

ORRICK'S FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM SET THEM APART IN THE INDUSTRY

We sat down with Partner Amy Padgett of the 2021 Best Law Firm for Women to discuss how women attorneys are encouraged to succeed.

By [Working Mother Editorial Staff](#)

The Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe leader discusses how women are encouraged to succeed at the firm.

1. What programs and initiatives have helped propel women at your law firm to success? Why have they specifically been so successful?

We take a holistic approach to developing, retaining and advancing women at Orrick with the goal of being intentional about helping every woman become the leader she wants to be. Some of the most impactful programs for me have been our associate training academies, our family-friendly policies, and our many formal mentoring and coaching programs.

The academies give associates the opportunity every few years to focus on the training, business development and networking skills to help them achieve and succeed. Our women's mentoring program matches mentors and mentees based on needs and interests, and we recently launched mentoring circles, which are creating even more connectivity.

Orrick also prioritizes supporting and retaining parents by offering a market-leading parental leave policy of at least 16 weeks of paid leave for moms and dads alike. We also recognize that the return is as important as the leave. Our on-ramping program helps parents manage their time as they integrate their family and professional lives.

What's also important is that we don't pretend it's easy, but we have created an environment where we can share our experiences and talk about how we can make things better together. A recent example of that is the caregiver relief that the firm offered during the pandemic. We were worried about what we heard from some of our parents, so we offered a temporary program of 80 percent work for 100 percent pay for those who needed it most. I believe these kinds of initiatives create a culture where you know that your colleagues have your back—and at the end of the day, that's more important than any policy or program.

2. Why is it so important to excel women within your firm?

For me personally, it's made it possible to connect with the firm and with a career in law. I feel like I belong here. We have all heard the phrase, "If you see it, you can achieve it." This has been particularly true for me and my career. Having women as role models, partners and mentors allowed me to believe that I too could achieve that level of success. It's critically important for the future of our firm and our next generation of associates and partners to see women as partners and leaders within the firm.

3. What percentage of partners at your firm are female and how has that changed over time?

Currently, 27 percent of our partners in the US are women. This is an increase from 21 percent in 2016. We also have a senior leadership team that is 55 percent diverse.

4. How has your firm as a whole improved by helping more women progress from within?

It's given us access to great talent. If we didn't create a culture where women join, stay and excel, we would be at a real disadvantage in having the teams we need to serve our clients. Many of our clients are women, too—and they want women on their teams. It's hard to imagine Orrick without the incredible voices of our women attorneys and the women on our leadership team.

5. What are some future initiatives that you plan to implement to further help women progress?

I am especially excited about some work I've been doing on our new workflow tool (which we designed with the support of the Diversity Lab's Mansfield Rule in collaboration with Move the Needle Fund). It's a way of interrupting any bias and making sure that women and other traditionally underrepresented attorneys are getting the opportunities they need to advance. We are also focused on expanding leadership training and offering individualized coaching for women attorneys. Especially in the hybrid workplace, being intentional and inclusive about this kind of support will be important.

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