

Women of Color in Accounting:

Women of Color in Professional Services Series

Women of Color in Accounting

Women of Color in Professional Services Series

According to *Women of Color in Accounting*, the second report in Catalyst's breakthrough *Women of Color in Professional Services Series*, women of color struggle to gain experience, support, and exposure essential to succeed in accounting firms. Workplace experiences of women of color are vastly different from those of white women, white men, and men of color. Furthermore, the study finds that these unique experiences should be recognized in order to better engage women of color and offer this crucial employee group greater access to advancement opportunities.

The report develops findings that compare the experiences of women of color with other demographic groups and provides a critical look at "intersectionality," which this study defines as the juncture between race/ ethnicity and gender as it specifically impacts women of color.

The accounting industry faces increasing talent recruitment and retention demands, and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of accountants and auditors is expected to grow faster than average through 2016. More than half the graduates earning accounting degrees are women, and women of color are a critical part of the talent pool for accounting firms. Yet according to this study, barriers for women of color include race-based disadvantages, double standards, and a lack of access to high-visibility engagements. These barriers result in women of color having low satisfaction in their careers, which is a significant predictor of intent to leave their firms.

"The accounting industry has made great strides towards building a more diverse and inclusive workplace. The fact that the 'big four' accounting firms supported this study demonstrates a commitment to making their diversity strategies more effective, especially for women of color," said **Ilene H. Lang, President of Catalyst**. "Working to further change the white, male, up-and-out culture to one that is more inclusive to women and people of color will not only expand opportunities for women of color in the accounting industry but also allow firms to attract and retain the best and brightest in the field."

Ernst & Young is the lead sponsor of *Women of Color in Accounting*, with contributing sponsors **Deloitte & Touche**, **KPMG**, and **PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**. For more information or to download or purchase *Women of Color in Accounting*, please visit www.catalyst.org. **Catalyst's Speakers Bureau** is also highlighting a speaking opportunity designed around the *Women of Color in Professional Services Series*. As with all of our presentations, this for-fee engagement can be customized to fit your audience and speaking engagement needs. To schedule a speaking engagement, contact Serena Fong at 646-388-7757, sfong@catalyst.org or Tracie Maloney at 646-388-7739, tmaloney@catalyst.org.

About Catalyst

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit membership organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive workplaces and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in the United States, Canada, and Europe, and the support of more than 370 member organizations, Catalyst is the premier resource for research, information, and trusted advice about women at work. Catalyst annually honors exemplary organizational initiatives that promote women's advancement with the Catalyst Award.

