



For Job Seekers | For Employers | About WetFeet

Search

Search in ...

[Advanced Search](#)

[Research Companies, Careers and Industries](#)

[Company Interviews](#) | [Career Profiles](#)
[Company Profiles](#) | [Industry Profiles](#)
[Insider Guides](#) | [Real People Profiles](#)

[Manage Your Career](#)

[Salary & Perks](#) | [Interviewing](#)
[Self-assessment](#) | [Women & Diversity](#)
[Resume Help](#) | [Discussion Boards](#)

[Find a Job](#)

[Job Listings](#)
[Internship Listings](#)
[International](#)

Find Insider Guides

More Career Topics

[Free Membership](#)

The WetFeet Store

Just in...
New Insider Guides!

- [20 Top Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Firms](#)
- [Ace Your Case III™: Practice Makes Perfect](#)
- [From College to Career: Entry-Level Resumes for Any Major From Accounting to Zoology](#)

[VIEW ALL INSIDER GUIDES](#)

Insider Guide Sale!

**WetFeet Insider Guide
March Madness Sale!**

**Save \$10
on orders over \$50**

From now until the end of March, save \$10 on any purchase \$50 and over.

Welcome. [Login](#) or [Join](#)

[WetFeet Insider Guides](#) [Shopping Cart](#) [Help](#)

[Home](#) > [Diversity](#) > Article

What Women Should Look for in a Firm

Brought to you by: **Deloitte Consulting**
soon to be Braxton
Soon to become Braxton.

Figure out whether a firm is right for you by answering questions about advancement, diversity, and work/life balance.

By Sheila Wellington
Catalyst



[E-mail this page to a friend](#)

You've made the decision that a firm is the right place for you. You are attracted to the potential for advancement, intellectual stimulation, and financial reward. But how do you select the right firm? Catalyst has uncovered key questions you should ask when picking a firm, through years of researching, and talking to, women in corporations and firms.

What Does the Career Path Look Like?

As a talented and ambitious individual, you want to work at a firm where you will be able to use your skills and advance. That means you need to *check out the facts*. You can start by getting answers to the following questions:

- Is there diversity in the management ranks?
- Are there "glass walls," with people clustered in areas that don't lead to advancement or partnership?
- Is there a formal process for handling assignments?

Checking the facts enables you to see if there's a clear path to the top.

Get The Insider Guide



NEW 2002 EDITION!

**The Insider's
Guide to
Negotiating
Salary and
Perks**

Price: \$19.95

Choose your format:



[Important PDF Info](#)

WetFeet Resources

[Getting Ahead: Eight Axioms for Women's Advancement](#)

[How to Succeed at Your Firm](#)

[Discussion Boards](#)

[View All Insider Guides](#)

Partner Spotlight

What Is the Company's Culture Like?

Although firms tend to change more slowly than corporations, there are firms out there with great track records for advancement and retention. With a bit of effort, you can find them. The questions below will help you pinpoint what to look for:

- What is the firm's reputation as a place to work? Check out "Best Employer" lists like those found in *Fortune* and *Working Mother* magazines. And find out if the company is a Catalyst Award winner.
- Does it offer formal advancement programs like networking and mentoring? By doing a little digging, you'll get a good sense of whether you'll have opportunities to move ahead.

Can You Manage Work and Life?

It's important to figure out whether the values of your potential firm match your own. Catalyst has found that Generation Xers want flexibility to ensure that they can have lives outside of work. How can you find out if the environment allows you to balance your work and personal lives? Look into the policies on travel, site work, and career progression, and ask for examples on how they are used. Here are a couple of questions to get you started:

- Has anyone used a flexible work arrangement? What are the career impacts of using one?
- Do men and women take parental leave? Are there part-time partners? If so, do they participate in core activities, like business development and pro bono work, as well as billings?
- What are the requirements for billable hours, and are they different at various levels?

Investigating flexible work policies will give you the information you need to plan your career and life goals.

It's Up to You

When looking for the firm that's right for you, remember that you can chart your own course to success. However, it's a good idea to put yourself in the position to do so successfully. Do your research, get the facts, and choose carefully. When you pick the right firm, you will be on your way to a challenging, rewarding career.

The ideas for this article were excerpted from Sheila Wellington's book, *Be Your Own Mentor*, published by Random House in February 2001.

Learn about different careers, what kind of money you could make, and the kind of place you could be working.
[Career Advice Discussion Board](#)

Author Bio

Sheila W. Wellington is the president of Catalyst, the nation's premier, non-profit organization on women's private sector leadership. Having broken new ground for women in her own career, Ms. Wellington identifies strongly with women's efforts to advance in business. Ms. Wellington was the second woman officer of Yale University, serving as secretary for six years. Previously, she worked in the public health arena for more than 20 years, serving on the faculty of Yale Medical School and as director of two major mental health facilities.

