

Technology

Wolfspeed adds more diversity to C-suite with promotion

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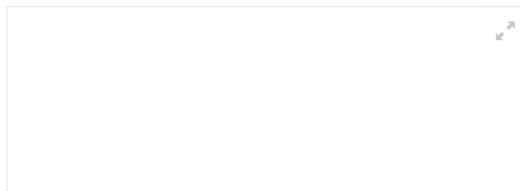
Amid concerns that the recent Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action might [impact diversity in corporate hiring](#), a local manufacturer is adding a second woman to its top leadership team in a matter of months.

Wolfspeed (NYSE: WOLF) has promoted Priya Almelkar to senior vice president and chief information officer of the semiconductor manufacturer in Durham. She was previously vice president of IT manufacturing operations.

She will be responsible for setting Wolfspeed’s technology vision. That means leading the automation strategy behind the planned [\\$5 billion materials factory the company is building in Chatham County](#).

“I personally love change,” Almelkar told the *Triangle Business Journal* Wednesday after her new role was announced. “I thrive in change, so this is a perfect match.”

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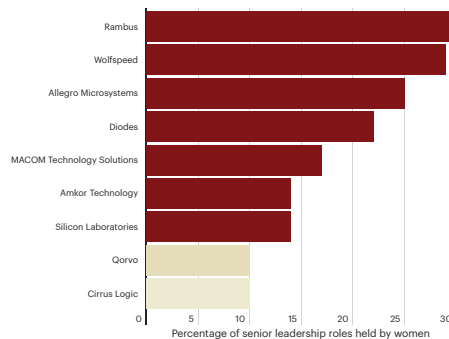
Priya Almelkar

ROBERT FILCSIK

Almelkar, who replaces former CIO David Costar, is the second woman to join Wolfspeed's C-Suite this year, [after Elif Balkas, who was named CTO in January](#). They join Margaret Chadwick, Wolfspeed chief human resources officer, Lisa Fritz, senior vice president of global quality, and Missy Stigall, senior vice president of the firm's global fab operations.

A sweep of the leadership teams at some of Wolfspeed's top competitors shows the company tops most of its peers, with women accounting for 29 percent of its senior leadership roles.

How Wolfspeed compares to its competitors for women in senior leadership roles



Source: Companies' leadership listings

Rosina Racioppi, president and CEO of leadership development firm WOMEN Unlimited, said there's been concern that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June barring colleges from using race as a factor in admissions could "erode some companies' initiatives around diversity, equity and inclusion."





A group of Republican attorneys general recently sent letters to Fortune 100 companies [warning of potential legal consequences](#) for using race as a factor in hiring and employment practices.

Racioppi points to research that shows putting women in executive leadership is good for business. "A lot of the research talks about this tension when you're with people who you are different from," she said. "You have to be explicit about what you're thinking. You get deeper into that conversation and, as a result, the outcome is so much greater."

Women continue to be underrepresented in company C-suites. In Russel Reynolds Associate's analysis of the top 100 companies in the S&P500, researchers found men were 2.5 times more likely than women to be executives in top leadership teams.

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