



ERIN KOMOROWSKI Director of ESG M&T Bank

Erin Komorowski is the Director of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) for M&T Bank, where she leads a dedicated team that develops and implements strategy, initiatives, and reporting for the bank's corporate sustainability. Erin has focused her career on building new capabilities and strategy for M&T and, in so doing, creating unique opportunities for managing business in a responsible, sustainable way. Previously, Erin served several social service nonprofits, and also spent two years as a volunteer in the US Peace Corps. She earned a B.A. in Religious Studies from Rice University and an MBA from The Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania. She is also very active in the community, serving as a board member for both the Learning Disabilities Association of Western NY and the NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo.

How are you personally supporting Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow?

Promoting gender equality is one of my personal passions and something I have dedicated myself to throughout my career. I focus my efforts on three things: 1) Highlighting exceptional female talent in every forum possible -- especially where those talents are discounted by gender-related stereotypes. Whenever I get the opportunity to speak to young women, I always remind them of the importance that so many of our career "ancestors" made without getting the recognition they deserved. More than anything, this shows the immense importance of "doing a great job" when we get the chance to shine; 2) Coaching and mentoring women; and 3) Volunteering for organizations and institutions that promote and support women's education, especially at the middle- and high-school levels when so many young women are subtly -- or not-so-subtly -- discouraged from expanding their ambitions and challenging expectations.

What inspired you to get into the finance industry?

While serving in the Peace Corps, I witnessed firsthand how providing access to capital for businesses and individuals can change lives and communities. This experience changed me and inspired me to pursue a career in the finance industry where I could make a meaningful difference in people's lives. At M&T, we talk about the importance of being a part of our "communities" and we have become an exceptional organization in this regard. I can see the results of our efforts as we, time and again, connect back to this simple idea and help change our communities for the better by providing opportunities for financial growth and independence.

What can companies do to increase the representation of women in finance?

The most important thing we can do is create opportunities for the next generations of leadership and make sure we have a steady pipeline of new recruits. To that end, we all need to identify the systemic issues in our recruiting pipelines that overlook or reject female talent and fix them. So often, we dismiss strong talent for having the "wrong" degree or the "wrong" experiences, especially when hiring at junior levels. At all of our employers -- and I say this as a Religious Studies major now working at a big financial services company! -- we should focus on identifying and fostering those transferable skills job candidates bring to the table and how those skills enhance their potential.



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How can companies invest in their women employees to prepare them for leadership roles?

Develop and promote women! Notice when there are not women in the room (or virtual room) and use that as an opportunity to find female talent to bring in. For all of us who have risen in our respective organizations, it's so critical to provide mentoring and coaching to the next generation of women business leaders so they are prepared to take the next step in their career journeys. If we notice that some of our junior colleagues are not completely prepared, we need to use that as an opportunity to create exposure for them and help them grow their skills.

What is your favorite book?

I love all of Michael Lewis's books! I just reread "The Premonition" and debated starting it again immediately. Going all the way back to "Liar's Poker", Lewis has the amazing ability to take complex ideas and make them both engaging and understandable. There's never a time I don't finish one of his works without learning something, while still being completely hooked.