

Builder

The Powerful Women Behind Public Builders in the Top 100

Lennar, PulteGroup, and Taylor Morrison lead among the top public builders for female corporate leaders.

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Note: The information in this article originates from SEC documentation of named executive officers and board members, and corporate governance data disclosed on company websites.



Recently, BUILDER explored the increasing importance of women in construction, an industry long populated primarily by men. At the executive level however, an increasing number of women have joined the ranks of corporate leadership. Not only have these women made their mark in the male-dominated world of home building, but the companies for which they work are also making strides in gender equality, for good reason: a recent New York Times article found that women in corporate leadership are actually tied to stronger profits.

For March, the Women's History Month, we've identified women leaders who either sit on the board of directors or take on organizational management responsibilities (division officers excluded) among public companies in the 2015 BUILDER Top 100 list. All of our information is aggregated from proxy filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC documentation of named executive officers, and corporate governance data disclosed on company websites. Our count of female executives is based solely on corporate governance listings, so if an executive position held by a woman is not disclosed on a company's website, then it is not represented in our data below. There are multiple female leaders excluded by this criteria who have filled pivotal roles in their respective companies, like Kira Sterling, who has been a driving force at Toll Brothers in the role of senior vice president, and now is championing a new role as chief marketing officer for the company.

A total of 17 out of 22--or more than 77% of--public companies on the 2015 BUILDER 100 list have at least one woman leader in the company, an achievement given the male-dominated history of home building. According to corporate governance documents, Lennar Corp. (NYSE:LEN), the second largest national builder in 2015, has five women in leadership roles. PulteGroup Inc. (NYSE:PHM), and Taylor Morrison Home Corp. (NYSE:TMHC), ranked no. 3 and no. 7 in 2015, respectively, have four women leaders each.

There are currently 21 women sitting on of the board of directors for 15 different building companies. Among them is Sheryl D. Palmer, president and chief executive officer of Taylor Morrison since 2007, and, as the only CEO, is the only female board member who is also in charge of organizational management. A total of six builders have two female board members each, including: PulteGroup, Taylor Morrison, Beazer Homes USA, Inc. (NYSE:BZH) , M/I Homes Inc. (NYSE:MHO), TRI Pointe Group Inc. (NYSE: TPH), and The New Company Inc. (NYSE: NWHM). Most--or 20 out of the 21-- female board members are outside/independent directors, meaning they are not employees of the company and often come from a related or different industry to bring outside perspectives and interests to the table.

A total of 17 women from 10 companies serve as executives. Sheryl Palmer of Taylor Morrison—once again—is the only president and CEO. In addition, Wendy L. Marlett serves as executive vice president and chief marketing officer of CalAtlantic Group Inc. (NYSE:CAA), the new company resulting from the merger of Builder's no. 5 builder, The Ryland Group Inc., and no. 11, Standard Pacific Corp. in October 2015.

Jill Peters of KB Home (NYSE: KBH), and Vivien N. Hastings of WCI Communities Inc. (NYSE: WCIC) both hold the title of senior vice president. Additionally, there are five women holding the title of vice president in their organizations, including Kimberly M. Hill and Mary Rachide of PulteGroup, Tawn Kelley of Taylor Morrison, Karen Gard of M.D.C. Holdings Inc. (NYSE: MDC), and Linda H. Mamet of TRI Pointe Group Inc. (NYSE: TPH). Some of these vice presidents also hold other titles in their companies such as treasurer, assistant secretary, or chief human resources officer.

Outside the VP level, there are also other pivotal roles that many women play in their firms, such as Laura Lete, chief information officer of Lennar, Brenda Baty, strategic initiatives of Lennar, and Rachel Eaton, chief marketing officer of LGI Homes Inc. (NASDAQ:LGIH).

Please note that our executive headcount information is contingent on company disclosure, in which executive headcount varies from one builder to another. Some firms only include top ranked executive officers like CEO, COO, and CFO, while others provide a broader break down of their senior management team. For example, BUILDER recently featured Joan Marcus-Colvin's promotion to chief marketing officer of The New Home Company. However, this was not included in our analysis because the position was not yet disclosed in the company's filings.

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