



INSIGHTS & LESSONS FROM OUR 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

For many organizations, the beginning of a new year signifies the beginning of new goals and strategies to enhance an organization's mission. At the Alliance, we hope organizations take the time to reflect on the lessons learned at our 2019 Annual Conference, [*Inspire. Innovate. Ignite!*](#) — it was a day packed with inspirational stories, innovative strategies and expert insights on trends and best practices covering D & I and flexible work strategies.

Here are our **top four takeaways** that we recommend keeping in mind when planning for the new year:

1. ***If you take the time to develop an innovative, holistic flexibility initiative that is sincerely embraced by leadership, you will meet the needs of a more diverse group of employees. In turn, you will create a truly inclusive culture.***

Our [**Flex Impact Award**](#) winners – PwC and Morgan Lewis – are proof of this concept. Morgan Lewis reported that 60% of associates said the firm's two day a week *Remote Working Policy* was the reason they chose to work at the firm! The key to Morgan Lewis's success? Senior leadership personally and genuinely promoted the policy resulting in an authentic shift in organizational culture. PwC also made communication from the top their number one priority when implementing their *Flexibility²* program. PwC's Chairman reached out directly to 3,500 partners worldwide to reinforce the importance of their comprehensive, flexible working program.

2. ***Expanded and inventive leave policies are critical to organizational success in the next decade.***

The preliminary results of our [**Law Firm Flexibility Insight Interview Study**](#) indicate that organizations must implement gender-neutral parental leave policies, eliminate caregiver designations in these policies, provide robust off/on-ramping support around leave, and formalize telecommuting policies to compete for top talent. (Stay tuned for the complete results and the launch of our **Corporate Flexibility Benchmarking Survey** in early 2020.)

3. ***Small improvements – or “Bright Spots” – can have a huge impact on your recruitment and retention efforts, as well as your employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction.***

Our [Bright Spots](#) Roundtable Discussions revealed countless brilliant and inventive ideas to improve inclusivity, such as:

- An all-inclusive parent network;
- A “Creative Inclusion Project” competition;
- Imaginative ways to creatively retain senior talent;
- Partnerships with diverse schools to ensure talent pipelines;
- Robust evaluation training for those giving and receiving feedback;
- An electronic workflow system that tracks project opportunities;
- Paid parental leave ramp-up and ramp-down programs;
- And, a customized parent mentorship support system.

4. To further move the needle and advance more women to top leadership levels, organizations must commit to systematically managing the pipeline of women, bolster support structures around flexible work programs, and provide mentor/sponsorship opportunities.

The biggest Bright Spot of the day was our announcement of the 51 major law firms that are “Tipping the Scales” by having women represent 50% or more of their 2019 new partner class (as identified through our [New Partner Report](#)). These 51 firms have clearly signaled their commitment to advancing more women into leadership, and we can all learn from their success. Our 2019 [New Partner Report](#) showed promising results – the share of women among new partners increased substantially to 41.3%, representing an increase of 2.4% from 2018. To further close the gap, firms must systematically manage the pipeline of women lawyers at every level, implement true workplace flexibility by improving support structures, create educational programs and monitoring mechanisms around flexible work, and support the advancement of women through sponsorship/mentoring.

We hope all our members will join us for our 2020 Annual Conference on **November 5, 2020** in Washington, DC to be part of the discussion and create a community of colleagues who share your passion in furthering diversity and flexibility.

TAKE ACTION

The Alliance is here to provide you with expert advice about developing a strategic D & I plan for your organization. As you develop your plans for the year, don’t forget to take advantage of all that your membership entails:

- [Schedule your annual Strategic Planning Call](#) (a member exclusive benefit) with our team.
- [Contact Eliza Musallam](#) with any general membership questions.
- Mark your calendars with our [upcoming events](#) and webinars.
- [Contact Manar Morales](#) to schedule your advisory services hours or to use your annual policy review.