

# The Boston Globe

## Ranks of top-level women decline

### More firms in state have no executives

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The number of top-level women executives in Massachusetts is the lowest it's been in six years, according to a study to be released today.

The Boston Club, an organization of professional women, found that 60 women have top-level positions in the 100 largest public companies in Massachusetts, a decline of about 27 percent from a high of 82 in 2007. This is the second year in a row the numbers of female executives have declined in the state. Women now make up only 8.6 percent of all executive officers.

The number of companies with no women executives has also risen in the past two years, from 47 in 2007 to 56 - a record high since the Boston Club started its annual census in 2003.

The report doesn't detail the reasons behind the two-year decline, but Boston Club president Kathleen Stone said she thinks some women leaders are leaving big companies to start businesses. "In some ways it may be a reaction to corporate culture," she said. "I have heard some women say that they don't always feel valued."

To be sure, the recession has taken a toll on the overall number of executive positions in the state, which have declined by nearly 8 percent since 2007, according to the study.

The recession also has caused businesses to focus more on the economy than diversity. "I think that corporate America has probably taken its eye off the issue, diverted by other issues that it's facing right now," said William Bacic, managing partner at Deloitte & Touche, who is advisory board chairman for the Boston Club.

The Boston Club's findings aren't an anomaly, said club president Stone, a lawyer in private practice in Boston. She cited similar declines in female executives found by sister organizations around the country.

The Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts found that women are leaving law jobs as well. A recent study revealed that although women make up one-third of active attorneys in the state, they represent nearly 60 percent of inactive attorneys.

Nationally, almost 47 percent of the workforce is female and women hold 15.7 percent of corporate officer positions at Fortune 500 companies, the same percentage as in 2002, according to 2008 data from Catalyst, a nonprofit that works to expand opportunities for women.

Boardroom numbers have improved for women in Massachusetts, but 38 percent of the 100 companies surveyed still have no women on their board of directors. About 30 percent of the companies don't have women in their boardrooms or their executive offices, compared to 23 percent two years ago. The number of women serving on boards, however, has increased since 2003, from 74 to 96, but has remained relatively flat - about 11 percent - since 2006.

In Massachusetts, nine companies have three or more women serving on their boards, up from six companies in the previous three years, and the number of companies with at least one woman director increased from 50 to 62 since 2003.

BJ's Wholesale Club Inc., based in Natick, is one of the local companies with three women on its board, including BJ's chief executive Laura Sen. These women talk about things that matter to their customers, Sen said: food, jewelry, buying furniture for their kids' college dorm rooms - something male board members don't do, she said.

"It's a whole different relationship with the product," she said.

[Hologic Inc.](#) also has three women on its board, but the Bedford health care company, which supplies mammography machines and pap smear tests, has no women executives.

Attempts to reach executives at Hologic were unsuccessful, but in an interview last year, chief executive Jack Cumming said the company has a program in place to advance women internally to leadership roles, but there aren't a lot of women in the field overall.

"The medical industry has been a boy's club for a long, long time," he said. "When women wanted to go into the imaging business, they were told that they could go into ultrasound - pigeonholing, slotting those women. The other issue you have is that women are not going to engineering schools."

Ironically, businesses need women in leadership more during a recession, said Deborah Merrill-Sands, dean of the School of Management at the all-women

Simmons College. “Diversity is correlated with success,” she said. “When we need it most is when we’re losing it fastest.”

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Rank	Company	Women on board	Women on staff	Score	% women on staff	Women on board	Score	% women on board
1	The Technology Center	25	2	8	27.0%	5	10	50.0%
2	Altera Technology Inc.	40	5	7	17.5%	0	7	0.0%
3	Wolfe Microelectronics Corp.	7	3	8	20.0%	4	8	50.0%
4	Pharos StarQuest Corp.	27	4	5	11.1%	2	5	40.0%
5	Allegria Technologies Inc.	16	3	12	20.0%	2	7	28.6%
6	Allegria Systems Inc.	16	3	12	20.0%	2	7	28.6%
7	Parade Research Inc.	10	3	8	10.0%	3	10	30.0%

## Gender diversity rankings for Mass. companies



## Report on gender diversity at Mass. public companies