

COVER STORY: WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

Beverly Evans

Portfolio manager and director of wealth management
Evans Wealth Management Team
Richardson GMP

It's during volatile market conditions that Bev Evans really comes through as an advisor. The winner of the *WP* Award for First Class Customer Service has built a thriving practice by making sure her clients know she is there for them when things are at their worst.

"In a word, it's communication – whether it's writing and giving them perspective, or educating them about opportunities that sometimes come along with periods of volatility like this," she says. "It's talking through any worries they have, making sure they know that we're here, and most importantly, making sure they know that we have a plan and we stick by our game plan."

As the leader of the all-female Evans Wealth Management Team, Evans points out that one of the most important aspects of building her practice was making sure she was surrounded by the right people.

"I'm blessed that right now I have a long-standing team," she says. "We've made sure that we've had the type of assessments where we know we're doing what we love. Each one of us is doing what we're good at and what we love. Then it just doesn't seem like work."



Are you seeing any improvements in gender diversity in the industry?

I have been happy to see, over the last few years, that the relationship-driven part of the business has grown, as opposed to the old-style performance-driven relationships. And I think that's an acknowledgement that what has often been seen as a more 'female' approach is being recognized as something that clients are looking for. A more holistic, relationship-driven approach is what people are connecting with. I think that's from

an acceptance of what women bring to our industry, and that is nice to see.

What advice would you give the next generation of female advisors?

The key is they need to be ready to work really hard. They need to be ready to embrace continuous change, but also be ready for a very rewarding opportunity to help people and to know that you're making a difference, which is what we have the privilege of doing.

Lynne Brejak

Director of human resources
Richardson GMP

For Lynne Brejak, a job in the financial services sector was love at first sight.

"It's very high-energy and intense, but it's a very relationship-based industry, so that's very appealing," she says. "There are a lot of very smart people running it. From an HR perspective, there is no time for a lot of process and policy that doesn't add value. But because it's all relationship-based, especially on the leadership teams, there's a good level of emotional intelligence and humour."

After being in the industry for 15 years, she's managed to succeed thanks to developing a strong understanding of what advisors and management require.

"Whatever we do in HR has to matter to the people that need us," she says. "So it's always trying to understand what they want versus what an HR rule is. I have a really strong view of how everything we do impacts those people at the end, so let's be smart about our choices. Let's not add undue burden to them without understanding the impact."

Are you seeing any improvements in gender diversity in the industry?

I am. There's always work to be done, but this is definitely an industry where you have to earn your way, so in some ways it's gender agnostic. The industry has evolved so much. One of the criticisms is that there probably aren't a lot of female managers in this industry, but more female advisors would mean more female managers – and we are always looking to hire strong female advisors. I'm definitely seeing the trend in a positive direction.

What advice would you give the next generation of female advisors?

How everybody gets there is different, and there's so much competing advice for women out there. My only thought is: Be true to yourself. If it's important for you to be more aggressive in advancing your career, get the support you need at home or other areas and do it. If what matters to you is that you have balance, then that's what you should be seeking. You've got to be true to yourself and to grow in the way that matters to you.