# WiS Week 2024 Leader Spotlight



Renew. Reengage. Reimagine.



# Kate Whalen Head, Global Client Coverage BMO Capital Markets

## What advice would you give to young women aspiring to pursue a career in finance?

The most important thing you can do is to choose to work for people who believe in meritocracy and want to give you opportunities. This can manifest in multiple forms – sometimes your managers present you with the next challenge, and sometimes you recognize it yourself and raise your hand. You want to surround yourself with people who will support you in both cases. Additionally, figure out how to prioritize what drives results versus what is merely for appearances, and have confidence that this skill set is transferable. New challenges will always require learning new material, but confidence in your ability to communicate, strategize, and affect change is applicable in all jobs.

# What inspired you to pursue a career in structured finance?

I like the fact that the cashflows come from a real place – i.e., the consumer marketplace, whether it is housing, retail, business, etc. As opposed to parts of finance where the financial engineering is opaque, this market ultimately ties back to studying and predicting consumer behavior.

### What does WiS mean to you?

WiS provides me with the opportunity to connect with a network of individuals, not just with shared market expertise but with shared background and challenges. To me this is especially pertinent as a working mother because I'm constantly looking for perspective on how others make it work!

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

Pay women on the quality of their work and not on qualitative metrics like "face time".

### What is a good way to give back to the community?

I like to find causes that resonate on a personal level, which for me now is parenthood. I'm actively involved with a New York organization called WIN. They offer a variety of opportunities, from tutoring to resume building to sorting coats, which not only allow me to contribute but also provide valuable perspective.

### What is your favorite book?

Rules of Civility by Amor Towles. It's about two women tearing up the NYC scene in the 30s!

This interview has been edited for clarity.