



## **GANNON SCHAEFER** **Head of Securitized Products Sales** **BMO Capital Markets**

Gannon is Head of Securitized Products Sales at BMO Capital Markets, where she is responsible for overseeing product distribution and client relationships for BMO's Securitized Products business. Prior to this role, Gannon spent 20 years in Fixed Income and Securitized Products Sales positions at Lehman Brothers, Barclays, and KGS-Alpha Capital Markets. BMO Capital Markets acquired KGS-Alpha in 2018.

Gannon received her B.A. in Finance from George Washington University.

### **What inspired you to get into the finance industry?**

I was fortunate enough to have a summer internship at Lehman Brothers in Equities Operations in 1999. I sat on the trading floor and was immediately hooked on the energetic, market-driven, client-focused environment. I had thought about being a journalist or lawyer but after that summer, knew I wanted to work in sales and trading.

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

Connect with women college students and educate them on careers in finance. I've spent 20+ years working in Fixed Income/Securitized Products but never even knew this path existed as a high school and early college student. Additionally, success begets success- early in my career I worked for several women Managing Directors that were excellent role models and helped me see that the longterm career path was achievable. Having diverse senior leadership will drive recruiting and retaining more women.

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

In my own experience, women are less likely than their male counterparts to raise their hands for "reach" positions and more likely to pass the opportunity to someone else because they are afraid to fail or think they are not ready. Through a few different experiences, I've seen that no one is every quite "ready" to step into a role, run with a large client opportunity, or create a new business opportunity. You learn "on the go," and through hard work, make it a success. Being ready for the next job is less about having the perfect resume and more about having the chance to tackle challenges. Good managers give you the opportunity to take on situations that require you to push yourself and provide feedback. The more you navigate, the more you realize you are capable of the next thing, even if you don't know exactly what that looks like upfront. I've been lucky to have leaders that have shown me what this kind of trust and enablement looks like.



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**What policies and/or benefits can companies put in place to better support their women employees?**

Flexibility goes a long way, especially when we have children. For me, being able to work from home on a Friday after a long week of client travel means I can have breakfast with my kids and plan a family activity for that evening. I really appreciate BMO's hybrid work policy because it helps me balance a demanding schedule with being a mom.

**What inspires you to continue to grow in this industry?**

1) Our clients – we have deep, long-term, productive partnerships with our clients and working on their behalf to find creative solutions, value, and new ideas in ever-changing markets is important to me. 2) The women I work with – we have an amazing, talented, and supportive group of women leaders at BMO and have built a fantastic network among each other.

**What advice do you have for other women in securitization?**

Network! Both internally and externally on a regular basis with potential clients, people in similar roles to you, people in senior roles, and people junior to you. You only have knowledge and potential partnerships to gain.

**What is your favorite out-of-office activity?**

Being with my family – my husband of 19 years, Michael, and my awesome kids – Quentin, Jackson, Ed, and Lilly. We love having dinner together, taking our dog, Sparky, on walks, having family “game night,” and going to the beach. They are where I find my joy, energy, and center.