

# CORPORATE BOARDS: LAST BASTION OF THE OLD-BOYS CLUB?

**WOMEN HOLD MORE THAN HALF OF THE MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL JOBS IN AMERICA.** Yet, in 2006, they held fewer than 15% of board positions in Fortune 500 companies. For smaller companies, the numbers are even lower. *What's wrong with this picture?* Bentley Professor Patricia Flynn tackles this question as she tracks data for an annual census on women directors in Massachusetts companies. She has one word for the progress women are making: discouraging.

PATRICIA M. FLYNN, Trustee Professor of Economics & Management

Q+A

## WHAT ARE THE EXCUSES?

Some companies claim they can't find qualified women candidates. Obviously, they're not looking in the right places—we can help with that. Other companies claim to have no vacancies. Last year we focused specifically on that issue.

## ARE THERE VACANCIES?

Definitely. Overall the companies we analyzed had a 10% turnover of independent directors. Unfortunately, only a small number of those openings were filled by women.

## WHY DOES GENDER DIVERSITY MATTER?

Not only is it the 'right' thing to do—it's a smart business decision. Boards should be sensitive to their customer and shareholder constituencies. Women are responsible for over 85% of all spending in this country and half of the investing. Companies can benefit from their input at the board level.

## DIVERSITY IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

There is growing evidence that diverse boards are correlated with improved financial performance. To remain competitive in a global market, it makes sense to include a wide variety of cultures, experiences and backgrounds on corporate boards.

**MORE** Professor Flynn discusses her work at [www.bentley.edu/research](http://www.bentley.edu/research)



*Patricia M. Flynn is the Trustee Professor of Economics and Management at Bentley College. Her current research has focused on the development of innovation economies in Ireland and Massachusetts as well as corporate board governance issues. She has written extensively on women in business.*

**BENTLEY COLLEGE** in Waltham, Massachusetts, is preparing undergraduate and graduate students to succeed in a rapidly changing global marketplace. To learn more about our renowned faculty, innovative programs and cutting-edge technology, we invite you to contact Bentley today.

©2008 Bentley College, Waltham, MA



**BENTLEY**

**Business in a Whole New Light™**

[www.bentley.edu](http://www.bentley.edu)