- Include the minimum salary for the position in the posting. Candidates who won't accept that salary won't apply, winnowing the field and easing negotiations.

Women accountants and auditors earn 73.8% of the pay earned by male accountants and auditors, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

• Choose candidates based on qualifications, not on their salary histories. This provides an even playing field for women who are re-entering the workforce or who have been paid less than the market rate at a prior employer. And, it helps ensure a 'pay for qualifications' standard applied consistently to all candidates.

• Hiring managers should consider conducting a quick compensation audit within their departments or teams to detect any existing discrepancies that might flag faults in the hiring process.

O Opportunity for Advancement

Key trends:

• Publicly reported initiative efforts and results.

• Practice and office level accountability for advancing women.

• Leadership responsibilities from the start help millennials envision a long-term career.

Transparency builds trust.

Transparency builds buy-in, internally and externally.

People trust a process they can see and understand.

That's why annual diversity reports are essential. Several MOVE firms have or are in the process of producing annual reports about their diversity efforts and results. Expect to see published reports this year from Plante Moran, Dixon Hughes Goodman and Cohn Reznick.

In doing so, they are taking a cue from the transparency 'halo effect' that Moss Adams has demonstrated through its annual Forum W report.

The Forum W annual report does more than keep Moss Adams accountable to itself and to the community. It also demonstrates the firm's ongoing commitment to the strategic importance of retaining and advancing women, says Tricia Bencich, the human resources manager who oversees Forum W. "We've put a lot of effort into articulating our goals, what we've accomplished, and where we're heading," she says. "It's also a great opportunity to recognize our women's accomplishments and highlight the programs our office networks have developed."

When Dixon Hughes Goodman, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, launched Women Forward in early 2014, it went public from the start with a dedicated website highlighting key metrics, the firm's goals for retaining and advancing women, and how it intends to achieve those goals. The site is the first version of an annual report that will openly chart the firm's process and results.

Transparency is integral to accountability for both process and results, says partner Nikki Swaney. And it's not just the firm's employees and potential

recruits who care: clients and business partners do, too. ""What we measure is what we focus on," says Swaney.

"We need to track tangibly to see where we meet the mark. As we run into larger, more sophisticated clients, they are interested in our policies and procedures. We have many more women CEO's and business owners [among our clients]. Though our people are our number one focus for this program, the business case clearly demonstrates that these efforts are also important to our clients and prospects."

Local Champions, Local Results

100%: That's the retention rate for the Emerging Leaders program at Lurie Besikof Lapidus.

With 71% of firms supporting formal women's initiatives, firms are moving beyond broadly framed mission statements. The first women's initiatives, a decade ago, typically were designed, attended, and led by women, with nominal support and buy-in from male leaders. Initiatives are morphing into semi-customized programs, led by rising women and partners, with office and practice managing partners responsible for results.

Precisely what those results are depends on the life stage of the initiative, the specifics of the program, and how closely integrated the initiative is with the office or practice area's business goals. Early initiatives measure activity - such as how many events were held. As initiative leaders and office and practice area partners fine-tune programs, they are also held increasingly accountable by national leaders for retention, advancing a higher proportion of women to partner, and in some cases, for capturing top-line growth.

"Baker Tilly's GROW (Growth and Retention of Women) program embodies the firm's commitment to advocating for the advancement of women in business by facilitating local networking events and information sharing among woman at all stages of their careers," says Principal Kim Herlitzka. Panel discussions, led by women partners and senior managers, are held at most offices and draw women at all levels.

How Lurie Besikof Lapidus Retains 100% of Its High Potentials

Millennials crave direct communication with senior leaders. Instead of fighting this generational habit, Lurie Besikof Lapidus is channeling it to help its high potential staff envision their futures as partners, right from the start. Launched in 2012, under the direction of managing partner, Beth Leonard, the Emerging Leaders program has a 100% retention rate for participants.

Partner and chief operating officer Kimpa Moss explains that the program first rotates the group through a variety of internal projects so they become familiar – in theory, at least – with the firm's business structure, marketing strategies and operations.

Then, they are challenged directly by the firm's partners to envision the "partner of the future." "Through that, they realize that partners don't all look the same," says Moss. "It helps them envision the partner roles they might play. They struggled with how to choose those paths. They originally thought that they'd each have their own little silos and wouldn't have to worry about everybody else's area. Now they realize what a balanced leadership slate looks like."

Next steps include taking on internal projects that accelerate their growth in their strengths, whether that's technical, client service, growth, or administrative. "You can't prescribe this," says Moss of the professional self-discovery process. "They have to discover this for themselves."

Champion Diversity Only If You Really Mean It

New grads expect a full slate of interesting work, not just a full plate, says Jennifer Dizon, partner with Hood & Strong based in San Jose, California. "Technology has replaced a lot of what new hires used to do, so they are exposed to strategic work faster," she notes.

Plante Moran has been evolving its diversity and work-life initiatives for more than two decades. Five years ago the firm added diversity awareness training for supervisors in addition to the awareness training for all employees, explains director of communications Teresa McAlpine, who is also on the firm's diversity committee.

But it wasn't until 2013 that Plante Moran integrated diversity training into its companywide core training for all employees. "It's seamless now," says McAlpine. "Incorporating diversity in the firmwide training curriculum equates it to a behavioral skill that is required and not optional."

Plante backs up its mission-driven training with metrics that closely track the status of women and ethnic minorities.

In doing that, it sidesteps a 'diversity danger zone' pinpointed in recent research by University of Washington psychologists. Though it is commonly accepted wisdom in American workplaces that diversity efforts must have C-level champions to succeed, big announcements must be backed up by consistent measurement to succeed, the researchers found. In fact, generic diversity training unaccompanied by management accountability and culture change actually prevents women and minorities from asserting their unique strengths because the superficial training creates the assumption that all workers are alike.

V VITAL SUPPORTS FOR WORK-LIFE

- Alternative career paths are not synonymous with work/life programs.
- 59% of MOVE firms have formal flexwork policies.
- 7% of MOVE firms track flexwork productivity and efficacy.

Orchestrating continual culture change is one of the most important leadership attributes for today's economy, according to Wendy Montague, head of leadership and talent development for Hay Group Pacific. These leaders are change agents who "create a culture where anyone can contribute new ideas and drive improvement," she says.

Basic work/life programs are so well established that firms no longer capture a competitive advantage from flexwork, remote work and telecommuting. Now, firms' challenges include:

- Clearly distinguishing work-life programs from alternative career paths.
- Evolving programs to reflect the needs of multi-generational workforces.
- Measuring the efficacy of work-life programs, especially their effect on retention.

Clarifying 'Flexwork'

The confusion often emerges at all American workplaces when terms like "flexwork" are used to loosely describe both alternative work schedules and alternative career paths. Equipping women for career advancement is not the same thing as providing work-life programs.

For example, a part-time work schedule likely represents an alternative path to partnership because it will take longer for that professional to accumulate the experience and results to qualify for partner. However, a flexible work arrangement reflects where and when that professional actually does the work – in the office during business hours, at a home office or remote site outside of traditional office hours.

For more than two decades, Plante Moran has cultivated a national reputation for work-life innovation. Yet, in the past few years, as the firm has broken out its Women in Leadership (WIL) initiative as a separate entity, it has been sure to avoid mixing career path and flexwork messages. "We've been very careful to keep it separate but coordinated," said partner Sue Perlin.

50% of MOVE firms offer flexible work hours and place as a formal program.

Firms that make the distinction do so by:

- Establishing clear style and terminology to ensure consistent communication.
- Clearly delineating all routes to leadership so that employees can see the qualifications for partnership and principal.
- Measuring the results of work-life programs on their own terms.

Choose career pathing words carefully, and be aware of popular business terms that could be misconstrued.

At The Bonadio Group, based in Pittsford, New York, human resources director Sue Conway has coined the term 'slow ramping' for professionals who choose to stay in a pre-partner track, and with the likely intention of accelerating towards partnership once they pass certain life milestones. She distinguishes "slow ramping" from the popular "on and off ramp" terminology, which implies a complete career exit and re-entry. Likewise, the firm uses the term "work life integration," not "work life balance," to indicate that flexwork must accommodate both the employee's and employer's needs.

Leah Powell, also of The Bonadio Group, never abandoned her aspiration to become a tax partner. She did, though, redefine her route, going part time for over a decade to rear her four children.

But that scaled workload also gave her room for reflection. She realized that though she was not cut out for hard-core business development, she did excel at retaining clients. With that insight, she realized that she had evidence of her contribution to the firm's revenues and profitability. "I realized I was already contributing to the leadership of our department," she says.

With two children in college and two in high school, Powell merged fully back into the partner lane, joining leadership skills training classes along with younger colleagues. At age 47, she became a partner.
Flexwork only works when it works both ways

Firms have found that flexwork can never go on automatic pilot. While remote work, telecommuting, flexible/core hours and other arrangements are not new, firms are finding new ways to keep these programs focused and productive.

CohnReznick spells out its expectation that flexwork for some will help the entire team achieve its goals. For instance, written guidelines help the team find ways to make flexwork better serve clients, balancing workloads, and respecting scaled hours.

36% of MOVE firms offer a referral service for emergency child care.

Everyday Innovations, Big Difference

- Lurie Besikof reframed its new parents' initiative as employee assistance and coaching benefit for all key life transitions. This addresses needs at all life stages, including the emerging needs of baby boomers who are managing care for their elderly parents.

- Consider "core hours" as a formal policy. "Core hours" requires employees to be officially at work between set hours and typically is used to designate hours that are not 9 to 5. For example, at Rothstein Kass core hours are 10 to 4. Managers are expected to schedule meetings within the core hours. This policy ensures that all employees have equitable access to a guaranteed level of flexibility.

- The annual 'busy season' is ground zero for programs that support work-life. Successful working CPA parents often come up with their own methods for getting through the crush. And, it is critical for staff to be up to speed on technology that supports remote and flexible work. Michelle Lifshitz, manager of CohnReznick's WomenCAN initiative, addressed all that with a "Busy Season Guide." It includes practical wisdom – right down to recipes – from seasoned working parents at the firm, as well as tips for troubleshooting technical access.

Outsource Work/Life Balance Problem-solving

Many firms are successfully integrating work/life flexibility into their strategic goals by enlisting coaches from HR or an outside service provider to help employees talk through what changes need to be made to their personal work/life fit, and how those changes might affect compensation and career advancement.

Why outsource? The danger is that conversations about flex/work arrangements have many cultural overtones, as well as legal ramifications. When a coach can help the employee outline workable options, the employee can then approach the manager with a list of possibilities that have already been vetted as workable by firm standards. Managers are then free to focus their conversations with employees on professional skills and career next steps, with personal privacy intact.

Best Practice: Successful Flexwork Tied to First Supervisor

If your first supervisor is influential, are you more likely to have access to work-life options later in your career? Researchers Forrest Briscoe and Katherine Kellogg say, "yes." Their 2011 longitudinal analysis of initial work assignments and later work-life program access at a law firm revealed that the crucial pivot was the initial manager, not the manager at the time work-life options were needed.

It's not just what you know, but who you know. Initial assignment affects career outcomes because the hard chargers get the best assignments, which builds reputation. These findings imply that the role of networking and social capital in careers should not be underestimated.

E ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By now, nearly every firm sponsors women's networking events designed to draw in potential clients, local women business owners and influencers. And many firms stage mixers with other professional firms that also are trying to help their women gain business development skills. General-purpose women's networking events are no longer a differentiator.

Leading firms, such as Rehmann, based in Troy, Mich., Rothstein Kass, and Moss Adams, are doubling down on highly selective, intense meetings engineered for frank referrals.

"The clients, too, need to see the women shareholders as someone who could take over their business and that they have the confidence to do that." – Kim Paskal, shareholder, Beach Fleischman, Tucson.

- Convert contacts to new clients is the missing link in women's business development.
- Mine the wisdom of their employee special-interest groups, such as women's initiatives and ethnic minority groups, for external marketing projects. 44% of MOVE firms do this.
- Align with like-minded women's groups in client industries is a powerful tactic.
- Explore new models of nurturing new lines of business, enabling women to get in on the ground floor of new practices.

What's New in Networking

Networking only works when contacts become clients.

And that's where many women come to a full stop on their path to leadership.

It's the rare firm that does not host networking events to provide a setting for their women to meet current and potential clients in a social setting. But, plain-vanilla networking events no longer offer a competitive advantage.

Instead, leading firms such as Rehmann, Clark Nuber, Rothstein Kass and Moss Adams are organizing highly selective, intense networking meetings engineered for frank referrals.

Old model:

Event: Host breakfast or lunch featuring an external speaker on a general business topic. Invite women from current and potential clients firms; women business owners; and local influencers such as politicians and municipal officeholders. To sweeten the appeal, add an element of fundraising or a charity appeal.

Business development preparation: Leadership-track women might attend a general networking-skills development class. Mentors might encourage women to stretch outside their comfort zones. Women are given little to no preparation in how to follow up and/or convert contacts to clients.

Measurement: Number of attendees.

36% of MOVE firms rotate emerging women leaders into client-facing roles.

New model:

Event: Concentric circles of events, each clearly focused on a specific goal.

- Awareness and community leadership: large events to which all women in the firm are encouraged to attend and encouraged to invite clients and potential clients. Typically tied to an ongoing, high-profile firm community partnership or commitment. Minimal expectation for specifically winning business.

- Thought leadership focusing on specific audiences/markets, such as the Rothstein Kass-sponsored annual report on women in alternative investments. Invitation-only events focusing on specific markets, industries or client categories, and intended for leadership-track women and current women leaders to invite key clients and high-potential clients. Event program in-depth on business topic of intense interest to that group. Leadership-track women prepared with business development skills intensive training, including internal practice. Expected results: meaningful contacts for immediate follow up and close tracking of conversions.

- Closed referral network: As pioneered by Moss Adams, this format brings together women senior managers, partners and principals with their peers at professional firms already in the firm's most intimate referral circle. The entire focus of the one-hour event is to specifically ask for and give referrals and recommendations. Participating women may be working with business development or performance coaches to sharpen their ability to 'make the ask' and immediately follow up and win new business. Measurement focuses on wins.

Building out, not breaking in

Succession planning is still a challenge for many firms, which complicates the transition of practice leadership from the nearly-retired to the up-and-coming.

Purposeful, thoughtful transitions are a chance to ensure that leadership-track women and new women partners are set up for success, as they are equitably represented on teams that take over existing client relationships.

Consider building strategic partnerships with local community/leadership organizations to support a broader leadership development program, as does Johanson & Yau through the Community Leadership San Jose program. This year-long leadership development intensive is designed to connect participants with the local community and prepare them for positions of leadership, such as nonprofit board leadership. But it also creates a strong peer network that fuels referrals and new client wins.

Entirely new practices offer a different way to ensure that women are fully participating in building lines of business from scratch. Clark Nuber, for example, forms multidisciplinary teams of employees in a sort of internal business plan intensive. Not only does the team frame the business opportunity, but it also must design the revenue and service model at the same time. This type of experience equips women with experiences essential for general management and for leading lines of business. Clark Nuber has used this approach to qualify and launch lines of business for healthcare, higher education, biotechnology and fraud.

For Candi Avery, an audit principal with Clark Nuber, confidence, influence and business development success have evolved simultaneously.

She collaborates closely with the other shareholders who lead the firm's not-for-profit practice. That, along with her enjoyment of the not-for-profit world "gives me a point of focus for my practice development, but I never feel that I have to do business development always on my own. Success most often happens when we bring a team to the table."

Clark Nuber starts new principals with a portfolio of clients in which they have established long-term relationships, which gives them a running start. Avery's confidence hit cruising altitude when she reviewed the contributions to the clients in her portfolio and realized "I do have an initial book of business."

Rehmann has come full circle with its women's initiative: the group's events are helping staff women and men cultivate business development skills, says Becky Guenther the human resource staffer who oversees the initiative. "Women and men want the same things: career-life integration, and opportunities for growth," she says.

"Just as much as we see more women in our senior management ranks, we're seeing more women in senior roles at clients," says Guenther. "They want to see women across the desk from them when they meet us."

MOVE Methodology

Fifty firms representing 23,993 employees contributed demographic and qualitative data to research partner Wilson-Taylor Associates between December 2013 and February 2014. Firms provided supplemental data and materials explaining their programs intended to advance women. Interviews were conducted with firm partners, human resources directors, and women managers, accounting academics and consultants, and with women at all stages of their careers in public accounting.

The MOVE methodology is unique in that it indexes the proportion of women in the leadership pipeline compared to the proportion of women employees. For example, if women comprised 50% of all employees, and women also comprised 50% of all managers, women would index at 1.00 for managers. But, if women comprised 40% of the senior executives at this fictitious workplace, women would index at .80 - that is, women senior executives would be underrepresented by 20 points, compared to the proportion of women at this workplace overall.

The MOVE methodology provides an apples-to-apples comparison of the status of women across diverse industries, employer type (public or private), employer size, and other factors that might otherwise obscure how well women actually fare across the nation.

About the 2014 Accounting MOVE Project Partners:

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Certified Public Accountants | Business Consultants

Moss Adams and its affiliates provide insight and expertise integral to the success of organizations across the globe.

Moss Adams LLP is a national leader in assurance, tax, consulting, risk management, transaction, and wealth services.

Moss Adams Wealth Advisors LLC provides investment management, personal financial planning, and insurance strategies to help clients build and preserve their wealth.

Moss Adams Capital LLC offers strategic advisory and investment banking services, helping clients create greater value in their business.

MOVE National Sponsor PROJECT

Rothstein Kass
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Rothstein Kass is a premier professional services firm serving privately-held and publicly-traded companies, as well as high-net-worth individuals and families. Beyond core audit and tax services, the firm provides a full array of integrated advisory services, including strategic business counseling, regulatory compliance and SEC services, insurance and risk management consulting, and family office services.

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Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance
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The Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance and American Women's Society of Certified Public Accountants (AWSCPA) cosponsor the Accounting MOVE Project. Their ongoing chapter program can serve as the nucleus for programs, especially if firms collaborate on enhancements, such as partner-track business development programs.

The Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance (formerly American Society of Women Accountants) promotes the professional growth of women in accounting and finance. Members of the association benefit from opportunities to connect with colleagues, advance their careers, and become industry leaders. For 75 years, the organization has proudly upheld its mission to enable women in all accounting and related fields to achieve their full personal, professional and economic potential and to contribute to the future development of their profession. Visit **www.afwa.org** for more information.

The American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants (AWSCPA) is a national organization dedicated to serving all women CPAs. The AWSCPA provides a supportive environment and valuable resources for members to achieve their personal and professional goals through various opportunities including leadership, networking and education. "One of the methods of providing this type of environment to our members is through collaborative initiatives, such as The MOVE Project," according to Kim Fantaci, AWSCPA's Executive Director. "In addition, AWSCPA is committed to promoting and supporting leadership education. We understand that today's professional needs relationships and resources outside of the traditional workplace opportunities." The Society is committed to providing accounting and finance professionals with the skills needed to inspire through knowledge and vision. Firms can amplify their efforts to advance women by customizing the ongoing efforts sponsored by accounting associations. Visit **www.awscpa.org** for more information.

Wilson-Taylor Associates

Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., has been designing and managing national research projects that measure the progress of women in the workplace since 1998. Its methodology pivots on factors proven to remove barriers so that women can fully participate in driving business results. Led by veteran business journalist Joanne Cleaver, its current and past clients include Women in Cable Telecommunications, Pink magazine, Women's Transportation Seminar Foundation, the Alliance for Workplace Excellence, Working Woman magazine, Tribune Co. and others. Her book, **The Career Lattice**, was published in 2012 by McGraw Professional. Please see **Wilson-Taylor's portfolio** of work at www.wilson-taylorassoc.com.

Want more information on advancing women in public accounting?

Employers may purchase a **MOVE Equity Scorecard**, which customizes analysis and recommendations from the 2014 Accounting MOVE Report to advise their own efforts to advance women. Contact Joanne Cleaver to discuss how we can produce a customized report that goes beyond the executive report and snapshot to diagnose and propose real world solutions for your organization.

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