

Each year, more than 100 high-level women who work across all sectors of Wall Street gather to continue to advance their careers and network strategically. The RegentAtlantic Wall Street Women Forum® is designed exclusively for women with significant experience and responsibilities in the financial services industry.

The themes of each event reflect what is most on the minds of the Forum community: reinventing our careers, taking bold risks, forging relationships, and demonstrating leadership. Our latest Forum was held on April 5, 2016 in New York City.

RegentAtlantic has hosted the Forum since 2010, and there is no other event quite like it. Attendees regularly tell me they leave the Forum feeling energized, empowered, and ready to move themselves to “the next level,” both personally and professionally. They want more.

Another important outcome of the Forum is the **valuable information** we gather about the most significant issues facing women on Wall Street. Each year, we survey the 700+ members of our Forum community, both in advance and during the event. In this post, I’ll share three key findings from our 2016 results, along with a few initial insights. I’ll report on additional survey findings in upcoming posts.

Here are some highlights from our 2016 Forum survey.

Question 1: Where are you right now in your career?

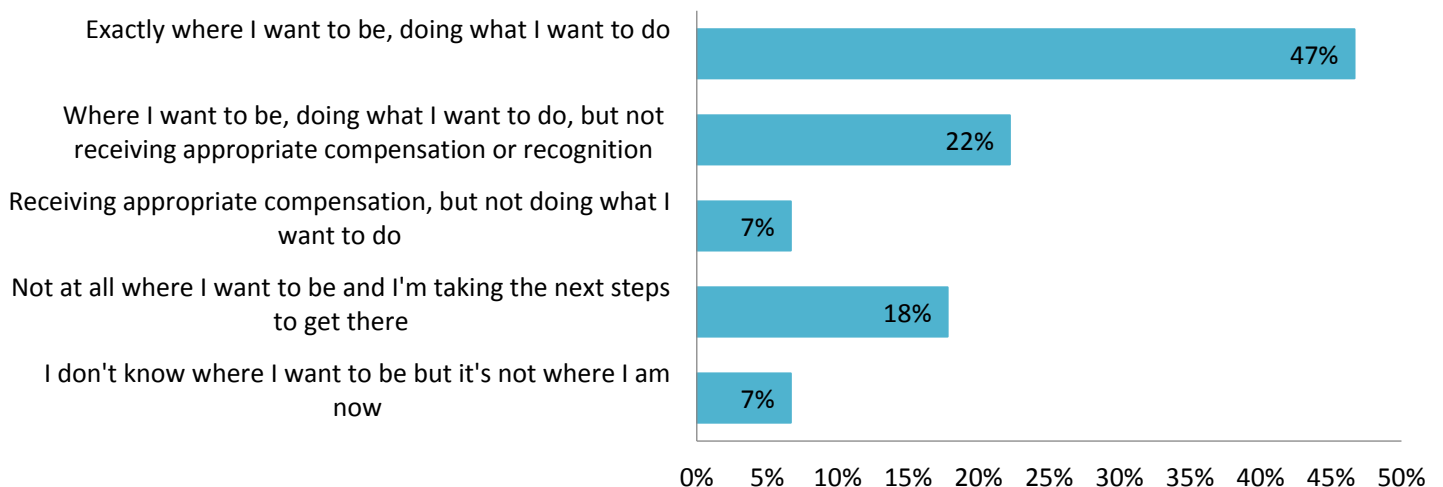
Key Findings: Among this year’s respondents, 69% said they are reasonably satisfied with their careers. Almost half (47%) of this group is doing exactly what they want to do professionally. An additional 22% are doing what they want to do, but still seeking additional compensation or recognition.

Comments: These results are very encouraging. More than two-thirds of respondents are feeling good about where they are professionally, similar to last year’s results (74%), and on the rise since 2013. The number of those who are “right where they want to be” has doubled during the same period.

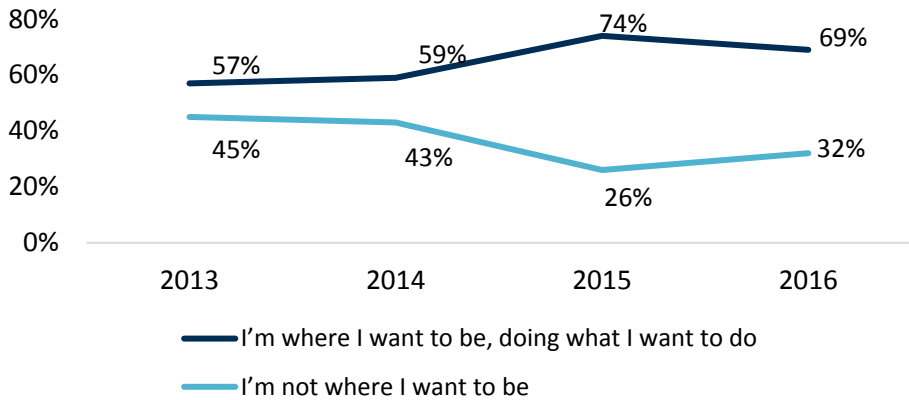
However, there’s a flip side: A full one-third of Forum respondents— most of whom are managing directors—are still dissatisfied with or unsure about their current careers. Admittedly, we haven’t surveyed men working on Wall Street so we can’t compare their levels of job satisfaction with that of our respondents.

As evidenced by their participation in the Forum community, Wall Street women recognize the benefit of investing in themselves to continue to advance. They want to not only *survive* but *thrive* in their careers. They also tell me they want to “stay relevant” in a continually changing industry.

Where are you right now in your career?



Where are you right now in your career?



From my direct conversations with 400+ women on Wall Street (and some men, too), I've picked up on their thirst to learn how to get where they want to go. This includes improving their negotiation skills, exuding confidence more consistently, becoming more visible and touting their accomplishments more effectively, and getting a "seat at the table." They also want to understand how to better evaluate opportunities in light of their situation and goals and what they can afford to do.

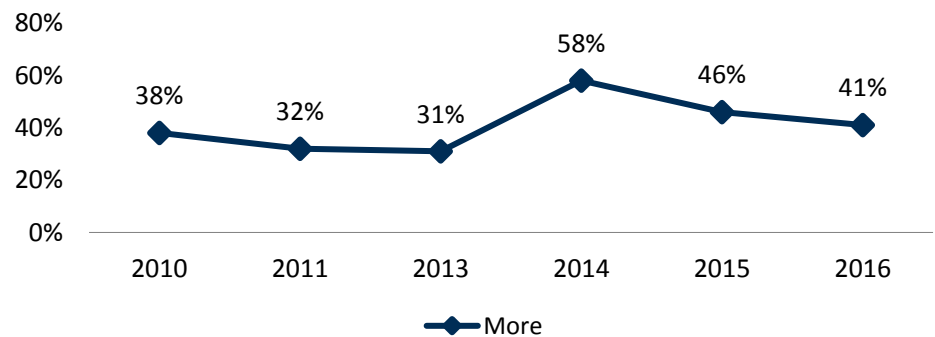
Question 2: Given the changes on Wall Street since 2008, do you think there are (more, fewer, or the same number of) opportunities for women to advance to the most senior positions in our industry?

Key Findings: A bit less than half—41%—of respondents say more opportunities are available. That's slightly lower than 2015's responses (46%). However, answers have been trending more favorably since 2013, when just 31% of respondents said "more" opportunities, and almost half saw "fewer."

Comments: Since our first Forum in 2010—and continuing for the next several years—many prominent, senior-level woman have left the Street. Their very visible departures, coupled with the aftershocks of the 2008 recession, seemed to rock the outlook for other women looking to reach the highest levels. Furthermore, the wave of industry consolidations starting in 2008 left fewer seats at the top, with an even smaller share of women in those seats.

However, my sense is that women are seeing an improved outlook overall. As the women at the Forum share with me their views of the industry and their stories of how they have used take-aways from our programs to further their careers, I sense less pessimism. Rather, participants at April's Forum exhibited confidence, cautious optimism, and a willingness to reinvent themselves to move ahead.

Given the changes on Wall Street since 2008, do you think there are More opportunities for women to advance to the most senior positions in our industry?



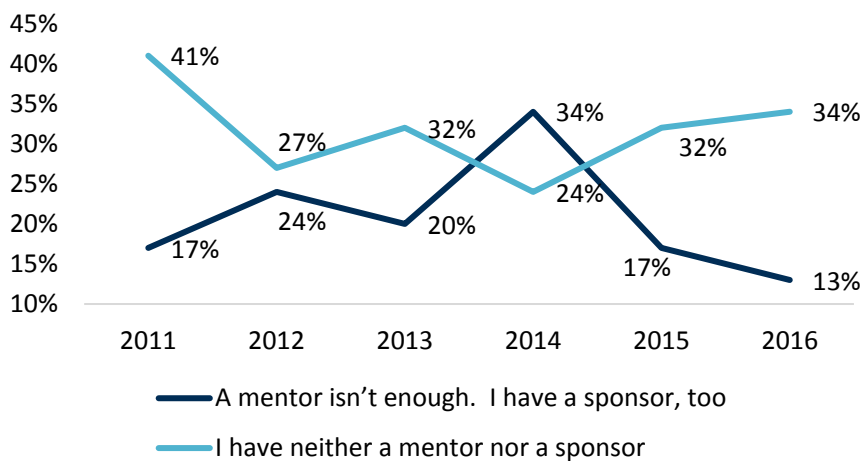
Question 3: Do you have a mentor and/or a sponsor (someone who advocates for you)?

Key Findings: Just over half (55%) of respondents have a mentor inside or outside their firm. That's good news.

Comments: But that's not enough. Research continues to show that while a mentor is helpful, a sponsor is absolutely *critical* for women who want to advance to Wall Street's highest levels. However, only 13% of our respondents this year have sponsors. That is a low figure over the six years I've posed that question. In addition, a third of respondents (34%) have neither a mentor nor a sponsor. These numbers need to improve.

My question to the Forum community continues to be this: While you may have advanced so far without the benefit of a sponsor, how are you going to continue to forge ahead without one (or two)?

Do you have a mentor and/or a sponsor (someone who advocates for you)? Select as many as apply.



What's the difference between a mentor and a sponsor, and why is a sponsor so important? I'll explore this topic more deeply in an upcoming blog. However, the short answer: A *mentor* is someone you can approach for professional advice or introductions. You could choose this individual, or they might volunteer to help.

A *sponsor*, on the other hand, is a powerful advocate who opens doors for you, sometimes without you even realizing it. A sponsor sees your professional potential, sings your praises to others, and may nominate you for important projects/positions. You can't ask someone to be your sponsor. It's a relationship you earn.

Continuing the conversation

In addition to the three questions outlined above, our survey respondents answered a variety of other important questions about work and personal finances.

Topics included:

- Key ingredients of leadership presence
- Attitudes about research showing that men are paid for career *potential*, while women are paid for (proven) *performance*
- The importance of "likeability" at work – for both men and women
- Moving from a nonprofit board to a corporate board of directors
- Strategies for "shifting gears" during one's career
- The "number"—or how much money do you need to do what you want in life?

I'll dive into some of these interesting issues in future posts. In the meantime, learn more about RegentAtlantic's Wall Street Women Forum at our website: wallstreetwomenforum.com. Full results of our [2010-2016](#) surveys are also available.

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Discover a community committed to your continued success

Female executives on Wall Street have a full plate of responsibilities and demanding schedules. We understand because we've been there ourselves. We realize that personal finances often fall to the bottom of the to-do list. We'll help you make the most of your finances and tie it all together for you — from creating a plan toward retirement and prioritizing cash flows, to guiding you in making strategic, informed decisions that impact all aspects of your life. Wherever you are in your career today, we can help you determine if you can afford to accept that dream job, move onto another stage in your career, or have enough to call it quits and enjoy an early retirement.

The RegentAtlantic Wall Street Women Forum®

The Wall Street Women Forum was founded in 2010 by Jane Newton and has grown into a sought-after community of more than 700 high-level Wall Street women, invited to gather with their peers across the industry to help advance their careers.

For More Information



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