

Women in Reinsurance  
co-chairs (left to right),  
Teresa Snider, Randi Ellias  
and Karen Borg

# Be in the crowd



**With a crowd of women in every part of the re/insurance industry, any woman can find opportunities and resources right for her, says Catherine Isely, co-founder of US law firm Porter Wright's Women in Reinsurance programme.**

**L**ast month, I walked into a room and thought: “What a crowd!” This has happened every year since I co-founded Porter Wright’s Women in Reinsurance programme in 2004. I was walking into the room reserved for our annual event. A crowd of women filled the space.

The women were debating one another and counselling one another. They were laughing and they were sharing challenges. I walked through a crowd with wide-ranging experience levels, differing demographics, varied perspectives and vibrant ideas.

Shortly after the event, I was asked to author this article. So often, I and other women with experience in the industry are asked to offer insights on what women “need to do” to “get a seat at the table”.

But I’m not interested in telling readers what I think women need or need to do, or whether I even believe it’s the women who need to do the skill-building. Or whether a woman reading this should find a mentor and a sponsor or be a mentor and a sponsor, or how to make a place for herself, or what the industry data says about how many women made it to a spot on some board this year.

This is my message: a seat at the table won’t do it. This industry needs a crowd of women in every space. A crowd of women who push through acquisitions and women who adjust claims. A crowd of women who navigate regulations and women who run off books of business.

A crowd of women who report to shareholders and women who

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manage mutuals. A crowd of women who develop new products and women who model risks. A crowd of women who manage operations and women who collect dollars. A crowd of women who market business and women who direct social media. This industry needs a crowd of women from all communities and women having intersectionality across multiple communities. A crowd of women who present differently from one another and women whose presentations are fluid.

With a crowd of women in every part of the re/insurance industry, any woman can find opportunities and resources right for her. Any woman can find a role model or decide instead to chart a new path to success.

The exceptional women executives profiled in this edition of Influential Women in Re/Insurance each have their own path, and I congratulate them on their success. I encourage them, and all readers, to walk into every room at their organisations intent on filling the space with a crowd of women. ■

*Catherine Isely is a partner at Porter Wright Morris & Arthur and the co-founder of Porter Wright’s Women in Reinsurance programme. She can be contacted at: [cisely@porterwright.com](mailto:cisely@porterwright.com)*