

# Accelerating the Advancement of Women in Commercial Real Estate



**CREW Network®**

Transforming the commercial real estate industry  
by advancing women globally.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Impact on Business Results: Facts and Findings.....	3
Despite Gains, Underrepresentation Persists .....	6
Spotlight on Commercial Real Estate.....	9
LEADING PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS FOR ADVANCING WOMEN	
■ Proven Strategies to Strengthen the Pipeline of Women into The Industry .....	11
■ Proven Strategies to Advance Women from Mid-Level to Senior Executive Leadership .....	14
■ Proven Strategies to Advance Women at The Corporate Board Level.....	18
A Look Forward: The Influence of Laws and Mandates.....	19
■ Proven Strategies to Advance Women Of Color.....	21
Commitment from the Top: Male Leader Perspectives .....	24
Accelerating Women: An Action Guide.....	26

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## Introduction

**Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network** is the premier business network dedicated to transforming the commercial real estate industry by advancing women globally. CREW Network provides support to nearly 12,000 members worldwide through business networking, leadership development, industry research, and career outreach. CREW Network is also the world's leading producer of research on women in commercial real estate. It develops white papers annually and publishes a benchmark study every five years to provide data and insights focused on gender equity and diversity and inclusion.

### The Business Case for Accelerating Women in Commercial Real Estate

At a time when gender equity, diversity, and inclusion are top of mind, CREW Network is the leader in research-based initiatives to accelerate the advancement of women in commercial real estate. Our vision for the future is an industry that reflects the vast diversity of the clients and markets we serve. To achieve greater diversity in our industry, companies must make gender equity, diversity, and inclusion a business priority among their leadership ranks.

What's the bottom line for companies who advance more women—and more diverse women in terms of characteristics including ethnicity, race, age, and backgrounds? Healthier corporate environments, greater financial outcomes, and many other benefits, including greater innovation and market growth, and

more successful employee recruitment and retention rates. This white paper provides the business case and practical tactics for accelerating women in commercial real estate.

In this white paper, we explore the business impact of more women in leadership, greater gender equity, and a more diverse workforce through our extensive research of international and national studies, industry trends, and company best practices. We reveal powerful first-person insights from women in leadership positions and those who are on the leadership track. And we provide companies with an action plan to capitalize on the full power and potential of their female talent.

By reading this white paper, you will gain a greater understanding of the following topics, and will take away tactics and best practices to implement in your company:

- Why having more women in senior leadership improves business, and how to advance gender equity in your leadership
- Why there continues to be an underrepresentation of women in commercial real estate leadership
- Proven strategies to advance all women into leadership
- Best practices from organizations that have achieved a high level of women in leadership
- How laws and mandates may influence our workplace
- How companies can create a clear plan to accelerate the advancement of women ■

# Impact on Business Results: Facts and Findings

A growing body of research indicates companies that prioritize gender leadership diversity are outperforming others. Multiple studies show a correlation between women leaders—C-suite and board members—and organizational outcomes: greater earnings, better governance, greater innovation, more opportunity, and other performance metrics.

## Greater Diversity = Greater Profits

Gender and ethnic diversity on executive teams and boards lead to higher profits, according to research from McKinsey & Company. Their data shows that companies in the top 25 percent for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians, while those in the top 25 percent for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have higher returns.<sup>1</sup>

A 2016 Peterson Institute for International Economics study found that, for profitable firms, a move from no female leaders to 30 percent representation led to a 15 percent increase in net revenue margin.<sup>2</sup>

While less than 5 percent of the CEOs in the S&P 500 (an index that measures the stock performance of the 500 largest companies listed on United States stock exchanges) are women, records show that most of the companies with female CEOs beat the index during their tenures. Of the 24 women CEOs in the S&P 500, 13 have led their companies' stocks to outperform the index. The biggest outperformer of woman-run S&P 500 companies is health-care-focused real estate investment trust Ventas, which has generated a cumulative total return of 2,559 percent since CEO Debra Cafaro took over in March 1999. The S&P's cumulative returns for the same period is roughly 215 percent.<sup>3</sup>

MassChallenge and the Boston Consulting Group

studied the performance of 350 companies that went through MassChallenge's accelerator programs last year. Those start-ups with women on the board subsequently delivered a return on investment that was more than twice what companies with all-male boards produced. Each dollar of funding that went into a start-up with female board leadership produced a return on investment of 78 cents. By contrast, the companies with all-male boards averaged 31 cents.<sup>4</sup>

A study by the World Bank Group's International Finance Corp. shows that greater gender equity gives investment teams in private equity and venture capital firms a performance edge. "Gender-balanced funds realized excess net internal rate of return of 1.7 percentage points greater than male- or female-dominated funds," according to the study. "Our research finds these benefits likely include enhanced investment decision making and deal sourcing."<sup>5</sup>

A report by Human Resources Management, based on an analysis of CEO characteristics, board composition

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are **35 percent more likely**  
to have higher returns.

(1) [Why Your Employer Should Want Gender Parity in Leadership](#), PayScale, March 8, 2019

(2) [Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey](#), Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2016

(3) [Female CEOs Are Scarce, But History Shows They Can Produce Huge Returns](#), CNBC, March 11, 2019

(4) [Here Come the Girls: How Women-Led Startups Tounce the Opposition](#), Forbes, Feb. 25, 2019

(5) [Private Capital Gets Performance Lift with Gender-Balanced Teams](#), Bloomberg, March 7, 2019

and firm outcomes of all Fortune 500 companies from 2001 to 2010, found that companies with women CEOs or gender diverse boards are associated with stronger business and equity practices and outcomes than their gender-homogenous peers.<sup>6</sup>

## Why Gender Equity Improves Business

Experts, consultants, and authors of these and other studies offer a variety of reasons why there is a connection between women leaders and company performance.

All-male boards typically examine problems only after they arise, says Paula Loop, who leads the governance insights center of the consulting firm PwC, but boards with more women try to monitor a company's current performance more closely.<sup>7</sup> "We also noticed gender gap differences between what female directors are focused on, versus what male directors think are important," Loop says. "The things we highlighted were around culture and talent management."

Other experts note the advantage of having the voice of women consumers or employees represented in the boardroom. Women directors may be better positioned to reflect the views of the women who are customers, shareholders, and employees.

A March 2019 report by Accenture draws connections between equality and innovation. Accenture surveyed more than 18,000 workers in 27 countries, including more than 150 C-suite-level executives, and found that at organizations that treat women and men more equally, innovation was significantly higher than at those that do not. Innovation is six times higher at organizations with the most equal workplace cultures, according to the report.<sup>8</sup>

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**"All-male boards typically examine problems only after they arise, but boards with more women try to monitor a company's current performance more closely."**

—Paula Loop

The report used 40 different factors to determine if an organization had a culture of equality, including transparent goals for closing the gender pay gap, a diverse leadership team and clear parental, paternity and maternity leave policies.

Accenture estimates that global gross domestic product would increase by as much as \$8 trillion over 10 years if employees' "innovation mindset" were raised by just 10 percent.

"We have discovered through this research, and talking with people inside and outside of Accenture, that when someone feels that they are operating in an empowering environment, they get to a place where they're willing to take more risks," said Nellie Borrero, senior global inclusion and diversity managing director at Accenture. "When you... are at liberty to take more risk, [that] in turn equals innovation and being able to deliver for that organization."

Research by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall and Laura Sherbin for *Harvard Business Review* also supports the idea that diverse teams can develop more innovative ideas. Their research showed that leaders with diverse backgrounds and experience helped companies innovate more. Diverse leaders were more likely to create an environment where new, creative ideas were considered. And diverse teams, they found, were more likely to have some shared experiences with their end-user. With this advantage, teams created better products.<sup>9</sup>

A February 2019 *Harvard Business Review* study

(6) [Do Women Leaders Promote Positive Change? Analyzing the Effect of Gender on Business Practices and Diversity Initiatives](#), HR Management, September 2017

(7) [What happens when there are more women than men in the boardroom?](#), NBC News, June 6, 2019

(8) [New Research Suggests Innovation Is 6 Times Higher At Companies Where Men And Women Are Treated Most Equally](#), CNBC, March 8, 2019

(9) [How Diversity Can Drive Innovation](#), Harvard Business Review, December 2013

concluded that gender diversity makes a company more productive. The study of 1,069 leading firms across 35 countries and 24 industries found that gender diversity relates to more productive companies, as measured by market value and revenue, only in contexts where gender diversity is

viewed as “normatively” accepted—a widespread cultural belief that gender diversity is important. The data suggests that for diversity to work, workers have to buy into the value of diversity, not just hear some rules about it. They cannot just see gender diversity as an obligation.<sup>10</sup> ■

## An Increase in Women Leaders

Women have gained considerable ground in leadership positions in the last year. A record number of women now hold the top spot at U.S. Fortune 500 companies. Of the companies that make up the 2019 Fortune 500 list, released on May 16, 2019, 33 have women CEOs. Not only is it the highest number of women to ever helm Fortune 500 companies at the same time, but it is also a considerable increase from a total of 24 women CEOs in 2018.<sup>11</sup>



Globally, women held 21.6 percent of all board positions in 2018, up from 20.4 percent the previous year, according to data-tracking company MSCI. U.S.-based companies did even better, with 23.4 percent of board positions going to women, versus 21.7 percent in 2017.<sup>12</sup> According to data from Fortune, women held 15.7 percent of board seats at Fortune 500 companies 15 years ago. Today, women hold 25.5 percent of those seats.

This year marks the first time in General Motors’ 110-year history that it now has more women than men on its board. When two male directors retired from the GM board in June 2019, the company joined a small club of companies with predominantly female boards. They include advertising giant Omnicom, Viacom, and Best Buy, according to MSCI. In addition, 19 other companies in the S&P 500 would have majority-female boards if they added one more woman.

State Street Global Advisors, marketer of the “Fearless Girl,” a statue of a little girl in front of the famous snorting bull figure near Wall Street, said it would vote against directors who did not live up to a company’s gender diversity program. Institutional Investor reported that 300 companies have added women since State Street’s initiative in 2017. ■

(10) [Research: When Gender Diversity Makes Firms More Productive](#), Harvard Business Review, February 11, 2019

(11) [The number of women running Fortune 500 companies is at a record high](#), CNBC, May 16, 2019

(12) [What happens when there are more women than men in the boardroom?](#), NBC News, June 6, 2019



## Despite Gains, Underrepresentation Persists

Despite gains in women obtaining leadership positions, and the intentions and efforts of company executives, the underrepresentation of women in leadership continues.

In 2016, the Peterson Institute for International Economics identified a significant underrepresentation of women on corporate boards and in leadership positions. They projected that changing board composition to include 30 percent female representation could add up to six percentage points to a company's net margin. This survey included 21,980 firms in over 91 countries. Half of those surveyed had no top women executives.<sup>13</sup>

The stalled journey to parity for CEO and board roles mirrors the journey of the broader workforce. At the current rate of progress globally, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report indicates parity is another 217 years away. "The trend line is comparable across virtually all industries, with little advancement in recent years despite heightened organizational efforts," the report states.

Women still make up only 6.6 percent of CEOs at the companies on Fortune's list. Women of color and members of the LGBTQ community make up an even

smaller percentage of this group. Mary Winston was appointed interim CEO of Bed Bath & Beyond in May 2019, making her the first black woman to head a Fortune 500 company since Ursula Burns stepped down from her role at Xerox more than two years ago.

In addition, Fortune notes that women CEOs in the Fortune 500 tend to have shorter stints than their male counterparts. On average, women serve 42 months as CEO, versus 60 months for men.<sup>14</sup>

The 2019 State of the Workforce Report from the ADP Research Institute found that women are promoted earlier than men but face a glass ceiling at the fourth level of management. The average number of years to first manager promotion for women is 6.6 years and 7.3 years for men. However, as women move

Changing board composition to include  
**30 percent female representation**  
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to a company's net margin.

(13) [Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey](#), February 2016, Peterson Institute for International Economics

(14) [The number of women running Fortune 500 companies is at a record high](#), CNBC, May 16, 2019



up management levels, there is a steep decline (12 percent) starting at the 3rd level of management, which declines at each level of advancement. There is a steep drop-off at the fourth level of management, as women only represent 23 percent of executives. Among the top brass or sixth level, women comprise only 15 percent.<sup>15</sup>

In Canada, women represent nearly half of all entry-level employees but only 25 percent of vice presidents and 15 percent of CEOs, according to a 2017 McKinsey Global Institute report, which says gender inequality costs the country roughly \$150 billion annually.<sup>16</sup>

Roughly an equal percentage of men and women enter the U.S. workforce as individual contributors. At the start of their careers (age group 20-29), 74 percent of men and 75 percent of women are in individual contributor roles. However, a much smaller proportion of women reach the manager/supervisor level or higher by the middle of their career. By mid-career (age range 30-44), 47 percent of men are managers or higher, while only 40 percent of women reach this level. By late career (age 45+), 57 percent of men are managers or higher, while only 41 percent of women reach this level. By late career (age 45+), eight percent of men have risen to an executive-level position, compared to three percent of white women, and two percent of women of color.<sup>17</sup>

PayScale, a leading employer and compensation researcher and data provider, cites multiple reasons for why women move up at a slower pace. For one, employers often make assumptions about what kinds




of work different genders are best suited for, funneling women into lower-paid, lower-level positions. Another key factor is that women tend to spend more time out of the workforce, primarily for family care, which hurts their career.

In the U.S., women hold just 24 percent of S&P 500 board seats, up only three percentage points since 2012, despite constituting 47 percent of the workforce and driving 70 to 80 percent of consumer spending on everything from food and electronics to healthcare and financial services. According to estimates from the U.S. Committee for Economic Development (CED), at the current rate, it will still take 75 years to reach gender parity in the board room.<sup>18</sup>

In the U.K., PwC's latest Women in Work Index finds that the region is slowly improving gender equality in the workplace. The U.K. is now ranked 13th in the index of 33 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, up one place since 2018 and up four places since 2000. The U.K. ranked the second highest of the G7 countries, behind Canada in 11th place.

However, the report points out that if the U.K. were able to match second-ranked Sweden's level of female employment (69 percent vs. the U.K.'s 57 percent), the benefit to the economy would be in the region of £178bn. Equally, closing the gender pay gap would boost women's earnings by £92bn.<sup>19</sup>

About 13 percent more men ages 25 to 65 are employed than women in the U.K., and, on average, men earn 19 percent more than women who work full-time.<sup>20</sup>

	Percentage of women in the workforce	Percentage of women in the C-suite/Top Management
	47%	15%
	57%	24%
	47%	19%

(15) [ADP State of the Workforce Report](#), 2019.

(16) [Power of Parity](#), McKinsey & Company, June 2017

(17) [The State of the Gender Pay Gap 2019](#), PayScale.

(18) [Effective Leadership Development Strategies at Pivotal Points for Women](#), Korn Ferry and The Conference Board, 2019

(19) [UK crawls up the gender equality rankings](#), ICAEW Economia, March 5, 2019

(20) [Gender Gaps in the UK Labour Market: Jobs, Pay and Family-Friendly Policies](#), Centre for Economic Performance, March 2015



Holly Neber, CEO, AEI Consultants; 2019 CREW Network President

The number of women holding the most senior jobs in the boardrooms of Britain's biggest companies has fallen, according to a report that criticizes the lack of progress made by businesses in getting more women to the top. Analysis from Cranfield University, as part of its 20th Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) Women on Boards Report, shows a sharp drop in the number of women occupying CEO, CFO or other executive roles on FTSE 250 boards, and static numbers at FTSE 100 companies. There are now just 30 women in full-time executive roles at FTSE 250 firms, down from 38 last year. They include six women CEOs and 19 women CFOs. The report described this as a "woeful situation," mainly because the FTSE 250—which primarily consists of mid-sized U.K.-focused businesses—is often viewed as the pipeline for jobs at larger FTSE 100 companies.<sup>21</sup>

On FTSE 100 boards, the percentage of women in leadership positions has flat lined for a fourth year at 9.7 percent. There are 25 women holding executive roles at 22 companies, the same as in 2017, with seven female CEOs and 10 female CFOs.

Women are now in 30 percent of directors' seats on FTSE 100 boards, up from 27.7 percent in 2017 because companies recruited more female non-executive

directors; women now hold 317 of 1051 FTSE 100 directorships.

At present, 38 FTSE 100 companies have reached the target of 33 percent women on their boards, set by the government-backed Hampton-Alexander Review for 2020. The percentage of women on FTSE 250 boards has risen slightly from 22.8 percent to 24.9 percent, and the number of all-male boards has decreased from 10 to 5.<sup>22</sup>

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Director-General Carolyn Fairbairn, said: "More women are taking their place in FTSE boardrooms, but the truth is it is not happening fast enough. If the Hampton-Alexander target is to be met, much more needs to be done right now—particularly at senior levels below the executive team."

## Recognizing Why Underrepresentation Persists

Some of the research and studies cited in this white paper also recognize the barriers to increasing the representation of women at all level of the leadership pipeline, including:

- Hiring manager mindset and bias (conscious or unconscious).
- Higher expectations for women candidates—men often are promoted on future potential, whereas women often are promoted based on past performance.
- Fewer opportunities to gain experience and advancement in business line and operational roles.
- Lack of mentors, sponsors, and champions.
- Insufficient programs to help integrate the demands of work and life and accommodate career interruption, where women are more widely affected.

These barriers coincide with the barriers to advancement that women in commercial real estate identified in the 2015 CREW Network Benchmark Study Report, which are examined in the following pages of this white paper. ■

(21) [Number of Women in Top Boardroom Positions Falls, Says Report](#), July 17, 2018, The Guardian

(22) [Hampton Alexander Review – FTSE Women Leaders](#), November 2018



## Spotlight on Commercial Real Estate

Commercial real estate is a predominately male industry. According to the 2015 CREW Network benchmark study report, women represent approximately 35 percent of the commercial real estate workforce in the United States and 37 percent in Canada. Women in the industry occupy approximately 9 percent of C-suite positions.<sup>23</sup>

While commercial real estate is lagging when it comes to female representation, the 2015 benchmark study revealed important gains made by women, including:

- More women fill senior vice president, managing director and partner positions than ever.
- The percentage of women with direct reports is now on par with their male counterparts.
- Women's career satisfaction and feelings of success increased across all industry specializations. Women with higher commission-based pay reported the highest career satisfaction.

The benchmark study also defined the top barriers for women in commercial real estate:

1. Lack of a company mentor/sponsor
2. Lack of promotion opportunity
3. Gender discrimination

Since the benchmark study in 2015, CREW Network has produced white papers annually to more closely examine some of these barriers for women—including unconscious bias and the pay gap—as well as case studies and action plans for companies to increase

gender equity and diversity to reap business benefits. Key findings from these industry publications include:

- 65 percent of professionals have personally experienced or observed gender bias against women in their commercial real estate workplace in the last five years (2011-16)
- 55 percent have personally experienced or observed gender bias against women outside of the formal workplace (i.e. women excluded from colleague hunting or golf trips)
- 91 percent of respondents said they have not displayed gender bias against a woman as a hirer or manager in commercial real estate
- 43 percent of professionals said that their company has a written diversity/inclusion policy; 29 percent were unsure<sup>24</sup>

According to a recent KPMG Women in Alternatives Investments report, 72 percent of real estate industry professionals agree that achieving gender equity and greater overall diversity is a business imperative.

KPMG's study also found that real estate investors are pushing for diversity. Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents have witnessed investors asking investment teams about their firm's diversity efforts.<sup>25</sup>

Ideas are turning into action. Many commercial real estate companies are putting diversity and inclusion initiatives at the top of their agenda, but we still have a long way to go.

(23) [CREW Network Benchmark Study Report - Women in Commercial Real Estate: 2015](#)

(24) [Closing the Gap: Addressing Gender Bias and Other Barriers for Women in Commercial Real Estate](#), CREW Network, 2016

(25) [The Call to Act: Women in Alternative Investments Report, Sixth Edition](#), KPMG, February 5, 2019

## The Opportunity Gap

In the 2015 CREW Network benchmark study, the majority of industry women (47 percent) indicated their aspirations topped out at the senior vice president or partner level and considered the lack of a mentor or sponsor within their company as their top barrier to success. Women in commercial real estate are 54 percent less likely than men to have a sponsor who can provide career advice or help advance a career path. In addition, one in five women said that family or marital status has adversely impacted their career or compensation.<sup>26</sup>

CREW Network's 2016 white paper, *Closing the Gap: Addressing Gender Bias and Other Barriers for Women in Commercial Real Estate*, asked 1,019 industry professionals why women are less likely to pursue C-suite level leadership positions than men. Thirty-two percent of respondents believe the lack of support for women in the C-Suite and/or at home is the top reason for the gap. The second most popular response (26 percent) was that women believe being in the C-suite will adversely affect their commitments and responsibilities outside of work.

Real estate attorney Lindsay Morgan, a partner at Norton Rose Fulbright in London for 30 years, who also serves as practice head for Europe, Middle East, and Africa, says: "We lose excellent senior associates who do not see partnership as either achievable, or desirable—particularly when trying to balance home responsibilities," adding that only 20 percent of women become partners in the United Kingdom's legal profession. "Only by making senior roles attractive to women will they advance. This requires deep consideration and reevaluation of working practices and the qualities and character traits that traditionally seem to be needed to make partner."

## The Pay Gap

Like other industries, commercial real estate is now under greater pressure to address the pay gap as

**One in five women said that family or marital status has adversely impacted their career or compensation.**



*Lindsay Morgan, Practice Head of Real Estate – Europe, Middle East and Asia, Norton Rose Fulbright; Chair, CREW UK Board*

companies strive to meet diversity, equality, and inclusion goals. CREW Network's 2015 benchmark study revealed that the industry median annual compensation—including bonuses, compensation, and profit sharing—for women was \$115,000 USD compared to \$150,000 USD for men—an average gap of 23.3 percent. The size of the gap varies by occupation, with the greatest difference in the study observed among commercial real estate brokers, at 33.8 percent.

Although starting pay is nearly equal between men and women at the entry level, the gap starts to widen at mid-career and increases to an astonishing 29.8 percent at the C-suite level.

There is also a gap when it comes to commissioned positions such as brokerage, sales, and leasing. For men, the share of their compensation coming from commissions has not changed since 2010, sitting at 24 percent. Women reported 14 percent of their compensation coming from commission in 2015, down slightly from 2010 (16 percent).

On the bonus side, the 2015 benchmark study revealed that compensation from short-term bonuses as a share of total compensation has increased as the economy recovered. However, there is still a disparity—bonuses only accounted for 14.7 percent of total compensation for women (\$29,413 annually) and 17.8 percent for men (\$46,260 annually). Long-term incentives represented 13 percent of total compensation for women (\$39,046 annually) and 14.5 percent for men (\$57,020 annually).<sup>27</sup> ■

(26) [CREW Network Benchmark Study Report - Women in Commercial Real Estate: 2015](#)

(27) [CREW Network Benchmark Study Report - Women in Commercial Real Estate: 2015](#)

# Proven Strategies to Strengthen the Pipeline of Women into the Industry

A key factor in talent acquisition is the availability of talent, especially diverse talent. Without a strong pipeline of individuals coming into the industry, it is difficult to fill the industry’s growing demand for talent.

The current pipeline of college graduates in the real estate field is very narrow and predominately male.



There are approximately 95 institutions that currently offer real estate related programs in the U.S. In 2017, a total of 811 bachelor’s degrees were conferred in real estate. Of those 811 degrees, 591 recipients were men (73 percent) and 220 were women (27 percent). The same year, 967 graduate degrees were obtained in real estate—694 by men (72 percent) and 273 by women (28 percent).<sup>28</sup>



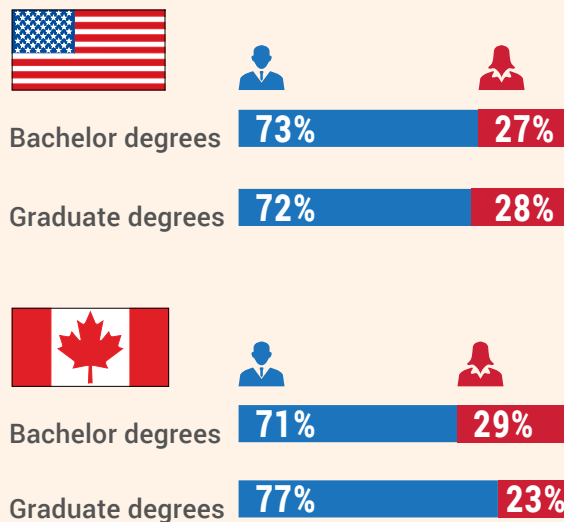
According to Canadian census data, approximately 310 university students received bachelor’s degrees in real estate in 2016—220 men (71 percent) and 90 women (29 percent). A total of 265 graduate degrees were granted that year by Canadian universities to 205 men (77 percent) and 60 women (23 percent).<sup>29</sup>



In the U.K., a total of 3,220 university-level students graduated with real estate related degrees in 2017. Nearly 64 percent of graduates entered employment in the U.K. in the real estate field.<sup>30</sup> The gender of graduates was not identified.

This is a diminutive amount compared to the demand in the industry at this time. While greater demographical data, including the race and ethnicity of graduates, could not be found through our research, the shortage of diverse candidates in the industry is apparent.

## Pipeline of College Graduates with Real Estate Related Degrees (2017)



The path to a career in commercial real estate may not be as clear as other traditional career paths. For example, a college student might major in finance and end up in a job at a CRE firm, or go to law school and end up in a real estate practice.

The industry is predominately male for a variety of reasons. Many CRE businesses started as family endeavors often founded by men and taken over by sons. Research also indicates that women may avoid risk-taking and commission-based jobs both early in their careers when they need steady paychecks and mid-career when they have children. In addition, women tend to be less likely than men to enter and gain experience and exposure to operational roles, which most often lead to the top levels of leadership.<sup>31</sup>

(28) [Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2016-17](#). National Center for Education Statistics.

(29) [Major Field of Study - Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) 2016](#), Statistics Canada.

(30) [Industry of leavers entering employment in the UK by subject area of degree](#), Higher Education Statistics Agency.

(31) [Effective Leadership Development Strategies at Pivotal Points for Women](#), by Korn Ferry and The Conference Board, 2019



*Barbi Reuter, President, Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR; CREW Tucson*

Barbi Reuter, RPA, president of Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR Commercial Real Estate Services in Tucson, Arizona, says one way to increase the pipeline of women into the industry is through creative compensation models. “One-hundred percent commission can be a deterrent to many new entrants to the brokerage business,” Reuter says. “The ‘Mommy tax’ and other penalties for off-ramping that affect compensation and progress should be eliminated. It took me eight years and one recession to return to my pre-maternity leave income.”

A handful of independently owned offices of NAI Global, a global commercial real estate brokerage firm, have implemented new initiatives to attract young brokers that focus on the value of mentorship and their role in new business. NAI Farbman in Southfield, Michigan, is offering new commercial agents a one-year, \$25,000 USD salary plus 10% to 20% of their senior broker/mentor’s share of closed transactions if the new agent plays a significant role in bringing in the new business. The program can be extended beyond the first year upon the agreement of the new agent and mentor. NAI Puget Sound Properties in Seattle, Washington, offers young professionals \$30,000 for a one-year program and some benefits from the mentor’s share of the commission splits based on merit.<sup>32</sup>

“The ‘Mommy tax’ and other penalties for off-ramping that affect compensation and progress should be eliminated. It took me eight years and one recession to return to my pre-maternity leave income.”

–Barbi Reuter

Other ideas: “As a recruiter, I’d like to see stronger assessment tools to evaluate core competencies and predictors of success in brokerage that could be administered to women in other businesses. Training resources for smaller firms would also help level the playing field,” Reuter says.

Recruiting diverse talent is one of the oldest and most persistent challenges facing commercial real estate leaders. Only 31 percent of real estate professionals in a recent KPMG survey said that their organizations require a diverse slate to be considered when hiring for open positions.<sup>33</sup>

Kmeal Winters, CCIM, vice president, asset management at Dallas-based Spirit Realty, says companies should recruit talent from various organizations like CREW



*Kmeal Winters, Vice President - Asset Management, Spirit Realty Capital; CREW Dallas*

(32) [Zeroing in on Recruiting, Training Young Professionals](#), GlobeSt.com, March 22, 2019.

(33) [Building the blueprint for change: Women in real estate paper](#). KPMG, 2019.



*Rhonda Holland, Director of Finance & Group Controller, MasterBUILT Hotels; CREW Calgary*

Network, National Black MBA Association, and the National Association of Black Accountants to boost their diversity.

"[Companies] should be more intentional with their hiring process to ensure they have somewhat equal representation based on talent and not just who they know," Winters says. She also believes CREW plays an integral role in exposing young professionals—even those in high school and college who are contemplating career options—to commercial real estate careers through the CREW Careers program.

Katherine Pinkard, president of Pinkard Properties in Towson, Maryland, agrees that CREW Network is an indispensable resource for companies. "A company connecting with [CREW's] existing framework would be a great pipeline," she says.

Another proactive approach to recruiting women from the next generation of talent is to connect with local schools and universities to speak with women students about the myriad opportunities that exist in the industry for women, Pinkard says.

Rhonda Holland, director of finance and group controller at Masterbuilt Hotels in Canada, agrees that educating and guiding high school and college women toward careers in unconventional industries is necessary, but what is more important is the "transferability of skills at all career levels of a women's life."

"Aptitudes can bridge many industries and the opportunities to have a rewarding career in commercial real estate are abundant," Holland says. "I think many women do not have the confidence to try to walk over that bridge. I am proof that a company can see past previous jobs on a résumé and see the worth of the candidate for the new life they can bring into their company. As long as the candidate is truly interested in the industry, it can develop into a passion."

Reuter also believes finding multiple mentors, both inside and outside of your organization, is essential for retaining and advancing women who are new to the industry. "The best mentors challenge us. Surround yourself with high achievers and model their behaviors."

She also advises that aspiring leaders, especially recent graduates, compensate for youth by being exceptionally professional.

"Build your brand equity early—develop a reputation for being results-oriented, professional, and a woman of your word. Speak up and make your voice heard. I've read that if you do not speak in the first 10 minutes of a meeting, you're forgettable. Never defer from the conference table, never offer to run the slides, take the notes, make the coffee or make the copies. Fight the imposter syndrome at every turn and affirm that you deserve a seat at the table," Reuter says.

"Many of us grow up afraid to toot our own horn. You can't wait for someone to recognize your accomplishments. Self-nominate for awards and opportunities or ask a colleague to do so for you." ■



*Katherine Pinkard, President, Pinkard Properties, LLC; CREW Baltimore*



## LEADING PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS FOR ADVANCING WOMEN

# Proven Strategies to Advance Women from Mid-Level to Executive Leadership

It is critical to provide more support for women transitioning from mid-level/senior to executive leadership roles. This is the crucial point from manager to senior executive leader, and potentially into the pipeline for the C-suite.

In commercial real estate, women hold approximately 54 percent of mid-level associate and senior positions. Mid-level is where the percentage begins to decline—and the pay gap begins to widen. Women hold approximately 27 percent of senior vice president, managing director and partner level positions, and just nine percent of C-suite positions in commercial real estate.<sup>34</sup>

The shift from individual contributor to manager requires engaging women early and often, understanding an individual's drivers and aspirations, and challenging women with honest feedback and stretch assignments early in their careers, including placement into high-level line or operational roles that directly impact an organization and its core work. The shift from VP to SVP deserves a different kind of attention, including providing differentiated

development opportunities and pivotal experiences and developing a sponsorship program.<sup>35</sup>

According to the 2018 Women in the Workplace report from McKinsey and LeanIn.org, sponsorship from inside of a company can play a key role in connecting female employees to these influential decision makers. Those with sponsors said they were much likelier to have a consequential meeting with a senior executive leader. These women also said they were 1.5 times likelier to see themselves as leadership material, compared to women without sponsors at work.<sup>36</sup>

Holland believes every senior executive woman must provide mentorship to other women within her company and industry. "Without this, her road was for naught and the next [successor] would have to work that same road again from scratch," she says. "The more women that are taught to navigate that road, the more exponential knowledge will follow. Not all of those [women] will make it, but it will be invaluable shared knowledge that will result in more women senior executives."

(34) [CREW Network Benchmark Study Report - Women in Commercial Real Estate: 2015](#)

(35) [Effective Leadership Development Strategies at Pivotal Points for Women](#), by Korn Ferry and The Conference Board, 2019

(36) [The real barrier for future female CEOs: Access to the boss](#) CNN Business, Feb. 12, 2019



McKinsey and LeanIn.org's report also notes that companies with more gender equal leadership are focused on ensuring women have opportunities to gain experience and exposure to high-level operational roles. This exposes women to fundamental aspects of the business, such as how the organization makes money, how product decisions are made, and how to manage a profit and loss center. These experiences build a track record relevant to important business outcomes and higher levels of leadership.

Lateral moves may offer greater breadth of experience in operational roles. According to CREW Network's 2015 benchmark study, 46 percent of women accepted a lateral move to a position with different responsibilities, versus 33 percent of men in 2015.

Reuter adds: "I've seen senior leaders rise through the ranks from nearly every pathway, but not all practitioners who excel have stellar leadership qualities. In my own experience, an operations background gave me breadth of oversight but comes with some danger of being more tactical than strategic. I find it valuable for younger to mid-career professionals to diversify their experience so that they are not siloed into one discipline. This prepares them for broader leadership opportunities."

In a 2019 report on effective leadership development strategies at pivotal points for women, Korn Ferry and The Conference Board suggest the following approaches should be at the core of any successful strategy to increase the representation of women leaders at any level:

- Engage and identify high-potential women early and openly to reinforce the pipeline.
- Challenge women with stretch assignments early in their careers, such as global responsibilities, leading a business line, and contributing to a turnaround or expansion.
- Provide high-potential women with more exposure to senior leadership and board service.
- Implement programs monitoring pay equity.
- Create recognition programs that promote successful women leaders as role models.
- Develop a sponsorship program.
- Help integrate the demands of work and life.<sup>37</sup>

Holland says she is fortunate that her company is truly an equal opportunity employer on all scales. "It is trained from within that the best person gets the

Lateral moves may offer greater breadth of experience in operational roles.

**46 percent of women in CRE accepted a lateral move to a position with different responsibilities.**

job," she says. "I hear many stories of women in the industry that have to fight for that golf invitation, the seat at the meeting, or voice on the decision. I have left those environments for just those reasons to be where I am today."

Winters says it is important to work for a firm that encourages professional organization involvement. "When I was a financial analyst, my male supervisor introduced me to CREW in 2005 and connected me with women in senior leadership roles because he understood the importance of networking as well as professional leadership and development," she says.

She also feels fortunate to be a part of an organization that exposes women to top leadership. The CEO of Spirit Realty, a company of approximately 90 employees, meets with women in senior leadership roles for lunch and roundtable discussion. "I think having face-time with executive leadership is huge, especially being able to provide feedback and recommendations that are heard and considered," Winters adds.

The McKinsey & Company report, *Diversity Matters*, recommends additional actions to employers who want to support gender leadership equality in their organizations:

- **Get committed.** McKinsey notes that gender equity was a top strategic priority for only 28 percent of companies in 2010. That seems to be improving, but until companies allocate resources to support gender parity and equality, they cannot expect real change.
- **Advocate for pay transparency.** If you're a decision-maker or otherwise have clout at your organization, advocate for the adoption of pay transparency practices that may reveal a gender pay gap—and thus gender parity issues. That might mean anything from revealing more about the company's compensation strategy to being completely transparent about how much every employee is paid, from the CEO to entry-level contributors.

(37) [Effective Leadership Development Strategies at Pivotal Points for Women](#), by Korn Ferry and The Conference Board, 2019

- **Confront your own bias.** Both men and women can have bias against women leaders, women negotiators, women in power or those who seem to want power. The first step toward dismantling that bias is facing up to it. Project Implicit, a collaboration between researchers at the University of Washington, Harvard University and the University of Virginia, has created a series of tests to measure implicit bias in a variety of areas, including women in leadership. If you have not spent time thinking about your own bias, it's a good place to start.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to efforts and action by employers, Holland believes women can play a huge role in their individual and collective advancement through “intelligent exposure.” This includes capable women being a voice for the industry by sitting on panels, representing large deals, providing innovation and direction for the industry.

“Put yourself out there in situations and circumstances that are hard to ignore by leadership. Never be afraid to speak up for your career advancement and opportunities,” she says.

Pinkard also says women should celebrate our differences and embrace what we bring to the table.

“Wear the pink blouse if you want to. Don't try to hide the fact that you're a woman,” Pinkard says. “We can dress professionally while not wearing drab, unfeminine pantsuits. I spent a few years trying to be viewed like my male peers and that was silly. Women can often bring a different perspective to the table than their male counterparts, which leads to more holistic decision-making reflective of the real-world clientele that they're serving.”

## It Pays to Negotiate

Governments are taking measures to close the gender pay gap. Many U.S. states and localities have compensation laws in place to stop employers from asking about previous salary history during the interview process. On January 1, 2019, Ontario became the first province in Canada to require all publicly advertised job postings to include a salary rate or range; bar employers from asking a job candidate about past compensation; prohibit reprisals against employees who discuss or disclose compensation; and establish a framework to require larger employers to track and report compensation gaps based on gender and other diversity characteristics.

“Women can play a huge role in their individual and collective advancement through 'intelligent exposure.' ... being a voice for the industry by sitting on panels, representing large deals, providing innovation and direction for the industry.”

—Rhonda Holland

Pay parity is not just the responsibility of the government or the employer. Employees must also take action. Unfortunately, however, women are much less likely to get more money when they ask for it. According to a 2016 Glassdoor analysis, men come out winners three times as often as women when asking for more money.<sup>39</sup>

The 2018 CREW Network white paper, *Achieving Pay Parity in Commercial Real Estate*, offers these pay negotiation tips for women:

- **Plan ahead.** Keep track of your accomplishments and quantify your results whenever possible. Go after stretch assignments and high-profile projects and note in detail how they turn out. Along the way, get as much feedback as you can.
- **Prepare.** Research how much someone in your desired role earns in compensation by consulting websites like Glassdoor and PayScale and talking to people who are in similar roles. Look at title, experience, industry, company size, and geographic location. With that information in hand, you can start negotiating by pointing out, “The market value of my position right now is X. I think I am worth that much, and here is why.” From there, sell your accomplishments.
- **Engage in negotiation training and mentoring** through professional memberships and associations like CREW Network.
- **Negotiate assertively for compensation commensurate to your skills and value.** Make the conversation about “us.” Bargain with your boss, rather than with anyone in human resources, for the common-sense reason that the person you report to directly is the one who knows your work best, and who presumably wants you to keep doing it. “How can we get my total compensation as close as possible to my market value?”—emphasis on “we.”<sup>40</sup> ■

(38) [Why Diversity Matters](#). McKinsey & Company, 2015.

(39) [How Women Can Negotiate to Close the Gender Pay Gap](#). Fortune, Feb. 8, 2019

(40) [Achieving Pay Parity in Commercial Real Estate](#). CREW Network, 2018



## Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR's Promotion of Women

Tucson, Arizona-based Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR Commercial Real Estate Services began as a progressive company more than 30 years ago and continues to champion gender diversity today. The company's founder launched the firm as an industrial brokerage in 1985 with four brokers, two of whom were women—the only women industrial brokers in the Tucson market.

Reuter, who joined the company shortly after it started, was continuously encouraged to advance. "We had a leasing assignment on an industrial building under construction, and the chance to manage it fell into my lap, which parlayed into a 30-year career in commercial property management," she says. "Our firm is employee owned, and I earned a seat at the ownership table in 1992 at age 26. In 2006, I turned leadership of the Property Management Division over to one of my partners and moved into operations leadership for the company. I was named COO in 2014, president in 2017, and in 2020 will complete the full leadership succession from our founder as CEO/designated broker."

Because women comprise 75 percent of Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR's leadership team and the company has been effective in recruiting younger brokers, it is perceived as a progressive firm

with an inviting corporate culture. "We also gain business value from sharing internal promotion success stories," Reuter says. "We still have a long way to go diversifying our brokerage team, but incremental progress adds up, and the message is out that we are on a mission."

### Cushman & Wakefield Global

While Cushman & Wakefield | PICOR is independently owned, it is closely associated with Cushman & Wakefield, which has received numerous "best of" rankings for an inclusive workplace, including a perfect score on the 2019 Corporate Equality Index and Forbes Best Employer for Diversity. Cushman & Wakefield's women's initiative is called the Women's Integrated Network (WIN). WIN's mission is to develop and support the talent of its women team members—such as encouraging and supporting professional development, collaboration, community service, and networking in the industry—and have a meaningful impact on the firm's performance. The WIN program is in its second year of a nine-month formal mentoring program where participants are matched with mentors. Each mentor/mentee pairing receives an online orientation and is assigned a senior executive sponsor for support throughout the program. ■

# Proven Strategies to Advance Women at the Corporate Board Level

## Increasing the Size of Your Board

The low turnover of board seats is a major obstacle to creating greater board diversity. Half of S&P 500 boards added no new directors in 2018. With few boards embracing term limits, and the typical mandatory retirement age set at 72 or older, an effective way to speed up board refreshment is to expand the size of the board.

In 2018, more than half of new women directors joined boards that had increased in size, according to global executive search and leadership consulting firm Spencer Stuart. At the same time, five-year data from the firm found that across the entire S&P 500, the average board size has remained relatively steady at 10.8 directors. Given that research suggests smaller boards are more effective, the board can return to its previous size once directors with longer tenures have retired, creating an optimally sized board with more diverse perspectives.<sup>41</sup>

Increasing greater diversity is easier to achieve when boards avoid filling open seats with people already in their personal and professional networks, says Mike Fucci, Chairman of the Board at Deloitte. Companies should consider a process of periodically assessing the skill sets that are ideal for the board compared with the skill sets currently represented on the board to identify gaps. Then, when searching for qualified candidates, use it as an opportunity to build gender diversity.

Board diversity matters but concentrating on only one form of diversity isn't enough, Fucci says. And certainly

**In 2018, more than half of new women directors joined boards that had increased in size.**

“checking the box” initiatives and “tokenism” for the sake of board diversity isn't a sound strategy. Instead, boards should ensure that they prioritize social diversity (gender, race/ethnicity, age/generation diversity) and professional diversity (skills and expertise diversity) to increase the perspectives represented on the board, and ultimately help the board get better results.

## Connecting Board Candidates and Companies

theBoardlist connects CEOs and investors with highly qualified, peer-endorsed women for their open board seats. Starting with the technology industry, theBoardlist is challenging boards of all stages, from early to public, to accelerate opportunities for better performance through creating diverse boards. The group currently has 2,000 female candidates that are qualified, vetted and board-ready.<sup>42</sup>

To qualify as a candidate, women must have corporate board experience, or be recommended by an individual who does. theBoardlist candidates must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Influencer, thought leader, or domain expert in her industry
- CEO or Founder of a company with at least \$5m+ in annual revenue
- VP level and above at a company with at least \$25m+ in annual revenue
- Director level and above at a company with at least \$500m+ in annual revenue ■

(41) [To Diversify, Some Boards of Directors Are Growing in Size](#), Fortune, March 28, 2019

(42) [The Compelling Business Case For Gender Diverse Leadership: A Conversation With Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, Founder And Chairman Of theBoardList](#), GeekWire, March 19, 2018



Also, Fucci notes that diversity does not matter as much on boards where members' perspectives are not regularly elicited or valued. Board culture is key. It is what can affect how well diverse boards perform their duties and oversee their organizations. Fucci says an effective board culture can be created when board chairs and directors develop a more egalitarian approach—a culture that elevates different voices, integrates contrasting insights, and welcomes conversations from everyone.<sup>43</sup>

### Changing the Criteria for Board Service

Another historical pattern of board appointment has been to require that candidates have prior CEO experience. Because there are so few female CEOs, there are often few female candidates in a board's talent pool.

As firms look to diversify their boardrooms, some are changing their criteria for candidates and becoming less insistent on candidates having CEO experience. PwC's 2018 Annual Corporate Directors Survey found that 24 percent of new directors on American corporate boards are current or former CEOs, compared to 37 percent of the previous class.<sup>44</sup>

### Board Service Leads to the CEO Chair for Women

Board service is a key career step for female CEOs. Researchers Catherine H. Tinsley and Kate Purmal recently compared the career paths of 100 female public company CEOs with those of a cohort of men in similar industry sectors and company sizes. Prior

to becoming CEO, the women were significantly more likely to serve on a corporate board than men. More than half of the women (59 percent) served on a public company board, as compared with 42 percent of the men. Almost twice as many women (23 percent) as men (12 percent) served on a private company board.<sup>45</sup>

Companies and boards that seek to include more women in their CEO ascension pool and who wish to groom women for C-level roles can initiate programs to assist high-potential women executives with securing a corporate board seat. It is a win-win situation.

### A Look Forward: The Influence of Laws and Mandates

What should be considered an "adequate" representation of women in leadership? Most boards have nine to 13 members, and they cannot add only one woman and expect real change in the way they operate. Boards need at least three women directors—the "magic number" according to Egon Zehnder's 2018 Global Board Diversity Tracker. With at least two women colleagues, women are more likely to speak up and be heard.<sup>46</sup>

According to a 2019 Korn Ferry and The Conference Board survey, having 46 percent of women in vice president roles and higher would constitute adequate representation. Paradigm for Parity, a coalition of business leaders dedicated to addressing the leadership gender gap in corporate America, advocates for 50/50 representation. The 30% Club named itself based on the determination that when women occupy at least three board seats on a 10-member board, or 30 percent, business impact begins to surface.<sup>47</sup>

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**Prior to becoming CEO, the women were significantly more likely to serve on a corporate board than men. More than half of the women (59 percent) served on a public company board, as compared with 42 percent of the men.**

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(43) [When and Why Diversity Improves Your Board's Performance](#), March 27, 2019, Harvard Business Review

(44) [PwC's 2018 Annual Corporate Directors Survey](#).

(45) [Research: Board Experience Is Helping More Women Get CEO Jobs](#), Harvard Business Review, July 29, 2019.

(46) [Who's Really On Board?](#) Egon Zehnder, 2018

(47) [Effective Leadership Development Strategies at Pivotal Points for Women](#), by Korn Ferry and The Conference Board, 2019.

## Government Support and Standards

Mandates to increase gender diversity on corporate boards are increasingly common. For example, Norway, Spain, France, and Iceland all have laws requiring that women comprise at least 40 percent of boards at publicly listed companies. In the U.K., the government's Hamilton-Alexander review was established by former Prime Minister Theresa May in 2016 to examine the gender gap in the top tier of U.K. businesses. The review has set a target of one-third of board members to be women at the 350 largest firms by the end of 2020.

In 2015, the Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA), an umbrella organization of Canada's provincial and territorial securities regulators whose objective is to improve, coordinate and harmonize regulation of capital markets, introduced disclosure requirements for the representation of women on boards and in executive officer positions. This requires companies to disclose on an annual basis:

1. the number and percentage of women on the issuer's board of directors and in executive officer positions;
2. director term limits or other mechanisms of board renewal;
3. policies relating to the identification and nomination of women directors;
4. consideration of the representation of women in the director identification and nomination process and executive officer appointments; and

5. targets for women on boards and in executive officer positions.

If a company has not adopted the above mechanisms, policies, or targets or does not consider the representation of women, it is required to explain its reasons for not doing so.<sup>48</sup>

Gender board mandates are relatively new to the U.S. In 2018, the state of California ruled that it will fine locally-headquartered publicly traded companies that do not have at least one woman on their board by 2020.<sup>49</sup> The mandate also encourages larger boards to nominate three or more women for board positions. By the end of 2021, the law increases the required minimum number of women directors to two if the corporation has five directors, and three women directors if the corporation has six or more directors.

California is the first state to pass such a requirement in the U.S. One of the bill's authors, Senator Hannah Beth Jackson, noted that as of June 2017, among the 446 publicly traded companies included in the Russell 3000 index (a capitalization-weighted stock market index, maintained by FTSE Russell) and headquartered in California, only 15.5 percent of the board seats were held by women, and 26 percent of the Russell 3000 companies based in California had no women directors serving on their boards. Whether the California mandate will become model legislation for other states remains to be seen. ■



(48) [NI 58-101 Disclosure of Corporate Governance Practices](#), Ontario Securities Commission, 2015.

(49) [California's New Gender Mandate for Corporate Boards](#) Mann Report, Feb. 1, 2019

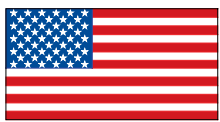


## LEADING PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS FOR ADVANCING WOMEN

# Proven Strategies to Advance Women of Color

*Note: While this section is focused on advancing women of color (defined here as a woman who is not white), we acknowledge that women in diverse affinity groups such as age, race and sexual orientation may also experience different and greater barriers to advancement.*

Programs will fall short of addressing barriers to gender equality if they propel only white women ahead. Successful programs acknowledge that women of color face a different set of barriers in advancing in the workplace compared to white women—and aim for all women to experience equal access to opportunities, pay, and recognition.



Despite representing about 18 percent of the U.S. population, women of color represented only 4 percent of C-suite level positions in 2018, far below white men (68 percent) and white women (19 percent).<sup>50</sup> When it comes to pay, women of color earn between 53 and 61 percent of their white male counterparts, while white women earn between 77 and 85 percent of men.<sup>51</sup>



In Canada, approximately 26 percent of senior managers in the private sector are women, and women of color occupy only 6.5 percent of all management positions. Women of color also are underrepresented among Canada's top earners, earning about 80 percent of what men of color earn, and 56.7 percent of what all men earn.<sup>52</sup>



In the U.K., women of color have seen very little progress since the 1990s in closing the gender pay gap, with a full-time pay gap of 21.4 percent in the 1990s and 19.6 percent today.<sup>53</sup>

Some considerations for companies to close the leadership and pay gaps for women of color:

- **Disaggregate pay data by gender and race.** A wide body of research shows that women of color experience higher pay gaps than white women. However, few organizations take a critical look at how employees are being paid by race and gender; it is usually one or the other. Neglecting to disaggregate

(50) [Women of Color Get Less Support at Work. Here's How Managers Can Change That](#), March 2, 2019, Harvard Business Review.

(51) [Reminder: Today isn't Equal Pay Day for All Women](#), April 2, 2019, CNBC.com.

(52) [Quick Take: Women in the Workforce—Canada](#), May 28, 2019, Catalyst

(53) [Many Minority Ethnic Women 'Left Behind' by Pay Gap Progress](#), March 6, 2017, Fawcett Society

this data has allowed corporations to only tell part of the story.

- **Analyze employee sentiment data by race and gender.** Employee engagement surveys are another area where the analysis is typically only broken down by race or gender. Yet, women of color remain underrepresented and marginalized.
- **Commit to funding and supporting employee resource groups, particularly affinity groups for women of color.** When you address the most marginalized communities in the organization, you have a better shot at creating an inclusive environment. Give people time out of their normal workload to regularly work on employee resource groups.
- **Analyze opportunities for women of color to progress—and ensure your targets/goals to improve gender representation also include racial representation.** Leaders must be intentional about putting as much emphasis and resources behind strategies for racial diversity as gender. This means, for example, including a target for how many women of color will comprise the number of women on your board.

Winters has experienced—and overcome—biases and stereotypes that are barriers to advancement for women. “I have been told that I was ‘aggressive’ and ‘too assertive,’ and that I needed to work on ‘softening my tone.’ I have had discussions with my male counterparts where they agreed that there was a double-standard because they would never be labeled as such or receive this kind of feedback.”

Winters says that although there has been some progress with the advancement of women to management roles, there definitely needs to be more done to advance women of color in senior leadership roles.

“Companies should be more intentional with their hiring process to ensure they have somewhat equal representation based on talent and not just who they know,” Winters says. “It is still a good ol’ boy’s network and if you did not grow up in the same neighborhood, go to the same school, church, etc., it is hard to get hired for senior roles because they already know someone and would prefer to give it to them, regardless of whether or not they are more or less qualified.”

Winters notes that sponsorship is also key. “I had a great supervisor early on in my career who was my sponsor to ensure that I was promoted to asset manager,” she says. “If it were not for him, I am not sure that I would be where I am today. Ensuring that

“We find that **diverse teams** provide better decision making and outcomes,”

This is because participants believe their opinion may be different, so they are more prepared with research and information and ready to voice their opinions.

**This is how you win in the market.”**

—Carolyn McCarty

women, especially women of color, have a sponsor that provides her with the right exposure and leadership over projects is key.”

Carolyn McCarty, head of diversity and inclusion, Capital One Commercial Bank, says when it comes to advancing more women—and more women of color—into leadership, there is no silver bullet.

“You have to be pulling and activating multiple levers. You must change the culture to create an environment where everyone has an equal opportunity to advance while also looking at recruiting efforts and at your bench,” McCarty says. “You also must create objective and intentional talent practices for all—women, men, all different races. If you’re truly objective and intentional with business practices—addressing everybody—it has an impact on underrepresented groups.”

Capital One is undertaking a variety of efforts to champion diversity and inclusion, including:

- All managers participate in an inclusive leader workshop. By the end of 2019, 90 percent of all Capital One people managers will have participated.
- Women in upper-middle management—individuals on the cusp of leadership—are invited to participate in the Emerging Women Leaders Program, which provides women with access and exposure to executive-level information and relationships. The program is in its second year, and the company’s promotional and advancement of women in that group is higher than its peers.
- Teams are intentionally being built to become more diverse to better address business issues.

Of Capital One’s 47,000+ associates, 53 percent are women and 49 percent are people of color. In the



company's 2018 All Associates Survey, 91 percent said they feel that Capital One is a great place to work.

"We find that diverse teams provide better decision making and outcomes," McCarty says. "This is because participants believe their opinion may be different, so they are more prepared with research and information and ready to voice their opinions. This is how you win in the market."

## Unconscious Bias Training

Nearly all of us have unconscious bias whether related to gender, race and/or ethnicity. We need to acknowledge that it exists so we can use our awareness to better understand how to avoid bias. It is critical for companies to discuss the topic openly, even if at times it feels uncomfortable. The more we do this, the more education we can offer, and the more we can break down these barriers.

Bozzuto Management Company offers an unconscious bias training program and is continually evolving it. "We understand this is an important component to building and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace," says Stephanie Williams, president of Bozzuto. "It's woven through our culture at Bozzuto. It's not a box that we check. It's who we are at our core."

One way this training is being implemented is during Bozzuto's hiring process. "It is important to invite others to meet the candidates—those who possess different skill sets and backgrounds, and who think differently than you," Williams says. "We are starting to use more of an interview panel format to bring together people with different viewpoints, eliminate biases, and ensure we don't fall short in recruiting and retaining top talent."

Bozzuto's senior leadership is nearly 50 percent women, and it is striving to reach total equality. "If people look up and don't see someone in the company who looks like them, they won't stay. Top talent won't be retained," says Williams.

## Rules for Success

Being a woman of color at work often means being the only one at the table. It also means that the rules of success are somewhat different than they are for others. Consider these strategies from Ellevest, a global professional women's group:

- **Stop being afraid of being yourself.** According to the Center for Women Policy Studies, 21 percent of women of color do not think they can be themselves

at work. Another 28 to 44 percent believe they must downplay their ethnicity to increase their chances of success at work. Authenticity changes the dialogue about women of color and brings focus on the actual issues faced by women of color at work.

- **Get used to being uncomfortable.** The more uncomfortable you are, the more prepared you tend to be. Getting used to uncomfortable and challenging environments is also the key to being innovative and a high performer.
- **Find your sweet spot.** Finding that overlap between your skills, interests, and opportunities is crucial to achieving success, especially as a woman of color at work.
- **Challenge yourself to speak up.** Speaking up as a woman of color at work can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, you may be labeled as too assertive. On the other hand, not raising your voice may make you seem incompetent or disinterested. The best strategy is to speak up. Share your knowledge, insight and experience to empower others and increase your team and company's efficiency.
- **Share your experience.** There is always going to be a certain level of unconscious bias embedded in people. Change the norm by changing others' understanding of your experiences. Whether you create a group for women of color at work, educate your co-workers and peers, or mentor a fellow woman, use your experience to empower others and create a positive environment.
- **Let your behavior dispel stereotypes.** The most effective way to dispel stereotypes and disprove some of the myths and beliefs around women of color is through consistent, positive behavior.
- **Mentor another woman of color.** While no one woman's experience is the same, there are similar themes in the challenges faced. Mentoring one another is another way to keep that door of opportunity open for future leaders, and to improve work environments with each generation of women leaders.<sup>54</sup>

"Own who you are, be proud of who you are. There is this whole notion around women and women of color about what you can and cannot do, around what is 'professional.' It is exhausting—especially when it comes to appearance," Williams says. "Women need to embrace our cultural differences and if you are in the right organization, they will support and celebrate you." ■

(54) [10 Rules of Success For Women of Color at Work](#), Ellevest



## Commitment from the Top: Male Leader Perspectives

Change starts at the top. We can benchmark all the data and acknowledge the challenges, but we cannot change the status quo without the support and commitment from male leaders.

We asked top male leaders in commercial real estate to provide perspective about women on their leadership teams and boards, and how they are working to increase gender equity and diversity and inclusion in their companies. Here is what they said:

### **Scott Brown, Executive Vice President Lincoln Property Group (LPC):**

“Without question, diversity helps enhance and inform overall goals. At LPC, differing voices and perspectives lead to our increased awareness and new opportunities, and helps identify areas where we need to improve. We encourage all employees—in a number of forums and at every level—to share their ideas, concerns, innovations, successes and challenges. Listening to our diverse workforce and working with them to resolve issues or initiate change results in bringing out the very best for our employees and our clients.

“Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is also reflected in our volunteer activities and sponsorships of organizations helping the Greater Boston community, and in encouraging our team to pursue leadership

roles in organizations that support our diversity and inclusion initiatives, including CREW and BOMA.

“Nationally, LPC’s Commercial employee base is comprised of approximately 60 percent women, and 41 percent minority. Locally, more than 65 percent of leadership roles on the LPC Boston Property Management team are held by women. We’re very proud of those statistics.”

### **Glenn Gallagher, Head of Regional Commercial Real Estate at Capital One:**

“To accelerate our diversity and inclusion efforts, Capital One’s Commercial Bank kicked off two connected efforts that have impacted our commercial real estate organization. The Commercial Bank Diversity Council was relaunched to focus on more action-oriented efforts, and the Emerging Women’s Leaders Program takes our top female talent and provides the network, visibility and support needed to accelerate their success.”

### **Mike Lafitte, Global Chief Executive Officer, Advisory Services, CBRE:**

“A more diverse and inclusive workforce enhances CBRE’s competitive advantage in several ways. First, it creates a productive and engaging work environment

**“We are particularly proud that women are consistently among our very top sales and leasing producers—year-in and year-out—and occupy an increased number of C-suite roles, including Chief Financial Officer, Chief Digital & Technology Officer, Chief People Officer and Chief Marketing Officer.”**

—Mike Lafitte

that allows each employee to contribute to her or his full potential. Second, we are expanding the pool of available talent by considering people of all backgrounds and life experiences. And third, we are able to attract top talent to CBRE because the best people want to work at companies that share their values. Diversity and inclusion also helps advance our business strategy. We can better understand—and therefore meet—the needs of our changing customer base.

“We’ve implemented targeted programs that aim to attract more women to our company and enable them to build fulfilling careers here. These efforts include recruiting, mentoring and developing strong female professionals at all levels of our company. We are particularly proud that women are consistently among our very top sales and leasing producers—year-in and year-out—and occupy an increased number of C-suite roles, including Chief Financial Officer, Chief Digital & Technology Officer, Chief People Officer and Chief Marketing Officer.”

**Shawn Mobley, Chief Executive Officer, Americas, Cushman & Wakefield:**

“Women make up a significant cohort of Cushman & Wakefield’s top brokerage professionals, service line

leaders, functional leaders and geographic leaders. That’s not an accident. The experience, focus and perspective our diverse employees bring to the table—including women at all levels of the organization—drives our success. And we leverage those qualities through our Women’s Integrated Network (WIN) to foster gender equality and inclusiveness, further professional development, celebrate colleagues’ accomplishments and recruit and empower the top women in our industry.

“A focus on diversity and inclusion is a foundational component of our success. A more diverse workforce reflects our clients, creates more opportunities for innovation and helps us better understand markets on a local and global level. Our people demand it, our clients expect it and—most importantly—because we are a people and ideas business, we produce the best outcomes when we harness the power of diverse teams and diverse perspectives.”

**Brett White, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Cushman & Wakefield:**

“Inclusion must be a management-led business solution, not just relegated to a single department or project. Our executive management team has dedicated real time this year to creating strategies that will drive inclusion into our organization. For example, right now we’re focused on setting clear expectations for managers in the field to ensure their talent management processes are consistent and inclusive.

“While there’s still much work to do, we are proud of the progress we’re making. In 2018, 65 percent of managers hired in the U.S. were diverse, women represented 42 percent of new hires globally, and women comprised 40 percent of the firm’s external Board of Directors. Our Women’s Integrated Network (WIN) has grown to more than 2,400 active members across 43 chapters around the world and now offers a nine-month mentoring program, ongoing professional development opportunities and scholarships to CREW Network’s Leadership Certificate program.” ■

# Accelerating Women: An Action Guide

So why, despite the intentions and efforts of company executives, does the underrepresentation of women in commercial real estate leadership continue? Company executives may be inclined to think of gender equity and overall diversity and inclusion as a human resources issue. However, any significant movement in women gaining greater opportunities in the C-suite and greater diversity and inclusion across company leadership must be sanctioned from the top of the organization. When the CEO holds his leadership accountable for identifying and sponsoring women into greater leadership roles, it creates a mandate that matters.

To accelerate all women in leadership and activate change in our industry, we need a shared commitment to tangible action. Following are practical tactics company leaders can implement to create a clear plan for the advancement of women.



## Strengthening the Pipeline of Women into the Industry

- Connect with local schools and universities to educate students about the myriad opportunities that exist in the industry for women; direct students to [CareersBuildingCommunities.org](http://CareersBuildingCommunities.org) to find CRE careers that fit their interests
- Expose young professionals—especially those in high school and college who are contemplating career options—to commercial real estate careers through the CREW Careers and UCREW programs
- Post your internship opportunities on the CREW Network CRE internships platform ([creinternships.org](http://creinternships.org)) to encourage women and people of color to apply
- Actively recruit women and people of color to join your company
- Develop creative compensation models
- Leverage assessment tools that evaluate core competencies and predictors of success



## Advancing Women from Mid-Level to Senior Executive Leadership

- Provide women with opportunities for advancement into high-level line and operational roles
- Challenge women with stretch assignments such as global responsibilities, leading a business line, and contributing to a turnaround or expansion
- Engage and identify high-potential women early and openly to reinforce the pipeline
- Provide high-potential women with more exposure to senior leadership and boards
- Develop a sponsorship program for women in your company
- Create recognition programs that promote successful women leaders as role models
- Develop programs and initiatives to help employees integrate the demands of work and life



## Achieving Gender Equity on Your Corporate Board

- Expand the size of your board
- Avoid filling open board seats with people already in your personal and professional networks
- Periodically assess the skill sets that are ideal for the board compared with the skill sets currently represented on the board to identify gaps, and use it as an opportunity to build diversity
- Create more egalitarian board cultures that integrate contrasting insights and welcome conversations from everyone
- Ensure targets and goals to improve gender representation also include racial representation



## Advancing Women of Color

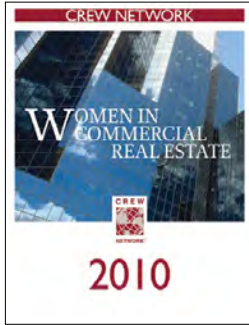
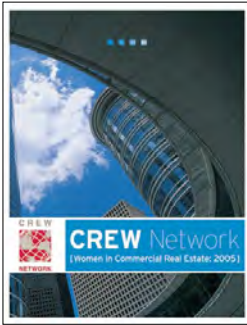
- Acknowledge that women of color face a different set of barriers to advancement than white women and aim for all women to experience equal access to opportunities, pay, and recognition
- Ensure your targets/goals to improve gender representation also include racial and ethnic representation
- Focus on recruiting women of color from university programs and professional organizations
- Advocate for pay transparency practices, disaggregate pay data by gender and race, and make adjustments if needed
- Analyze employee sentiment data by race and gender
- Establish unconscious bias training in your company and confront your own bias

**Recognize and mobilize top women talent: the time is now.** For companies who care about business performance and have not prioritized diversity as a key lever for driving growth, now is the time to commit to making a change. Gender equity and diversity and inclusion are no longer just the right thing to do—it is the smart thing to do.

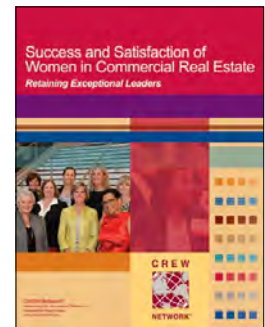
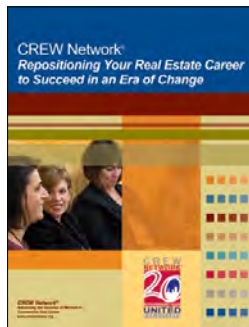
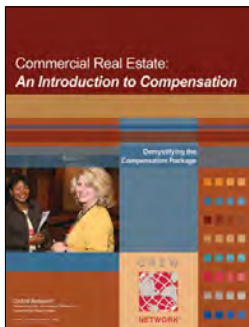
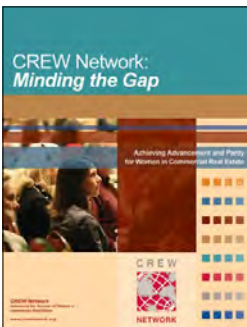
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## Benchmark Studies



## White Papers





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