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**Promotions, Plateaus and Possibilities:  
Context; Coaching; and Cohort Networks Keep  
Careers on Track**

*2019 Best CPA Firms for Women and 2019 Best CPA Firms for  
Equity Leadership Show How Investing in Women Is Investing in  
Firms*

Lexington, KY, June 6 2019 --

The [2019 Accounting MOVE Project](#) will delve into the perceptions and misperceptions that women and firms have about how and why women pursue partnership and other senior leadership positions. The report will also outline tactics that women, advocates for women, and firm

leaders can take to ensure that all women CPAs can fully achieve their aspirations for their careers and drive firm growth in the process.

Highlights of the findings include:

- *Peer Power:* Women's peer networks are both horizontal and tend to be powerful retention factors. By comparison, men's peer networks tend to be vertical and transactional. Leading MOVE firms shape women's initiatives to make the most of how women organically cultivate networks.
- *Piecing the Future:* Women plot their expectations based on what they observe and experience. Firms that show women the benefits of partnership and that build confidence and results with early business development wins seed ambition for partnership.
- *Intervention Builds Retention:* Women don't want to choose between coasting and quitting. Firms strengthen retention by cultivating multiple paths to senior positions, and by working with women before they reach the point of no return.

"Firms of all sizes are engineering new ways for women to excel. And when women excel, firms win new clients and grow their relationships with existing clients," said Joanne Cleaver, President of Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., the content strategy firm that manages the Accounting MOVE Project. "As well, the 2019 Accounting MOVE Project illustrates the power of re-investing in programs and culture proven to advance women. Firms that consistently participate in the Accounting MOVE Project promote more quickly. As a group, 28% of their partners and principals are women, ahead of even the high mark achievement this year of 27% women partners and principals, for all participating firms."

"The findings in the this year's report emphasize how important it is to be transparent about career paths and opportunities within your firm. Having those honest conversations strengthens relationships and really creates a sticky factor," said Jennifer Wyne, executive director of human resources for Moss Adams, founding sponsor of the Accounting MOVE Project.

"Midcareer coaching offers the greatest return for investment in women, and the greatest opportunity for firms to drive immediate and

long- term results from that investment. At CohnReznick, we are steadily capitalizing on the effects of retaining rising women,” said Risa Lavine, Principal and chief of staff at CohnReznick. CohnReznick is the national sponsor of the Accounting MOVE Project. “This year’s Accounting MOVE Project report shows strategies to help firms retool the pipeline.”

An executive summary of the 2019 Accounting MOVE Project is available at the [Accounting & Financial Women’s Alliance website](https://www.afwa.org/move-project/).  
<https://www.afwa.org/move-project/>

“This year’s MOVE Report is especially important to AFWA,” said Cindy Stanley, executive director for the Accounting & Financial Women’s Alliance (AFWA), the association partner for the Accounting MOVE Project. “As a women’s organization, we see first hand the value of a strong women’s network at all stages of the career pipeline. This year’s report shows that as women advance in their career they have fewer peers, and each peer becomes more valuable. From entry level to partner, women benefit greatly from the support and example of other women in their network. AFWA’s goal is help women connect, advance, and lead. The MOVE Project is important to us, as the report heightens awareness of the changes that are necessary for women to advance in this industry.”

Firms of all sizes are invited and encouraged to participate in the 2020 Accounting MOVE Project. Registration will open in August 2019 at [www.wilson-taylorassoc.com](http://www.wilson-taylorassoc.com). The MOVE Project is supported by founding sponsor Moss Adams, national sponsor CohnReznick, and administrative fees from participating firms. [Registration](#) for the Accounting MOVE Project will be open through December 20, 2019.

MOVE is making a real difference in the profession and has positioned CPA firms as innovators in the business world. Look no further than [MOVE mentions](#) in the *CPA Practice Advisor*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Financial Times*, *Parade* and other publications to see how MOVE Project firms are leading the national conversation about advancing women.

## ***2019 Accounting MOVE Project Best CPA Firms for Women***

*In alphabetical order*

### **The Bonadio Group/Pittsford, NY**

The Bonadio Group continues to maintain its focus on advancing women with 39% women partners and principals. The firm maintains a strong commitment to its mentoring programs that focus on professional growth areas.

### **BPM LLP/San Francisco**

Women with diverse backgrounds are opening new markets for BPM, parlaying their knowledge of culture and specialized technical expertise to rapidly build relationships with new clients. BPM provides three-dimensional support in the form of business development skills; budget for special programs; and plenty of scheduling flexibility that fosters rapid client relationships."

### **Brown Smith Wallace/St. Louis**

Brown Smith Wallace continues to create programs that engage and develop women at each stage in their career. To help balance workloads, the firm has found some creative solutions, including quiet time so employees can focus on completing projects.

### **Clark Nuber PS/Bellevue, WA**

Clark Nuber hires some of its interns as on-campus recruiters during the school year. The interns recruit and vet potential interns, which gives potential interns a first-hand perspective and gives the firm more opportunities to reach students.

### **CohnReznick/New York**

CohnReznick /Women compose a full third of CohnReznick's management committee. The firm stays a step ahead of national pay equity trends, proactively communicating its policies to all, and

advocates for gender-diverse slates of speakers at events in which it participates.

### **Eide Bailly/Fargo**

When Eide Bailly realized its pipeline had sprung a leak at the midlevel, it concentrated resources on a unique program that equips women with meeting facilitation skills. Because those skills build confidence in nearly all settings – from business development to one-on-one meetings – midlevel women gained traction..and stayed.

### **Elliott Davis, LLC/Greenville, SC**

Deliberate, strategic, flexible work practices are reshaping Elliot Davis career paths and advancement for women, even in its travel-intense audit practice. Taking cues from prior MOVE Project winners, the firm's initiatives for women are rapidly accelerating, office by office.

### **Lurie LLP/Minneapolis**

Women lead five lines of business at Lurie, demonstrating to all employees and to its business community that there are as many paths to leadership as there are women. 33.3% women partners & principals, for equity leadership list

### **MCM CPAs and Advisors/Louisville**

MCM CPAs and Advisors joins the small but growing number of firms with part-time partner tracks. This program ensures that women working reduced schedules continue to invest in long-term skills that qualify them for leadership.

### **Moss Adams /Seattle**

Moss Adams continues to see positive progress and momentum from its long-term commitment to Forum W, which is its effort to attract, develop, retain, and advance women. Women now represent 26% of the partnership and 33% of its executive committee.

### **Novogradac /San Francisco**

Nobody can argue with this firm's resourceful, entrepreneurial approach to setting partners up for success – not when 40% of its partners and principals are women and 33% of its management committee are, too.

### **OUM & Co./San Francisco**

OUM demonstrates how firms with fewer than 100 people can create robust programs that center around women and women in leadership. In the past year, the firm has invested and expanded its Women's Initiatives Network, which is powered by women, but inclusive to all; created customized leadership pathways; and instituted remote working policies so staff can manage their own schedules and time.

### **Plante Moran/Southfield, MI**

The firm continues to create programs and policies to help women forge meaningful peer relationships that serve as a support system through life stages that often threaten career momentum.

### **Rehmann/Troy, MI**

At Rehmann, career paths are customized for women. The firm is redoubling its investment in mid-level women by adding additional upper-level positions, such as subject matter experts that can be either career destinations or a step on the way to shareholder.

### ***2019 Accounting MOVE Project Best CPA Firms for Equity Leadership***

*In descending order of percentage of women partners and principals; firms also on the Best CPA Firms for Women indicated with an \*.*

**Kaiser Consulting/Columbus (Powell) OH** – 100% women on the management committee.

A unique business model synchronizes business growth with staff scheduling and professional aspirations, ensuring that the firm wins the work that staff want most to do.

**Kerkering, Barberio & Co** Kerkering, Barberio & Co. - 60%

Kerkering, Barberio & Co. has long had flexible work arrangements and found the main beneficiaries to have been women. The firm is majority female-owned, with three-quarters of its staff being women and nearly two-thirds of its top leaders serving as shareholders/partners at the firm.

**KWC /Alexandria, VA – 60%**

Women lead the audit practice, sparking innovation for the firm's other practices.

**RoseRyan/Newark, CA – 60%**

RoseRyan, whose employees work in seven states and in Malaysia, continually keeps its eyes on two goals: reasonable work/life balance for its people and outstanding work for clients. The firm was founded by two women in 1993.

**Abbott, Stringham & Lynch/San Jose, Calif. – 50%**

The snowball effect works, as proven by Abbott, Stringham & Lynch: Women are attracted to and trust firms where they see other women given positions of leadership and influence. ASL ensures that every staffer - not just managers and directors - has a mentor.

**Clark Nuber PS/Bellevue, WA - 50% \***

**James Moore & Co./Gainesville, FL – 50%**

James Moore & Co. has in Carol Villemaire its first managing partner who's a woman. That gender equity is reflected in its partners, which are half women, because of a focus on mentorship, career advising and a mindset of coming alongside its staff to help them thrive, no matter their career goal.

**Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell, P.C./Bethesda – 47.1%**

Newly appointed board chair Pat Drolet doesn't take anything for granted; the firm is ramping up diversity programs to stoke momentum.

**Jones & Roth/Eugene, OR – 46.2%**

A family focus and an emphasis on flex scheduling for all genders has helped buoy the number of women in leadership and on staff throughout Jones and Roth.

**HBE/Lincoln, NB – 45.5%**

Gender equity is ingrained in the firm's culture but partners are also intentional about long-range succession planning, creating a multigenerational pipeline of female and male partners to ensure seamless leadership transition.

**Johanson & Yau/ San Jose - 42.9%**

Revamped pay equity and compensation training has brought the topic into the open at J&Y, reassuring women that the firm has their backs.

**Novogradac/San Francisco – 40.4% \***

**The Bonadio Group/ Pittsford, NY - 39%\***

**Hood & Strong/San Francisco - 37.7%**

In the last year, Hood and Strong elected its first woman managing partner. The firm integrates an advancement outlook discussion to the evaluation process of every employee that includes a pathway conversation on the skills and qualities people need to develop in order to reach their career goals.

**MCM CPAs and Advisors/Louisville – 37.3%,\***

**BeachFleischman PC/Tucson – 37.5%** Overhauling rules for the management committee was a chance to introduce rotating seats to draw in both women and young leaders.

**Brown Smith Wallace/St. Louis – 36.6% \***

**FrazierDeeter/Atlanta 35.4%**

Frazier & Deeter launched its Women's Program almost a decade ago and the program still serves its mission to help women in areas of networking, executive presence, confidence and business development. The program also has had another benefit: It has helped managers understand how to better support women in their careers.

**Lurie LLP/Minneapolis – 33% \***

**OUM & Co. /San Francisco 33% \***

### ***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

### ***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 partner the Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance; founding sponsor Moss Adams; and national sponsor CohnReznick.

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.

The Best CPA Firms for Women list, sponsored by the AFWA, is based on each year's MOVE results. 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.

The Best CPA Firms for Equity Leadership list is also based on MOVE survey results and recognizes firms with at least 33% women partners and principals, as 33% is widely recognized as the tipping point for 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.

***About the Accounting/MOVE Project Partners***



**Moss Adams** brings more West to business. More than a location, it's a way of doing business in which innovation thrives and optimism abounds. At Moss Adams, we're excited by the greatness of possibility and the extraordinary potential for companies and individuals to prosper. With more than 3,200 professionals across 25-plus locations in the West and beyond, we provide the world's most innovative companies with specialized accounting, consulting, and wealth management services to help them embrace emerging opportunity. Visit [www.mossadams.com](http://www.mossadams.com) to discover how Moss Adams is bringing more West to business. For more information, visit [www.mossadams.com](http://www.mossadams.com).



CohnReznick LLP is one of the top accounting, tax, and advisory firms in the United States, combining the resources and technical expertise of a national firm with the hands-on, entrepreneurial approach that today's dynamic business environment demands. Headquartered in New York, NY, and with offices nationwide, CohnReznick serves a large number of

diverse industries and offers specialized services for middle market and Fortune 1000 companies, private equity and financial services firms, government contractors, government agencies, and not-for-profit organizations. The Firm, with origins dating back to 1919, has more than 2,700 employees including nearly 300 partners and is a member of Nexia International, a global network of independent accountancy, tax, and business advisors. For more information, visit [www.cohnreznick.com](http://www.cohnreznick.com).



## 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 80 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 [www.afwa.org](http://www.afwa.org) for more information.



Strategic communication firm 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, the Women's Transportation Seminar, the Alliance for Workplace Excellence, SitterCity, and many others. Please see Wilson-Taylor's portfolio of work at [www.wilson-taylorassoc.com](http://www.wilson-taylorassoc.com)

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