PUBLIC ACCOUNTING REPORT

Wolters Kluwer CCH

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In This Issue

Five Steps Can Help Firms Boost Their Profitability

Profile, scale, enforce, benchmark and manage.

Public accounting firms are increasingly attentive to profitability in today's economic conditions—not just because they want to enjoy the results, but because they are mindful of achieving the right value when they retire, sell or merge.

Consultant Ira Rosenbloom, CEO of Optimum Strategies, based in West Caldwell, N.J., recommended the following five steps to boost firmwide profitability:

- profile your business;
- scale your practice;
- enforce engagement restrictions;
- benchmark all referrals; and
- manage the metrics.

Who Is The Ideal Client?

Firms should take the time to determine the "model client" for their practice, Rosenbloom said.

See **FIVE STEPS**, page 5

Women Move Steadily To Partnership At Firms That Track The Metrics

Keys to retention include transparency, accountability.

Measure, evolve, repeat.

That's how public accounting firms accelerate the advancement of women and develop them into partnership.

The MOVE Project proved that fact through its 2013 benchmarking and analysis of best practices of accounting firms that most successfully retain and advance women. (*See EXTRA! Enclosed with this issue.*)

Women account for 19% of partners at the 37 firms participating in the MOVE Project this year, up from 17% in prior years. Women account for 27% of management committee members at the 10 firms with at least 800 employees that participated in the project in each of the past three years. In the 2011 MOVE Project cycle, women accounted for 16% of management committee members at those same firms.

Women are rising faster at those firms too, accounting for 42% of senior managers, up from 38% in 2011.

The MOVE Project is an annual research project that measures and supports the advancement of women in public accounting. It is designed and managed by communication consultancy Wilson-Taylor Assoc. of Chicago, with the support of founding sponsor Seattle-based **Moss Adams** and national sponsor **Rothstein Kass**, based in Roseland, N.J., and in partnership with the **Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance** (AFWA) and the **American Woman's Society of CPAs** (AWSCPA). *PAR* is The Move Project's exclusive media partner. *PAR* neither provided nor received revenue associated with the survey.

See **WOMEN**, page 3

Baker Tilly Virchow Krause Takes The Long Road To The Big Apple

HRR deal provides launching pad for global growth and specialization.

After years of patiently waiting to merge with just the right New York firm, Chicago-based **Baker Tilly Virchow Krause** unites with **Holtz Rubenstein Reminick** on June 1, creating a firm with more than $300 million in net revenue and serious muscle in the nation's two foremost financial capitals, with vast potential to springboard into a global powerhouse.

BTVK (FY12 net revenue: $259 million) has long kept a New York deal in its strategic crosshairs and has discussed combinations with a long list of Big Apple prospects over the years, but its leadership held out for the right firm that best met its strategic agenda.

"We're very selective. We've looked at a lot of New York firms, but we have a specific strategy, and part of that is being appropriately patient for the right firm," BTVK Chairman and CEO Tim Christen told *PAR*. "We're very globally focused, and New York is a global gateway. A Manhattan location is essential." The combined firm retains the Baker Tilly Virchow Krause name, and all 26 HRR partners become BTVK partners.

The combination with HRR (FY12 net revenue: $33.5 million) helps position BTVK for strategic "lift-outs"—the ability to cherry-pick select specialties, niches, skills sets and talents.

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PAR News Digest

International accounting firms, associations and networks increasingly are severing their Iranian affiliations after coming under pressure from an activist group committed to preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Grant Thornton, **RSM**, **Crowe Horwath** and **Nexia International** recently agreed to discontinue their relationships with Iranian firms at the behest of New York-based United Against Nuclear Iran. Nexia withdrew the membership of Iran's **Behrad Moshar CPAs** this month, following the lead of GT, which severed its ties with Iranian firm **Rymand & Co.**; RSM, which dropped **Dayarayan Auditing & Financial Services**; and Crowe Horwath, which ended its relationship with **Hoshiyar/Behmand & Co.** The Big Four terminated their Iranian affiliations in 2010. UANI renewed its efforts in March to target international accounting networks and associations that affiliate with Iranian firms. "At a time when the international community is working to economically isolate Iran in response to the regime's illicit nuclear activities, the provision of accounting, auditing and other professional services by these accounting networks and associations is a boon to the Iranian economy and facilitates international commerce in Iran, often by creating a veneer of credibility and transparency that encourages foreign investment," said a statement by UANI, which launched a similar and successful campaign against the Big Four's Iranian affiliations in 2010. UANI objects to the international accounting community benefitting Iranian affiliates with their associated prestige, training, multinational business opportunities, global expertise, access to referral networks and specialized technical resources. "The presence of these branded accounting firms in Iran also lends a sense of security to multinational businesses that partner with Iranian entities and masks the serious fiduciary and reputational risks that most responsible businesses would otherwise refuse to accept. These Iranian accounting firms also commonly provide services for the Iranian government, blacklisted Iranian entities and firms in Iran's sanctioned oil and gas sector," the UANI statement said. Still on UANI's hit list at press time: **Moore Stephens International**, **HLB International**, **AGN International** and **IAPA**. UANI was founded in 2008 by former UN Ambassador Mark D. Wallace, the late UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, former CIA Director Jim Woolsey and Middle East expert and former diplomat Dennis Ross.

Another high-level Clifton Gunderson alum is exiting CliftonLarsonAllen on the heels of its co-CEO. Wisconsin Managing Partner Mark Williams announced his Dec. 31 retirement shortly after co-CEO **Krista McMasters** announced her plans to leave the firm. (*See PAR, March 2013.*) A new Wisconsin managing partner hasn't been named yet. Williams and McMasters are veterans of legacy firm CG, which was based in Milwaukee. Williams is also partner-in-charge of southern Wisconsin; Todd Craft will succeed him in that role, overseeing operations in Milwaukee, Madison, Racine and Sheboygan, reports *The Milwaukee Business Journal*. McMasters left earlier this month after the firm decided to eliminate its co-CEO leadership model. Gordy Viere, a **LarsonAllen** alum, remains as the firm's sole CEO. Williams joined CG in 2004 after 30 years with **Ernst & Young**. "The story to watch on this combination is one of culture," wrote Jim Hammerand in the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*. "LarsonAllen had a reputation as an entrepreneurial accounting firm, while Clifton Gunderson's legacy firm was more formal. If there is a cross-border power struggle, Minnesota appears to be winning." CG and LA combined in early 2012. CLA had FY12 net revenue of approximately $569.2 million.

New York-based Marcum LLP merged in Cornerstone Accounting Group, a boutique firm that specializes in institutional real estate. *PAR* estimates that the deal adds approximately $15 million to Marcum's net revenue, which was approximately $276 million in FY12. "This is a boutique practice in a niche we wanted to expand," Marcum Managing Partner Jeffrey M. Weiner told *PAR*. "This firm brings national and international clients and a stellar client list," including private equity funds, hedge funds, real estate investment trusts, pension advisors and private real estate companies. "Real estate is one of the niches we've identified for growth, and Cornerstone practices this specialty at the highest level. They were interested in joining us because they now have a deeper bench, a national footprint and can service clients in most major cities since we have offices there," Weiner said. Cornerstone's five partners and 75 staff joined Marcum, and Cornerstone Managing Partner Daniel Vitulli became national leader of Marcum's real estate industry group. Vitulli also joined Marcum's executive committee. Marcum is expected to announce "several more" combinations by the end of the year, Weiner said. "We're looking at boutique practices to increase depth in certain practices, geographic mass for critical markets and practices that can help us bolster existing offices," he told *PAR*. Cornerstone partners and staff didn't have to move far: before the combination, the firm was located in the same building as Marcum's Manhattan office.

The Bonadio Group (FY13 net revenue: approximately $55.3 million), based in Pittsford, N.Y., expanded beyond the Empire State's borders with the acquisition of Independent Audit Associates of Rutland, Vt. The deal adds strength in financial institution internal audit, adds 14 new banking clients and helps the firm launch a new internal audit team, led by Principal Thomas Giglio. The deal brings six new professionals to Bonadio in addition to the Vermont office. The Bonadio Group's internal audit team will be headquartered at the firm's Syracuse, N.Y. office and is projected to have annual billings of more than $1.2 million as a result of the acquisition. CEO and Managing Partner Thomas Bonadio expects the internal audit team to grow its revenue by 10% to 15% over the next few years. The acquisition is the second for The Bonadio Group in the last few months. The firm established an office location in Utica, N.Y., in late 2012 when it acquired the practice of **Richard Zweifel**. The firm now has more than 380 employees and offices in the New York cities of Albany, Rochester, Buffalo, Perry, Geneva, Syracuse and Utica, as well as a Wall Street location.

Two veteran Top 100 accounting firm executives transitioned leadership of their firms to successors in the last few weeks. Robert M. Littman became CEO of Cleveland-based **SS&G** (FY12 net revenue: approximately $79 million) after a 16-month transition, succeeding long-time CEO Gary Shamis. Shamis, who led the firm since 1986, remains president and continues to serve on the firm's executive and finance committees. He will focus on growth and strategic initiatives. Littman joined SS&G as a manager in 1985 and has co-led the firm's Akron, Ohio, office since 1990. He has also served on the firm's executive, finance and personnel committees. **Kennedy and Coe** (FY12 net revenue: approximately $32 million), based in Salina, Kan., named Jeff Wald as CEO, succeeding veteran leader Kurt Siemers, who retired March 31 after 42 years with the firm. Wald is based in the firm's Loveland, Colo., office. He joined the firm's management board in 2009, and before taking the CEO role, headed the Kennedy and Coe Wealth Creation Group. He joined the firm in 1995. ■

Five 'Cultural Cs' Play Key Role In Keeping Women

The following practices are proven to accelerate the advancement of women at firms that participate in the Accounting MOVE Project, research shows. They include:

- compelling business models that integrate the advancement of women with firm growth strategy;
- clear priorities regarding work-life balance as a mode of retaining women and clients;
- consistent measurements for identifying and developing rising women;
- coaching and accountability for managers at all levels to ensure that well-intended policies are translated into culture-shifting practices; and
- communication training and support to ensure firm leaders understand and effectively use messaging and can frame constructive conversations with rising women.

The complete 2013 Accounting MOVE Project executive report is available at the *www.wilson-taylorassoc.com*.■

Women, *continued from page 1*

Keys: Accountability, Transparency

What are firms that succeed at retaining their talented women doing that other firms are not? After all, women's initiatives and work-life programs are nothing new at public accounting firms. Nearly all firms have some sort of remote work policy, according to the 2013 Accounting MOVE Project, and the profession universally laments the evaporation of women from its partnership pipeline.

Accountability and transparency make the difference.

Many young women quietly discard their ambitions for public accounting careers before firm leaders have an inkling that anything is awry. Leadership often believes that high-potential women are right on track for partnership and are shocked when those same high-potential women hand in their resignations.

*See **WOMEN**, page 6*

Tim Christen

Barry Garfield

Allan D. Koltin

Baker Tilly, *continued from page 1*

"Our intention is for this to be our flagship in New York and to build off that to do additional mergers or lift-outs," Christen told *PAR*.

BTVK isn't looking to fold in smaller general practices through tuck-ins. Instead, it's looking for specialty expertise that can deepen its existing services.

"We're looking to find smaller groups of expertise in larger firms," Christen told *PAR*.

For example, "We could lift out just the real estate practice" of an existing firm, said Barry Garfield, managing partner of HRR, who becomes regional MP for BTVK's New York region.

"Our philosophy would be to honor the terms of any nonsolicitation agreements and compensate the firms where applicable," Christen said, adding, "We're not the only firm that's attracting talent that moves from one firm to another."

Plans call for growing the New York practice to 500 employees from the approximately 200 now there, Garfield said—including those from BTVK's existing New York office, which almost exclusively offered cloud consulting services. Those employees will move into HRR's office at One Penn Plaza, which will headquarter BTVK's New York offices. HRR also has an office in Melville, N.Y.

Garfield pointed out that his New York firm brings the Chicago-based giant not only the coveted New York location, but some new practice areas as well, most notably a national higher education practice that includes Ivy League clients, a robust not-for-profit practice, a deep fraud and forensics group and a sophisticated financial services practice.

Garfield's group in New York will help the BTVK specialists build out their strengths in New York. Early efforts will concentrate on real estate, construction, international taxation and institutional financial services such as banks, hedge funds, broker-dealers, insurance and private equity.

Intensified globalization is another primary strategic reason for BTVK's decision to merge with HRR, Christen said.

"Global reach is one of the key motives for the deal," he told *PAR*. "There are only a few firms that have global brands, where you can find them in Moscow, Munich or Milwaukee: the Big Four, Grant Thornton, BDO, Baker Tilly, Crowe Horwath, and potentially Mazars and McGladrey," Christen said. "So with New York, we were looking for firms that can execute our strategy of deep specialization, being an employer of choice and seen by clients as a valued advisor. That's part of our evaluation in any deal: Do they have the capability to execute this strategy and the clientele to support it?"

BTVK aims to be in the top 20 U.S. cities eventually, Christen added.

"Currently, we'd like to increase size in the major markets we're in, like New York, Chicago and Detroit, and from a strategy review standpoint, Texas and California seem to be the most attractive next markets. But if conversations began with another major market, we'd consider that. We'd go back to what are we trying to accomplish as a firm," Christen said.

BTVK intends to move forward with additional mergers and acquisitions. Garfield will

See **BAKER TILLY**, page 5

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By The Numbers: Baker Tilly Virchow Krause/Holtz Rubenstein Reminick

FYE	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Baker Tilly Virchow Krause									
Net Revenue ($mil)	136.3	150.4	182.2	202.1	216.0	207.2	238.0	242.0	259.0
Holtz Rubenstein Reminick									
Net Revenue ($mil)	23.2	25.4	29.7	33.1	38.3	35.9	34.5	34.7	33.5
Source: *PAR* research									

Baker Tilly, *continued from page 4*

oversee expansion into lower Connecticut, parts of New Jersey and all of New York state.

Criteria for merger candidates under serious consideration include "great culture, strong reputation, technical excellence and interest in specialization and globalization," Christen said.

Ideal merger candidates also have offices that are significant in size.

"We have a general aversion to smaller offices because it's more difficult to execute strategy from them, and we have a global mindset," Christen said. "We're a firm working a strategy that differentiates us from the other 45,000 firms."

HRR had enviable profit per partner, an excellent succession system and strong growth, noted Consultant Allan D. Koltin, CEO of Chicago-based Koltin Consulting Group, who consulted on the deal.

"HRR didn't have to merge, but its leaders did notice that in the New York market, being bigger had its privileges: it provides better access to talent and more sophisticated clients. HRR's partners are very entrepreneurial and could see the benefits," Koltin said. "The firm had been approached by at least 10 other firms because of its location and high profitability."

Meanwhile, BTVK spent four or five years looking for the right New York merger candidate, "and to their credit, they waited until they got it right," Koltin said.

BTVK's "big criteria were a high-achieving, highly accountable, performance-based culture and a willingness to invest profits today in HR, marketing, culture and specialized services—and to have a vision for the New York practice," Koltin said. "Because BTVK is the leading firm for Baker Tilly International, it was critical for the New York firm to be significant in terms of critical mass, so immediately there were only 10 to 15 firms that could even be considered: those with $30 million or more in annual revenue—but the right firm also needed to want to go after larger clients and grow the practice."

BTVK did have lengthy discussions with two other firms, but one had a different culture, and the other had a different philosophy about client strategy.

HRR's strengths in real estate, construction, hedge funds, broker-dealers and private equity enable it to sail upstream immediately with this deal because BTVK has complementary strengths.

"Literally the day after closing, this deal allows HRR to climb upstream immediately in terms of going after bigger clients," Koltin said. "HRR can walk out and pursue clients they probably couldn't get in front of in the past."

Christen's patience leaves Koltin especially impressed and excited about this deal.

"Four or five years ago, Tim Christen took a very successful Midwestern firm and could have done very well, but he dared to be different. He led his partners to literally transform from a Midwestern firm into a global firm and had the staying power to wait until they got it right.

"He went out and spent several million dollars off the bottom line [on branding and globalization]. He did that at a time when firms were hurting with the worst recession of our time. Talk about traits of great leadership! He watched other firms come into the New York market by merging with firms he probably took a pass on. You've got to put a check by his name as one of the great thought leaders and executors of this industry," Koltin said. ■

Five Steps, *continued from page 1*

"Each firm brings together varying skills and preferences for client service, and as a result, the model client will not be the same from one firm to another," he noted. "The definition should primarily be a function of the services you either like to provide or have the best ability to provide."

Be as specific and descriptive as possible about the client, Rosenbloom advised. Is it a closely held enterprise? A global or niche-based business? Also, specify sales volume parameters and operating history attributes for the model client, and determine a fee level given the services and value that the firm is providing.

"Once you know your ideal client, you are in the best position to gear up your organization with people and technology to efficiently and effectively service the clientele you select," Rosenbloom said. "Furthermore, you will be able to contour your marketing and business development efforts more finitely." The better a referral source clearly understands the firm's ideal client, the more productive that referral source can be, he added.

The same holds true for prospects.

"The better you define yourself in the market, the easier it will be for potential clients to understand your concentration and react accordingly. Definition yields efficiency, as well as economies of reaction time and performance," Rosenbloom noted.

"The more narrow your definition, the more specialization will come and the greater the value your service will be to potential clients, existing clients and employees. Heightened value of your services will result in higher profit and longevity," he said.

Scale Practice For Service Expansion

Expanding the service connection with clients leads to greater loyalty, heightened satisfaction and top- and bottom-line growth. Determining the potential for expanded services and the ability to provide the right degree of increase is the core of scaling the practice, said Rosenbloom.

"Start by creating a roster of services that you deliver and the clients who receive them. Then, make a list of clients for whom services can be expanded," Rosenbloom advised. "Quantify the amount of new fees available if you successfully increase service to clients. The goal is not to maximize the number of clients, but to have clients getting the maximum service."

Set a practical goal, he added. It may not be realistic to expect 100% of clients to access all services, but generally, half of your clients using half of your services is realistic.

Conduct a scaling effort at least annually, and keep an eye toward developing new services that potential demand may justify, Rosenbloom recommended.

Track Budgets And Referrals

The threshold for budgeting engagements should consider common clients and the next tiers both above and below them, said Rosenbloom. Insert the budgets into each client's module in the time and billing system to automate tracking actual-to-budget so variances can be handled in real time.

"Depending on your package, you may have the ability to lock down an account when a percentage of the budget has been reached that is beyond the percentage of completion," Rosenbloom noted. "If you have no lock-down mechanism through your package, have a report issued when accounts hit the 50% and 75% levels so that a decision can be made about continuing or approaching the client." Have a lockout

*See **FIVE STEPS**, page 6*

Ira Rosenbloom

Five Steps, *continued from page 5*

when the client is behind in payment beyond a standard set by the firm, he advised.

Be sure that the firm is seeing return on investment of time spent cultivating and maintaining strong referral sources, Rosenbloom added.

"When cultivating referral sources other than existing clients, the time has to produce the right reward. Certain sources are better than others, and accepting less than they are capable of will impair the return on time invested," he said.

Time spent on underperforming referral sources also adds pressure to create additional referral sources. To every degree possible, evaluate each referral source's potential, the source's referral history and the nature of the competition for the referral, Rosenbloom recommended. Set targets each year for either the number of opportunities or the dollar level for each referral source, and work toward exceeding the goal.

Measure Key Indicators

Every accounting firm should focus on performance indicators, Rosenbloom insisted.

"Traditional metrics such as billing, collections, realization and utilization are valuable and should be part of a dashboard that is available easily—at minimum to the leadership of the firm, and at best, to all of the players," he said.

Also measure productivity per hour, Rosenbloom advised. This metric "is a must to target, monitor and achieve," he said. "All too many firms get hung up on their realization percentage and not on the effective hourly charge and collection rates."

When budgeting the firm's finances, target a total net profit for the owners and relate that to the number of performance hours to come to a target charge-hour rate, Rosenbloom added.

For example, if your net profit was 40% and leadership wanted a profit for the partners of $1 million with optimally 10,000 charge hours generated from the firm's timekeepers, an average rate of $250 per hour would be needed to hit the target, he noted. In a value-driven billing structure, the value-added or adjusted features would affect the average rates, as well.

"In a firm with multiple areas of specialty, you would have different rates for each department, but overall, the goal would be for the full firm to come in at that net profit target," he said. ■

Women, *continued from page 3*

"What the heck went wrong?" the leaders wonder when the women resign.

This year, the MOVE Project closely examined the factors that women senior staff and managers consider when they debate whether to stick with a career at a public accounting firm or transition to industry or entrepreneurship.

It found that the main reason why women abandon ambitions to become accounting firm partners is because they doubt they can manage the perceived workload at the level of excellence that propelled their current success.

When the 2013 MOVE Project asked high-potential women why they left their accounting firms, the following reasons emerged:

- 57%—"I could not reconcile ambitions for personal/family life with what it takes to achieve partner."
- 22%—"The established path to partner in that firm was not a path I would or could follow."
- 19%—"There is a lack of female role models at my firm."
- 17%—"I lacked the business development skills to become a partner at my firm."

During the autumn of 2012, the MOVE team—in collaboration with AFWA and AWSCPA—surveyed 440 young women working in public accounting firms. The team also conducted in-depth interviews with more than four dozen women at all points in their careers, based partly on their survey responses and partly on ongoing discussions with leaders of women's initiatives and women partners. Interviews concentrated on the deci-

See ***WOMEN***, *page 7*

Women, *continued from page 6*

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

Public Accounting Report

Women In The Pipeline At All Participating Firms

Source: The 2013 MOVE Project

sion factors and career consequences for those sticking with public accounting.

According to the individual surveys, women believe that firm leaders can retain more women long enough to move them into partnership if they follow these five recommendations:

- Neutralize work-life conflicts.
- Amplify the authority and efficacy of women role models.
- Build out programs that equip women with business development skills.
- Evolve firm culture to remove subtle barriers.
- Communicate opportunities and career paths more consistently and clearly.

Are Charge Hours A Barrier?

Rising and established women leaders told MOVE researchers that firms' goals for workplace flexibility and retaining women often are undermined by an immutable focus on billable hours. Programs are announced with great optimism, then are eroded by deadline- and billing-driven decisions made by line managers. Leaders make sweeping statements about their firms' commitment to advancing women, but those ambitions often are out of touch with the daily conflicts of work, life and career goals held by women, working parents and millennials.

The MOVE Project shows how advancing women actually drives firm growth and supports succession planning. Instead of repeating the launch-fail cycle, the practices outlined by MOVE merge the aspirations of firms, women and the next generation of CPAs.

Transparency is one silver bullet used by MOVE firms that are making the most progress in advancing women. For example, **The Bonadio Group**, based in Pittsford, N.Y. (FY12 net revenue: approximately $55.3 million), is among the MOVE Project participants that share insights about the range of potential partner compensation, so young accountants understand the payoff at the end of the pipeline.

Increasingly, firms are asking everyone to share responsibility and credit for advancing women. **Moss Adams** (FY12 net revenue: $344 million) is using an integrated initiative to change culture and boost career coaching—a technique that is pumping its pipeline of women into partnership at an accelerated rate. For **Rothstein Kass** (FY12 net revenue: $185 million), concentrated professional development is paying off as rising women are increasingly winning new clients.

Other MOVE Project participants are forging paths to show they're serious about advancing women.

Chicago-based **Baker Tilly Virchow Krause** (FY12 net revenue: $259 million) continually audits pay levels to ensure that women are paid equitably, building employee trust in the process. Firms like New York-based **CohnReznick** (FY13 net revenue: $488 million) and Minneapolis-based **CliftonLarsonAllen** (FY12 net revenue: $568 million) have developed in-house programs to ensure women at their firms are on an even playing field for career advancement. Minneapolis-based **Lurie, Besikof Lapidus & Co.** (FY12 net revenue: $26 million) blends career and business development into work/life fit discussions.

Participants profiled in MOVE Project reports say clients tell them that they want to work with accounting firms that share their commitment to diversity. For example, **Plante Moran**, based in Southfield, Mich. (FY 12 net revenue: $331 million), knows that it wins new clients when pitches are presented by ethnically diverse groups of mixed gender.

While the MOVE Project is setting the standard for the profession, the Big Four as a whole have declined to participate. (Some regional offices have informally participated because they want the feedback and benchmarking reports provided to MOVE participants.)

The MOVE Project takes an annual in-depth look at the opportunities and obstacles for women in the public accounting profession. Each firm contributes a modest administrative fee, which covers the cost of collecting and fact-checking data, and each firm receives a confidential benchmarking snapshot.

Data from The MOVE Project is used by consultants when making their recommendations and assisting with creation of strategic plans, and academics use MOVE for class assignments.

The MOVE Project zeroes in on the factors proven to advance women and challenges firms to become more transparent and accountable in how their well-intentioned policies actually translate to culture and practices. More than just a "best list," the project uses the most current research on diversity with experienced analysts to interview and understand the best HR practices across the profession. ■

PEOPLE, FIRMS, AND PROMOTIONS

BKR International admitted **Abou Nasr and Associates** into membership. The firm has offices in Iraq and Lebanon.

CohnReznick named **Bill Riley** to lead its Northeast Region Affordable Housing Practice. He relocated to New York to take the position. Previously, he was co-managing principal in the Baltimore office and led the Mid-Atlantic Region's New York and New Jersey Affordable Housing initiatives. **John Corsaro** and **Rose Ann Slawson** were named co-managing partners of the firm's Central Jersey Office. They are based in Eatontown, N.J. **Jarrett Bluth** (tax) and **Swami Venkat** (CohnReznick Advisory Group) were elected to partnership. Both are based in Roseland, N.J. **Marc Staut** was elected principal and named CIO. He is based in Bethesda, Md.

Chicago-based **Crowe Horwath** named **Doug Schrock** managing partner of the manufacturing and distribution group. He is based in New York. **Joe Macina** joined Crowe as an audit services partner in New York. He was previously a partner with **KPMG**. **Todd Welu** joined Crowe as the firm's CFO. He also leads and manages the firm's financial services group and is based in Oak Brook, Ill. The following were named directors at the firm: **Tom DeMetrovich**, tax, based in Dallas; **Sean Duffy**, tax, based in Fort Wayne, Ind.; **Steve Lalor**, tax, based in New York; **Duane Lisowski**, performance consulting, based in Chicago; and **Andrew Schweik**, risk consulting, based in Oak Brook.

Grant Thornton named **Vince Tomkinson** as the new office managing partner of its Chicago practice. Most recently, Tomkinson served as GT's Detroit OMP. Tomkinson succeeds **Mike Hall**, who has been the Chicago OMP since 1998. Hall will continue to serve as Midwest region managing partner. **Amy Roberts** was named leader of the Minneapolis tax practice. She has been interim Minneapolis tax co-practice leader, along with **Dan Bartholet**, since late 2011 and has been the Minneapolis Federal Tax practice leader for five years. Bartholet will continue to lead the Minneapolis SALT and SALT Health Care practices. **Joshua Bushard** was named leader of the firm's Minneapolis audit practice.

Los Angeles-based **Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt** named two new partners: **Hans Gustafsson**, who specializes in tax consulting and compliance services and is based Pasadena, Calif.; and **Morris Zlotowitz**, who specializes in the real estate sector and is based in West Los Angeles. In addition, the firm opened a new office in Fort Worth, Texas, giving it a total of eight offices.

Patrick J. Donoghue joined **Marcum LLP** of New York as a partner. Donoghue heads the Advisory Services practice in the firm's New York headquarters. Previously, Donoghue was senior managing director at FTI Consulting, Inc., and led the New York Transaction Advisory and Valuation Services Group. He is a former **Arthur Andersen** partner and a **PwC** alumnus. **Marge Filippelli** was named partner-in-charge of the Roseland, N.J. office. Her appointment follows firm's merger with Cornerstone Accounting Group. (*See related story, page 3*.)

PKF International appointed **Sajjad Akhtar** as its new chairman. He is managing partner of PKF-CAP LLP, Singapore and chairman of the PKFI Asia-Pacific Board. Sajjad succeeds **Wolfgang Hofmann** who stepped down in March. PKF International appointed **John Sim** as CEO. Sim is former regional executive partner for **KPMG Asia Pacific**. Sim also worked extensively in the U.S. In addition, **Littlejohn** was admitted as a new UK member. The firm is based in the Canary Wharf area of London.

Washington-based **Raffa** admitted **Dan Maffey** to partnership, giving the firm a total of 16 partners. He joined the firm in 2008 and works in the accounting services practice.

WeiserMazars, based in New York, appointed **Kenneth M. Fischer** as the new partner-in-charge of its healthcare group. He succeeds **Lawrence P. Cafasso**, who stepped down after leading the group for seven years. The firm named **Vincent Burke** as its new partner-in-charge of the Philadelphia office. He succeeds **Kathryn A. Byrne**, who oversaw the successful integration of the Philadelphia-area firms **Fishbein & Co.** and **LECG/Smart** into WeiserMazars, as well as the move to the firm's new, expanded offices in Fort Washington, Pa. She transitions into new responsibilities in New York, Philadelphia and internationally. **Ron Ries** joined the firm as a partner in its Not-for-Profit Group. Most recently, Ries served as CFO at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. In addition, WeiserMazars appointed **Mahmoud Abdallah** as a senior advisor in its consulting practice. He is the former chairman and CEO of MISR Insurance Holding Co. and executive vice president of American Re Group. ■