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WEL January 2012 Newsletter



Happy New Year!

We have hit the ground running in 2012 with exciting program events and excellent speakers throughout the month of January.

During the month of December, both [Catalyst](#) and [I/O](#) released data surrounding the number of female directors in Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies. While the numbers show little-to-no fluctuation, Florida did see an increase in the percentage of executive officers who are women.

WEL's census women directors and executive officers for 2011 identified 15 of Florida's top 100 public companies with two or more women on their board of directors. In 100 in Florida women hold 79 of a total 864 board seats. This represents 9.3% as compared to 8.8% in 2010. While it's a step in the right direction, there is definitely work to be done.

Leveaging these studies, WEL received some attention in [Florida Today](#), [The Orlando Business Journal](#) and [The Miami Herald](#) to name a few. We are very appreciative of these opportunities to share our mission and gain further exposure for our organization.

All the best,

Laura A. Marks
President
Women Executive Leadership

Conversations with Alex Sink; Leadership in Private Industry and in the Public Eye

This past week, Alex Sink joined WEL bright and early for a breakfast event in Miami where she shared insights about her leadership roles in both banking and politics. As always, she was honest, forthright and inspiring. Highlights of the program include Sink's reflections on her career moves during her time in banking as well as challenges and opportunities she encountered while holding the position of CFO for the state of Florida.



Currently, Alex is the Chair of the [The Florida Next Foundation](#), a non-profit that is dedicated to re-invigorating and re-envisioning

Florida's small businesses and quality of life. She is also a Senior Advisor with [Hyde Park Capital](#), a Tampa-based firm that offers services for investment banking, mergers and acquisitions, and capital raising.

Sponsor Spotlight -



This month, we are pleased to turn the spotlight on Crowe Horwath LLP, one of the top 10 public accounting and consulting firms in the U.S. The spotlight also shines on WEL's Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Cindy Kushner, who is a Partner of the firm.



The conversation provides us an opportunity to learn more about Crowe Horwath's commitment to gender diversity and her hopes for a future with a more equal playing field.

Cindy shared with me that while over 50% of new hires out of college to the public accounting profession are female, that number drops to 35% at the manager level, and into the teens at the partner level.

First, tell me a little about why you saw a need for an organization like WEL?

My philosophy has always been that it's important to get the right person for the job, and if women are left out of the selection process, how do we know that viable talent isn't being overlooked? So, the intention has always been for WEL to serve as a bridge between companies who are committed to gender diversity and board-ready female candidates.

By creating strategic alliances and educational, yet opportunistic, programming, we have been able to get more females included in the selection process and, in my opinion that is progress.

WEL provides its members with significant opportunities to network with other female executives as well as access to executive search firms who have been retained by leading companies to place top talent on their boards.

Crowe Horwath has been a long time supporter of WEL. Tell me about the firm's commitment to diversity.

Advancing women into leadership positions is part of the firm's inclusion initiative that leverages diversity so we can better serve our clients and ultimately the communities in which we work. We have women on our Executive Committees, as well as many women in other leadership positions. Our firm also created Women Into Leadership (WIL), a program designed to support our commitment to advancing women leaders within our firm. Through mentoring programs, career development initiatives, and organizational

advocacy, we have been able to remove some of the unintended barriers that may prevent some women from reaching leadership positions.

What are you hoping for the future?

In the next five years I hope that our organization, and others like us, can help accelerate change on a higher level. It has taken way too long to move the needle on this issue and through WEL's census studies and programming, I'm hoping for bigger and faster results. This is a national, if not an international, issue and raising visibility on a global level is the way to go.

What's Upcoming...



On January 31st, we will be hosting a program event and reception at the esteemed Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg. Featured guest speakers include Karen Dunlap, PhD, President of the Poynter Institute and Jill Geisler, Head of Leadership and Management Programs and Columnist "What Great Bosses Know." By Invitation Only!

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Upcoming WEL Events

Visit our website to see a calendar of upcoming events for 2012.

<http://womenexecutiveleadership.com/index.php/programs/calendar>

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