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## **Career Sustainability and Flexible Partnership Model Success Outlined in 2023 Accounting MOVE Project Report**

*Pinched between immediate capacity shortfalls and applying  
talent to innovation, firms are crafting new ways to recognize  
and reward women's resilience.*

*Reno, Nevada, October 27, 2023 --*

You can't go the distance on an empty tank.

It takes pacing, re-fueling and constant systems checks to achieve long-term goals, for both accounting and advisory firms and women in the profession. Individual career sustainability is essential for firm growth – and vice versa.

In the [2023 Accounting MOVE Project report](#), released today, a talent-starved profession receives a fresh influx of strategies and inspiration for investing in the women it must attract and retain to achieve short goals and survive long-term. With nearly 75% of accounting firm leaders eligible for retirement, and accounting degree college enrollment continuing to drop, the profession is at a crossroads. It is more important than ever for

firms to find ways to attract and retain employees to not only meet increasing client needs, but to simply survive. So, what are firms that are outpacing the industry doing differently?

The Accounting MOVE Project report finds firms embracing the new super skill of career sustainability are rising to the occasion. For women, career sustainability addresses the capacity to maintain motivation and energy at every step, while rebalancing the personal and professional with each engagement. For firms, it engenders a leadership culture, defining new capabilities, qualifications, and measurements for unmapped growth. And for both, this super skill is the ability to “skate to where the puck is” on slanted ice through upended physics. Through it all, mutual respect and collaboration remains paramount, the inescapable legacy of the workplace upheaval brought on by the pandemic.

“In today’s increasingly challenging talent crunch, it is important for firms to create opportunities for women to advance in the way that makes the most sense for them,” said Tricia Bencich, Inclusion & Social Responsibility Associate Director for Moss Adams. “We must work together to ensure clients get the attention they need, employees have the power to craft their ideal careers, and firms can continue to thrive.”

Along with this year’s report, the Accounting and Financial Women’s Alliance and Accounting MOVE Project released its two lists of exemplary CPA firms, based on the Accounting MOVE Project results: the **2023 Best Firms for Women** and the **2023 Best Firms for Equity Leadership**. Winning firms are listed below.

“We are excited to see firms embrace radical flexibility so women can create their own career path instead of being forced to stick to a rigid, and outdated, progression,” said Cindy Beets, Global Head of Marketing, SAPRO. “It is also encouraging to see so many firms introducing and expanding holistic well-being offerings so women can take care of themselves – as well as others – no matter where they are in their career journey.”

“When options abound, women want to work for firms that appreciate their talents and give them opportunities to advance at a pace that fits with the rest of their lives. That’s why programs like the Accounting MOVE Project are so important to identify firms that have a history of women in leadership and offer flexible career options,” said Cindy Stanley, Executive Director of the Accounting and Financial Women’s Alliance.

“When the 2023 Nobel prize in economics is awarded to a historian for her work unmasking the ingrained imbalance in wages and opportunities between men and women, we are in good company,” said Bonnie Buol Ruszczyk, Accounting MOVE Project president. “We are committed to identifying and sharing best practices so the profession as a whole can become more equitable and attract a more diverse slate of leaders.”

# The Best CPA Firms for Women

(In alphabetical order)

## **Abbott, Stringham & Lynch**

Abbott, Stringham and Lynch ranks among the upper echelon of MOVE firms for its percentage of female partners. The firm provides professional support across all levels, crafting a roadmap that shows how to encourage participation and bolster career trajectories for women and diverse talent.

## **Armanino**

Armanino is intentional about supporting women as they rise into leadership. This intentionality is clearly seen as combinations with other firms occur and best practices are blended, within the communities the firm supports, in the strides it takes toward gender equity at all levels and in its flexible partnership model.

## **BeachFleischman PLLC**

Women comprise 57% of BeachFleischman's principals, and 42% of its management committee, demonstrating the firm's commitment to creating a collaborative culture. Add in lower charge hours, remote career tracks, extensive coaching programs, and many employee resource groups, and you understand why retention is less of a problem here than at other firms.

## **BerryDunn**

Under the leadership of its female CEO, BerryDunn has developed a diverse management team with women representing 39% of partners/principals, 50% of its leadership team and 60% of its board, building on its mission to invest in it is people and cultivate a culture where future leaders can thrive. The firm continuously assesses policies and procedures to ensure they include inclusive and approachable benefits, events, and resources to give everyone the flexibility to chart their own course.

## **Bland & Associates, P.C.**

This year, with women accounting for 44% of the firm's partners and principals, Bland thinks differently about its people. With the ability to cross train within a smaller firm, women can try out different roles and practices without uprooting their families or disrupting their career track or earning progress.

## **BPM LLP**

As the national conversation about DEI continues to escalate, BPM is amplifying its advocacy based on its historical commitment, compelling metrics and leadership support. Recent combinations allow the Firm to further expand opportunities for women's development and advancement, positioning BPM as the employer of choice in the profession.

**Clark Nuber**

Six of Clark Nuber's major departments are led by women, their partner group and management committee have achieved gender parity, and women lead the pack at every level. Their thriving collaborative work environment – an element that gives employees (especially diverse employees) opportunities to rise faster and achieve key career goals in less time – is a huge part of their success.

**Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell, PC**

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell (CBM) embraces an intentional strategy of personal growth and learning which has attracted a slate of diverse recruits and female talent. The firm promotes work-life integration and has established a variety of employee resource initiatives yet continues to ask tough questions that lead to open and actionable conversations and change.

**Eide Bailly**

Eide Bailly continues to focus on creating a firm where women can advance to leadership. The firm recently launched two new ERGs and enhanced its executive coaching offering. Add that to their flexible partnership option, and you see why Eide Bailly continues to grow and thrive.

**James Moore & Co.**

A perennial standout among MOVE Project firms, James Moore has a pioneering spirit that doesn't let up, even when it is comfortably in the lead. James Moore has the numbers, the support, the vision, and the alignment to prove momentum for women in their firm.

**Johanson & Yau**

Johanson & Yau (JY) recently promoted its first female managing partner and is focused on uprooting entrenched barriers to help women make progress. Earlier this year, the firm's endowment funded its first scholarship with a local university to attract and support under-represented students entering the profession. JY is also planning to bolster its long-term benefit offerings, including paid leave options and access to expanded insurance coverage.

**Moss Adams**

Moss Adams is committed to creating opportunities and providing the necessary tools so everyone can advance and lead in the way that make the most sense for them. This is borne out by programs that support women and people of color, a culture that encourages innovation, and a process that measures progress, reports results, and insists upon firm and individual accountability.

**Rehmann LLC**

Rehmann continues to show the profession how to retain women with programs that address systemic, societal issues, including flexible leadership training and career pathing, caregiver and mental health supports, and pay equity policies. Embraced by employees, the firm's "whole person approach" is designed to fulfill its commitment to women and its promise to all stakeholders.

### **RoseRyan, a ZRG Company**

RoseRyan, a ZRG Company, takes great care to prove its commitment to career sustainability by offering skill-building opportunities and cross-functional experiences. From rebooting its Employee Engagement Team to increasing accessibility to leadership to its unique skip level leadership exercises, it is showing how to create a firm of the future.

### **Schellman**

Schellman fully embraces the concept of buy-in and places immense value on giving its people a voice in the process of developing, improving, or even ceasing initiatives. The firm's commitment to a 360° approach and radical transparency not only foster inclusivity but serve as the very pillars that underpin Schellman's success.

### **The Bonadio Group**

Recognizing the importance of enriching atmospheres of support, Bonadio has a partner in charge of remote teams, offers customized partnerships, and carefully monitors data trends concerning hours worked so they can right size imbalances. Their unwavering focus on personalized experiences reflects their understanding that diversity goes beyond simple representation; it encompasses the unique needs and aspirations of every individual within their firm.

## **The Best CPA Firms for Equity Leadership**

(In descending order of percentage of women partners & principals. To qualify, women must comprise at least 31% of a firm's partners and principals.)

### **73% KWC Certified Public Accountants**

With a built-in culture of mentorship and accountability, KWC is a stand-out firm with 73% women partners/principals. This is not an anomaly either, as the firm's pipeline of future leaders is stacked with promising women who are eager to take on added responsibility and nurture a growing slate of clients too.

### **61% Kerkering, Barberio & Co.**

Kerkering, Barberio & Co. ranks above all MOVE firms for its percentage of women at every professional level. Its renewed dedication to work-life balance solidifies its place at the top of its class.

### **57% BeachFleischman PLLC**

Women comprise 57% of BeachFleischman's principals, and 42% of its management committee, demonstrating the firm's commitment to creating a collaborative culture. Add in lower charge hours, remote career tracks, extensive coaching programs, and many employee resource groups, and you understand why retention is less of a problem here than at other firms.

**57% RoseRyan, a ZRG Company**

RoseRyan, a ZRG Company, takes great care to prove its commitment to career sustainability by offering skill-building opportunities and cross-functional experiences. From rebooting its Employee Engagement Team to increasing accessibility to leadership to its unique skip level leadership exercises, it is showing how to create a firm of the future.

**53% Abbott, Stringham & Lynch**

Abbott, Stringham and Lynch ranks among the upper echelon of MOVE firms for its percentage of female partners. The firm provides professional support across all levels, crafting a roadmap that shows how to encourage participation and bolster career trajectories for women and diverse talent.

**50% Clark Nuber**

Six of Clark Nuber's major departments are led by women, their partner group and management committee have achieved gender parity, and women lead the pack at every level. Their thriving collaborative work environment – an element that gives employees (especially diverse employees) opportunities to rise faster and achieve key career goals in less time – is a huge part of their success.

**48% James Moore & Co.**

A perennial standout among MOVE Project firms, James Moore has a pioneering spirit that doesn't let up, even when it is comfortably in the lead. James Moore has the numbers, the support, the vision, and the alignment to prove momentum for women in their firm.

**44% Bland & Associates, P.C.**

This year, with women accounting for 44% of the firm's partners and principals, Bland thinks differently about its people. With the ability to cross train within a smaller firm, women can try out different roles and practices without uprooting their families or disrupting their career track or earning progress.

**44% HBE LLP**

HBE has a talented pipeline of women employees, from new hires all the way to partners and principals. Its commitment to work-life balance has resulted in a positive culture and greater opportunities for all employees to succeed at their own pace and in line with their individual career goals.

**43% The Bonadio Group**

Recognizing the importance of enriching atmospheres of support, Bonadio has a partner in charge of remote teams, offers customized partnerships, and carefully monitors data trends concerning hours worked so they can right size imbalances. Their unwavering focus on personalized experiences reflects their understanding that diversity goes beyond simple representation; it encompasses the unique needs and aspirations of every individual within their firm.

### **43% MCM CPAs & Advisors LLP**

MCM is meeting people where they are this year with the understanding that “everyone has a season.” This realization has led to the development of additional career paths to support remote and part-time employees and an interesting new travel reward program for employees. (The firm recently merged in with Cherry Bekaert.)

### **43% Jones & Roth**

Jones and Roth boasts a longstanding and authentic commitment to women by offering individualized career paths, reducing charge hours, and ensuring that professional and personal goals align. The firm’s changes have brought momentum, and its talent base is currently comprised of more than 60% women.

### **42% Johanson & Yau**

Johanson & Yau (JY) recently promoted its first female managing partner and is focused on uprooting entrenched barriers to help women make progress. Earlier this year, the firm’s endowment funded its first scholarship with a local university to attract and support under-represented students entering the profession. JY is also planning to bolster its long-term benefit offerings, including paid leave options and access to expanded insurance coverage.

### **40% Councilor Buchanan & Mitchell, PC**

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell (CBM) embraces an intentional strategy of personal growth and learning which has attracted a slate of diverse recruits and female talent. The firm promotes work-life integration and has established a variety of employee resource initiatives yet continues to ask tough questions that lead to open and actionable conversations and change.

### **39% BerryDunn**

Under the leadership of its female CEO, BerryDunn has developed a diverse management team with women representing 39% of partners/principals, 50% of its leadership team and 60% of its board, building on its mission to invest in it is people and cultivate a culture where future leaders can thrive. The firm continuously assesses policies and procedures to ensure they include inclusive and approachable benefits, events, and resources to give everyone the flexibility to chart their own course.

### **37% Rehmann LLC**

Rehmann continues to show the profession how to retain women with programs that address systemic, societal issues, including flexible leadership training and career pathing, caregiver and mental health supports, and pay equity policies. Embraced by employees, the firm’s “whole person approach” is designed to fulfill its commitment to women and its promise to all stakeholders.

### **35% Frazier & Deeter**

Frazier & Deeter consistently retains women through the director level and has female representation among partners that exceeds the MOVE Project firm average. Boasting a

people and culture department of twelve, the firm is heavily investing in the infrastructure needed to innovate in ways that appeal to women and people of color.

### **31% Eide Bailly**

Eide Bailly continues to focus on creating a firm where women can advance to leadership. The firm recently launched two new ERGs and enhanced its executive coaching offering. Add that to their flexible partnership option, and you see why Eide Bailly continues to grow and thrive.

### **31% BPM LLP**

As the national conversation about DEI continues to escalate, BPM is amplifying its advocacy based on its historical commitment, compelling metrics and leadership support. Recent combinations allow the Firm to further expand opportunities for women's development and advancement, positioning BPM as the employer of choice in the profession.

## **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

The Accounting MOVE Project is the basis for two recognitions of excellence for women in the accounting and advisory profession, both awarded by the AFWA:

- *Best CPA Firms for Women:* To earn a spot on the list, an employer must have *both* a proportionate number of women at most or all levels of management *and* proven success with the MOVE factors. An employer cannot win by having a rich array of programs but few women in leadership. We believe that if a firm's MOVE factors are effective, it will have a healthy and growing proportion of women in its leadership pipeline.
- *Best CPA Firms for Equity Leadership:* This list recognizes firms with at least 31% women partners and principals, as roughly a third is the widely recognized "tipping point" or 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.

### **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 partners the Accounting and Financial Women’s Alliance, founding sponsor Moss Adams and supporting sponsor, SAPRO.

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 Project. See the archives of MOVE Project reports at <https://accountingmoveproject.com/archives/>.

## About the Accounting MOVE Project Partners



At Moss Adams, we believe in the power of possible. A business and personal advisory firm with more than 100 years of experience and 4,400 professionals across 30 markets, we work with clients to meet the rising challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. Discover how we can help you go where you want to be next. Upward. For more information, visit [www.mossadams.com](http://www.mossadams.com).



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## Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance

CONNECT • ADVANCE • LEAD

The Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance 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 more than 85 years, the organization has proudly upheld its mission to enable women in all accounting and related fields to achieve their full potential and to contribute to their profession. Visit <http://www.afwa.org/> for more information.



CPAacademy.org

CPAacademy.org offers an easy-to-use platform for knowledge sharing and idea exchange through the marketing and presenting of the most up-to-date educational content and developments important to the accounting profession. On CPAacademy.org, members have access to the highest quality webinar presentations by thought leaders in the profession. Visit <https://www.cpaacademy.org> to learn more.



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