



## **ION Report Reveals Low Number of Women Board Directors, Executives in Top US Public Companies: Search Firms, Investors, Governance Chairs Urged to Cast Wider Net in Search for Qualified Candidates**

### **Annual Status Report of Russell 3000 Companies Shows Only 13 Percent of Board Members, Executive Officers Are Women**

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Oct. 23, 2014 /PRNewswire-iReach/ -- ION has released its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Census of women board directors and executive officers of public companies (<http://ionwomen.org/ion-reports>). The report includes 2014 data from 2,827 US corporations in the *Russell* 3000 (R3000). Key highlights of the census include:

#### **Board Directors:**

- In the 2,827 R3000 companies analyzed, 13 percent of the board members are women
- In the 449 *Fortune* 500[1] (F500) companies analyzed, 18.5 percent of the board members are women
- Five of the companies analyzed have gender parity on their boards (50:50) and four are greater than 50 percent female

#### **Executive Officers:**

- In the 2,827 R3000 companies analyzed, 13 percent of the executive officers are women
- In the same dataset, 3.7 percent of CEOs are women
- In the 449 F500 companies analyzed, 15.5 percent of the executive officers are women

"Effective corporate governance – along with the kind of strategic thinking and tough decisions required to address the challenges of a global economy and the realities facing today's corporate leaders – require diversity of background, experience, skills, perspective *and* gender. Having women on corporate boards is an issue of economic competitiveness. Gender diversity is not a nice thing to do – it's a business imperative," said ION President JoAnn Cavallaro.

"Our ION Member Organizations employ numerous strategies to effectively collaborate with visionary CEOs, champions of change and board committee chairs. We do this to advocate for more women on boards, help identify their strategic needs and provide experienced board-ready women as companies make progress in diversifying their boards," she added.

ION Interim Director Julie Graber agrees. "Exceptionally well-qualified women can be found. Companies simply need to expand a board search beyond the usual networks and search firms."

"In addition to providing diverse board search opportunities, ION is committed to helping companies learn more about the correlation between organizational performance and the presence of women in leadership, as evidenced by my recent blog post on using correlations to advance corporate diversity," she said. (<http://www.ionwomen.org/correlations-advance-corporate-diversity/>)

For the census, ION continued its strategic alliance with MSCI ESG Research to provide the key statistical data for all R3000 companies headquartered in the US, among other research support. Detailed state-by-state data is available from ION members at <http://www.ionwomen.org/ion-reports/member-reports/>.

## About ION

Celebrating its tenth year, ION is a national consortium and stakeholder organization whose mission is to increase the number of women appointed to corporate boards and to executive officer suite. With 15 current Member Organizations representing more than 50 percent of the 26 million women in management and professional roles across the nation, ION is the only confederation of regional organizations in the US engaged in this work. Through its research, annual *Status Report*, best practices, thought leadership and board search referrals, ION provides a national platform and voice for collaboration, education, advocacy, and outreach for the advancement of women across corporate America. To learn more about ION, go to [www.ionwomen.org](http://www.ionwomen.org).

## ION Members:

The Board Connection (TX)	Milwaukee Women, Inc. (WI)
The Boston Club (MA)	Network 2000 (MD)
Central Exchange of Missouri	OnBoard (GA)
CABLE (TN)	Women's Economic Development Council-(AL)
Executive Women of New Jersey	Women for Economic & Leadership Development (OH)
Financial Women's Association of New York	Women's Executive Leadership (FL)
The Forum of Executive Women (PA)	Women's Leadership Foundation (CO)
Inforum Center for Leadership (MI)	

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[1] ION's census includes the *Fortune* 500 companies that are also listed in the R3000

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