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26 June 2009

GENDER BIAS IN FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

- One in two women believe men get paid more, but men disagree

While the number of women on Australian finance and accounting teams has increased, some perception gaps still remain in career advancement opportunities and remuneration, according to research released by international recruitment firm Robert Half.

Robert Half's Workplace Survey of 404 Australian finance and HR managers reveals that one in two women (**48%**) still believe men get paid more than them when doing the same job while another 24% of women believe men have a better chance of advancing to management levels.

"We are surprised by the findings," said Megan Alexander Senior Manager of Robert Half. "When filling a role, gender simply doesn't come into play. We see employers make hiring decisions based on merit and past performance and this is where their attentions should be focused.

"That there's such disparity in the responses between men and women shows a gender bias exists among employees, not employers."

The survey revealed an evident bias, with only **10%** (compared to 24% of women) of men believing that men have a better chance than women of advancing to management levels and **30%** (compared to 48% of women) believing that men get paid more than women when performing the same role.

"Women, just like men, need to think about why they are not getting promotions on a technical and soft skills basis, without consideration for a gender bias," Alexander said.

The good news, according to Alexander, is that more women are now working in the finance industry with **22%** of respondents indicating an increase in female finance and accounting staff members, in the past two years.

"And when compared with the rest of the world," said Alexander, "Australia fares better."

Fifty-five per cent of Australian respondents believe there is no difference in pay between men and women, compared with 46% of people globally.

To download and listen to Robert Half's podcast on Women in Finance with Megan Alexander, Senior Manager with Robert Half, visit <http://rhiwatch.viotv.com/>

Robert Half's tips for employers:



- Offer a mentoring program. Employees, including men and women, find it much easier succeed in their jobs and move their careers forward under the guidance of a good mentor. A good mentor helps staff feel comfortable and gives them the knowledge and the confidence they need to excel.
- Give honest feedback to all employees about their strengths and what weaknesses they need to work on to further advance. Then make it possible for staff to address these weaknesses.
- When a position becomes vacant, ensure all those who wish to apply for it know precisely what is required so they can realistically measure themselves against that standard to decide to apply.

ENDS

About the Workplace Survey

The Robert Half 2009 Global Workplace Survey questioned 6,167 finance, accounting, HR and executive-level managers from 20 countries, including 404 from Australia. It was conducted by an independent research firm and was carried out in February and March 2009.

About Robert Half

Robert Half International Inc. (RHI) pioneered specialised staffing services and today is the world's leader in the field. Founded in 1948, the company is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (symbol: RHI) and operates four separate divisions in Australia, each serving distinct markets. They include: Robert Half Finance & Accounting, for temporary and permanent finance and accounting personnel; Robert Half Financial Services Group, for high-calibre finance and banking professionals; Robert Half Management Resources, for specialised interim financial professionals and OfficeTeam, for highly skilled temporary administrative support. There are more than 360 Robert Half International staffing locations worldwide. *In 2009 Robert Half International was ranked number one in our industry on FORTUNE® magazine's list of the "World's Most Admired Companies."*

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