



# **American Society of Women Accountants and American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants Announce 2012 Best Public Accounting Firms for Women**

*Best Firms Showcase Innovation in Advancing Women through Creative  
Community Service Strategies; Improved Retention;  
And Proven Return on Work-Life Programs*

May 21, 2012 --

The 2012 Accounting MOVE Project list of Best Public Accounting Firms for Women is drawn from the 29 firms that participated in the third cycle of this benchmarking project.

Firms were ranked on the range, depth and success of programs and workplace culture proven to remove barriers to women's success, especially at midlevel and above, and scored using the trademarked [MOVE parity scale](#). The MOVE methodology pivots on four factors – **M**oney, **O**pportunity, **V**ital supports for work/life and **E**ntrepreneurship -- proven to advance women in the workplace. In keeping with the 2012 Accounting MOVE Project theme of advancing women through strategic community service, this year's list also reflects innovation in blending professional development with philanthropy, thus creating a new mode for gaining partner-qualifying experience.

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These firms, in alphabetical order, are the 2012 Best Public Accounting Firms for Women:

**[Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP, Chicago, IL](#)**

Baker Tilly got more than it bargained for in several local mergers-- and was smart enough to keep thriving women's initiatives intact and growing. Fifty-five percent of all managers are women, providing more and more young associates with examples of diverse career paths at the firm. As firms of all sizes rediscover the power and promise of empowering local offices to tailor women's programs in terms that drive local business, Baker Tilly shows the way-- and ensures that the best local ideas are cross-pollinated firm-wide.

**[Hood & Strong, San Francisco, CA](#)**

Hood & Strong takes great pride in being a firm where young associates can learn and grow. As its 100th anniversary approaches, the firm continues to carefully log and plot out next steps in talent development for each young associate. The percentage of women in the leadership pipeline boasts a solid showing of women, averaging 50% or better at each level. It's a diverse pipeline, too: women of color comprise 67% of women managers.

**[J.H. Cohn LLP, New York, NY](#)**

Lateral networking is one way for women to rapidly expand their business contacts; J.H. Cohn has accelerated this proven practice by pairing its Professional Women's Program with other women's initiatives and hosting Executive Women's Forum sessions. This strategy has opened up a new range of opportunities for women at midlevel and above to network. The average duration of a woman's employment at J.H. Cohn has doubled since 2007, and J.H. Cohn has improved their communications strategies for their women's network, including newsletters for the firm's women as well as clients and contacts.

**[Johanson & Yau Accountancy Corporation, San Jose, CA](#)**

Johanson & Yau wins accolades for its diversity – approximately 50% of female employees are women of color. Attention to diversity is a central aspect of its long history, which also extends to its client base, and firm branding is focused on the business case for diversity. The firm boasts both 40% of the management committee and partners are women. Two-thirds of managers with potential opportunity for partnership are women, and their success has attracted new talent to join the firm. Best of all, human resources carefully benchmarks all new hires, as well as compensation/bonuses, to ensure equity at all levels.

**[Jones & Roth CPAs and Business Advisors, Eugene, OR](#)**

With over 50% women at the senior manager level, Jones & Roth has a better than average chance of retaining and promoting more women to partnership in the coming years. Its integrated performance review system was updated with a practice development metric tied to bonuses, so that each associate knows how to meet and exceed expectations. The "Coaches for Everyone" model ensures that conversations about personal success and FlexLife options are routine, and this results in fewer surprises, and more success stories to encourage younger associates.

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**Kerkering Barberio, Sarasota, FL**

Women comprise half of all partners, and 78% of all managers. Young accountants easily find role models with career paths that included flex options and career track part-time. The firm is careful and deliberate about its integrated pay for performance model, and metrics go far beyond the billable hour. Expectations are clear - and usually exceeded. Best of all, the firm has a strong focus on leadership development and provides staff members the training they need as they make the step up into management, as well the step up to partner.

**Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Company, LLP, Minneapolis, MN**

Lurie Besikof Lapidus is known for its support of women's entrepreneurship and all facets of women's leadership. Their positive branding is incorporated internally also-- women comprise 56% of firm professionals and 20% of the management committee, including the managing partner. The foundation for these successful initiatives is a continuous commitment to best practices and innovation in terms of client service and employee engagement. These achievements are only a springboard for the future and not an end point.

**Moss Adams LLP, Seattle, WA**

As Forum\_W, the Moss Adams culture change effort, moves the needle on advancing women to partner, the second generation of leadership is taking the reins. The firm saw an uptick in female senior managers (41%) and women now comprise 20% of its management committee. That means more responsibility for programs and results based in local offices - and more opportunities for women at all levels. Moss Adams also overhauled its communications efforts, to ensure that both employees and clients are aware of successful programs.

**Plante Moran, Southfield, MI**

For larger firms, it is worth celebrating when more women are found at each level of the pipeline, especially a modest gain in women partners to 18%. But Plante Moran is impatient to see more progress, and vows to be even more intentional. It is concentrating resources on the three years preceding partnership, delving into dynamics, programs and practices to remove barriers to that final stretch.

**Rothstein Kass & Co., Roseland, NJ**

By undertaking needed research in the male-dominated field of Alternative Investments, Rothstein Kass proved the power of women marketing to women, even in a specialized financial category. The report created a thought leadership platform for women partners-- and got the whole industry talking about Rothstein Kass' culture and programs for women. In part due to an increased focus on empowering women in the workplace, Rothstein Kass has seen the percentage of women in its upper middle management ranks has increase 10% in the past year.

**About the 2012 Accounting MOVE Project**

The Best Firms were among the 29 that participated in the 2012 Accounting MOVE Project. Through the project and its sponsoring associations, the American Society of Women Accountants and the American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants, the profession can consistently measure the status of women and collaborate on proven and promising practices that advance and retain women.

The 2012 report of the Accounting MOVE Project was made possible by charter sponsor Moss Adams LLP and Rothstein Kass & Co. The Accounting MOVE Project research partner is Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., which has been measuring and supporting the advancement of women since 1998.

"Golf isn't the only way develop a book of business. The Best Public Accounting Firms for Women show how to infuse professional development with a greater purpose, so that women can grow their careers and their communities at the same time," said Joanne Cleaver, Wilson-Taylor president.

Registration for the 2013 cycle of the Accounting MOVE Project opens in October 2012. Please visit [www.wilson-taylorassoc.com](http://www.wilson-taylorassoc.com) for additional information about Wilson-Taylor projects, reports and tools for advancing women.

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### ***MEDIA CONTACTS***

Andy Schwarz  
Director of  
Public Relations  
American Society  
of Women Accountants  
703-556-7160  
[aschwarz@aswa.org](mailto:aschwarz@aswa.org)

Kimberly A. Fantaci  
Executive Director  
American Woman's Society  
of CPA's  
800.AWSCPA1  
M: 937-313-1337  
[info@awscpa.org](mailto:info@awscpa.org)

Joanne Cleaver  
President  
Wilson-Taylor Associates  
414.395.6876  
M: 414.232.3181  
[jycleaver@wilson-taylorassoc.com](mailto:jycleaver@wilson-taylorassoc.com)

