Forté
More Women Leading

BEST PRACTICES
FOR RECRUITING WOMEN

ATTRACT HIGH-PERFORMING TALENT

Forté provides holistic solutions to companies and academic institutions to recruit and retain leading talent at every career stage. We partner with forward-thinking organizations who share our commitment to increase access to opportunities for women and improve representation at every level.

EARLY CAREER → MID CAREER → ADVANCED CAREER

www.fortefoundation.org/morewomenleading

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING WOMEN

It's been 20 years since Forté set out to change the status quo. At the time, women comprised just 28% of MBA students at leading business schools, and Forté's remit was challenging: grow female enrollment, increase the ranks of women pursuing business careers, and help launch more women into the C-suite.

Over the years, the hard work of Forté, other organizations and institutions, and individuals has paid off.

As of 2023, women's full-time enrollment in MBA programs is 42%, 10% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women, 33% of S&P Board seats are occupied by women, and post-MBA compensation has increased significantly for both white and underrepresented minority women.

Despite this progress, inequities still exist. According to Forté research, the gender pay gap is still formidable, more men than women hold line roles, post-MBA men are promoted more often than post-MBA women, and men have more direct reports.

These challenges can hinder a recruiter's ability to attract high-performing female talent who want to work for companies where they fit in, and feel included and empowered to succeed. By applying the following best practices from company executives and leveraging Forté's exceptional suite of resources and tools, recruiters can generate more high-quality leads.

1 FACILITATE FLEXIBILITY

A post-pandemic reckoning among women who won't go back to the way things were means flexibility is the currency of the realm. Many women will choose a job that allows for sustainable work-life balance, even if the salary is lower. Our research shows that for URM women in particular, flexible work policies are very important to career advancement and satisfaction.

22%

Research by Ernst & Young found that flexibility boosted women's perceptions that they could reach senior levels in their company by 22%.

2 PERSONALIZE YOUR PACKAGE

Women don't all need or want the same things, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to benefits. Have a conversation, meet women where they are, and think outside the benefits box to accommodate your recruits' most-desired needs.

73%

of employees said having customized benefits made them more loyal to their employers, according to a MetLife survey.

3 CREATE A COLLEGIAL CULTURE

Everyone can benefit from relationships in the workplace that support professional growth. Colleagues and mentors can offer valuable perspectives for everything from starting a family, considering a move, and pursuing a promotion or a raise, for example.

One of the top 3 factors women consider when deciding to join or stay with a company is having a manager who cares about their well-being.

4 STOKE YOUR "KEEP WARM" STRATEGY

Play the long game: stay connected to stand-out candidates who may not have accepted your offer or weren't quite right for the initial role. Invite them to external events or educational webinars, check in with them occasionally, and let them know about other opportunities as they become available.

Lack of a sufficient candidate pool was cited as the most significant barrier to increased levels of experienced female hires according to research by PwC.

5 REALIZE WOMEN'S READINESS

Women are already prepared for leadership roles. Women are often either overlooked or lack the confidence of their male peers, but it doesn't mean they are not competent. In fact, women are often more qualified than men who apply for the same jobs or reach for the same promotions. Use AI to mobilize and parse data on where women are falling off the ladder, and deploy interventions to prevent it from continuing.

Women were

14% less

likely to be promoted than their male colleagues, despite receiving higher performance ratings.

6 RECOGNIZE THE MANY PATHS TO BUSINESS

Business success often hinges on the strength of relationships, and any background can contribute to that goal. Non-traditional work and educational experiences, for example, hide a whole world of talent. More women than men study the liberal arts, but that doesn't mean they don't have instincts, skills, and experiences applicable to a career in business.

Top 3 skills

employers consider to be important when hiring talent are:

Written communication

Problem solving

The ability to work in a team

7 RESPECT REPRESENTATION

Increase the visibility of women leaders and showcase their executive presence so that others can see themselves in similar roles and your company will foster trust. What you say about women in high-powered roles will not be credible if no one can see that women are actively holding those positions.

65%

of Gen Z women look for women in leadership roles before applying to a job.

8 LEVERAGE FORTÉ

Through its employer advisory board, Forté listens to the challenges that corporate recruiters face, then designs and delivers programs and services that offer solutions to the issues that keep recruiters up at night. Think of Forté as a business partner who wants to help you succeed.

75%

of women say they are more likely to choose a company with a demonstrated commitment to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce.

GETTING THE MOST OF YOUR FORTÉ PARTNERSHIP

A Membership Database Like No Other

Recruiters prize Forté's curated database, which contains 100,000+ profiles of determined, high-performing, business-minded women, of which 40% to 45% are underrepresented minorities. No other organization comes close to offering access to such a deep bench of high-quality, diverse, female talent.

Celebrated Career Center

The Forté Career Center's job board is a hub for both seasoned and early-career women. Smart, well-qualified women who trust Forté and the quality of its programs appreciate the opportunity to upload their resumes, gain visibility within a selective audience, and access exclusive job openings.

Powerful Conferences

Something special happens at Forté's College Career Conferences when undergraduate women gain visibility to successful women in business, perhaps for the first time. While Fast Track to Finance, Campus to Business Leadership, Women of Color Leadership Symposium, and the Virtual Women's Conference and Career Expo offer distinct content to attendees, they all enable authentic connections, empower young women to ask honest questions, and provide life-changing feedback and direction.

A Broad Reach

Forté has the broadest reach of any similar organization, bringing together three talent profiles in one place: undergraduates, MBA students, and mid-career professionals. Partnering with Forté pays off both in the short and long term, providing a distinctive recruiting experience not just for graduating MBAs, but for directors, managing partners, and even corporate board members.

This article was derived from interviews with the following experts:
Cat McLaughlin, Chief People Officer, Lafayette Square
Lori Sullivan, Director of University Recruiting, Gartner
Shuntasha Phillips, Director of DEI PA Partnerships, Gartner
Stacie Sasaki, former Barclays recruiter