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Survey Shows Slow, Steady Improvements in Law Firm Diversity
Minorities and Women Make Gains, But Still Underrepresented

NEW YORK – Results of a national survey released jointly by Vault.com and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) show that minority and women attorneys are making slow but steady advancement in their law firm careers but are still far from achieving full parity.

The findings are from the annual Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Survey conducted in the spring of 2013 and the quantitative data were reported as of the end of the 2012 calendar year. Participants included 233 law firms representing virtually all of the AmLaw 100 and a majority of the NLJ 250. The survey collected quantitative data on the numbers of attorneys who are minorities, women, GLBT, or individuals with disabilities, as well as qualitative information regarding firms' diversity plans and initiatives.

For the complete results of this year's survey, visit the Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Database at <http://mcca.vault.com>. Survey results for the past five years are also contained in the fully searchable database.

Issues raised in this year's survey will also be discussed during the [Creating Pathways to Diversity® Conference](http://Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference) on September 16. Sponsored by MCCA, the conference will take place at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City. Sessions include – #203: Law Firm-Law Department Collaborations for Diversity and Inclusion and #301: Creating Effective Sponsorship Programs to Develop and Grow Diverse Talent.

This year's Vault/MCCA survey provides evidence of some progress for attorneys of color at virtually all levels within law firms, from the recruitment of summer associates and hiring of laterals to the promotion of partners and accession to leadership roles. However, progress is slow, especially at the leadership level.

Not all minority groups are faring equally well, the study found. While the number of Hispanic and Latino students among summer associates is increasing, for example, the percentage of African-Americans hired has declined. And the number of women attorneys in law firms has remained fairly static in recent years.

Also, diversification of law firm partnerships remains slow. Minorities and women now make up more than 40 percent of the law firm attorneys, but nearly 75 percent of partners are white men.

Highlights from the Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Survey help illustrate these findings:

- The percentage of minority attorneys has increased modestly over the last four years, from 13.44 percent in 2009 to 14.27 percent in 2012. This increase reflects growing numbers of minorities within most of the attorney categories tracked in the survey – associates and partners (both equity and non-equity).
- About one in eight attorneys (13.09 percent) promoted to partner in 2012 was part of a racial/ethnic minority group.
- The past year showed an uptick in the hiring of minority lawyers and law students. At 28.11 percent, the 2012 summer associate class included the highest representation of minorities in the last six years. And the percentage of minority attorneys hired rebounded from a low of 19.09 percent in 2009 to 21.67 percent in 2012.
- Minority attorneys are gaining representation within law firm leadership. In 2012, attorneys of color represented 6.29 percent of management/executive committee members, up from 5.42 percent in 2007. Also, minority men and women represented 5.71 percent of practice group/department leaders, compared to 5.09 percent in 2008.
- Retention of minorities remains a concern. Minorities made up 14.27 percent of attorneys at law firms in 2012, but they represented 19.88 percent of lawyers who left their firms that year.
- The percentage of African-American lawyers among surveyed firms has been decreasing each year since reaching 3.62 percent in 2007, falling to 3.05 percent in 2012. This trend was mirrored in the areas of recruitment and promotion; the percentage of black associates fell from 5.11 percent in 2007 to 4.23 percent in 2012.
- Hispanics and Asians are the segments of the minority population that have seen the most consistent gains in the Vault/MCCA survey. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino lawyers promoted to partner increased from 3.03 percent in 2007 to 4.04 percent in 2012, and they represented 3.16 percent of all attorneys. Asian Americans now account for 6.44 percent of the law firm population, and 10.23 percent of attorneys hired in 2012 were of Asian descent.
- The number of women lawyers stood at 33.66 percent in 2012, a number that has held fairly steady since 2007. The number of women associates – 45.05 percent of the law firm population – also hasn't changed significantly since 2007.
- However, more women are joining the rank of partner. The percentage of attorneys promoted to partner who were female was 33.06 percent in 2012, up from 30.03 percent in 2007. Women have also been making inroads into the equity tier, rising from 16.05 percent of equity partners in 2007 to 17.88 percent in 2012.
- Women are also gaining ground in firm management. Women now represent 17.81 percent of executive or management committee members, compared to 14.81 percent in 2007.
- There has been a slight decrease in overall attrition by female attorneys over the last few years. The lowest rate was among midlevel lawyers (associates with four to six years of experience), 45.92 percent of whom were women, the lowest since 2007. However, younger women did not fare as well. In 2012, 48.08 percent of first-year associates who left were women, and the

number of departing third-year associates who were women reached a six-year high at 50.18 percent.

- The number of openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) lawyers reported by law firms has increased slightly over the last six years, from 1.58 percent in 2007 to 1.87 percent in 2012. The highest percentage of GLBT lawyers was reported for associates, 2.50 percent.
- Survey data for attorneys with disabilities was less reliable since approximately one-third of reporting firms do not track or disclose disability information. However, the 2012 data indicates that less than one percent of the law firm population consists of attorneys with disabilities.
- The majority of attorneys working part time are still women, but the number of male attorneys working part time grew significantly, from 23.88 percent in 2007 to 29.89 percent in 2012.

About the Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Database

The Vault/MCCA Law Firm Diversity Database (mcca.vault.com) is the legal industry's primary tool for measuring law firm diversity. It includes law firm demographics, with breakdowns by race/ethnicity and gender, GLBT attorneys and individuals with disabilities, as well as qualitative information regarding firms' diversity plans and initiatives. This free online tool (registration is required) allows the corporate counsel community, graduating law students and prospective employees to make side-by-side comparisons of diversity metrics, track firms' progress over the last six years and evaluate their performance against industry-wide benchmarks.

About Vault

Vault.com is the source of employer and university rankings, ratings and insight for highly credentialed, in-demand candidates. Vault's editorial mission is to provide the research required by candidates to evaluate professions, industries, educational pathways, and top companies. Vault ratings and rankings inform candidates' analysis of companies and allow direct comparison between potential employers in such high value industries as law, banking, consulting and accounting. Vault's customers include Fortune 1000 advertisers and recruiters, the country's top universities and graduate schools—and 8 million consumers worldwide.

About MCCA

The Minority Corporate Counsel Association (mcca.com) was founded in 1997 to advance the hiring, retention and promotion of diverse attorneys in legal departments and the law firms that serve them. MCCA accomplishes its mission through publishing, research and training, pipeline initiatives and networking. MCCA's work has been recognized with awards from the National Minority Business Council, Inc., the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the National LGBT Bar, and the Association of Corporate Counsel. MCCA is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

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