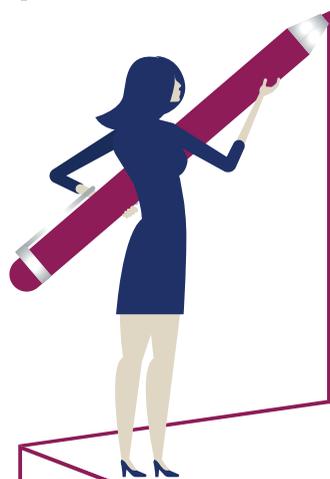


FEMALE LEADERSHIP HELPS SET RICHARDSON WEALTH APART

Women are driving industry-wide change for greater diversity at the table

Richardson Wealth is proud of the number of women it employs in senior leadership roles, with over 30 women now working at or above the vice-president level.

While the firm has always celebrated its inclusive culture, it has recently been successful in attracting more women in pivotal roles, making Richardson Wealth a front runner in the industry. Within the past seven months, five new leaders have onboarded: Jan Sampson as Director of Operations; Julie Burnham as Vice President of Strategic Communications; Christina Clement as Vice President, Growth and Execution; Sascha Isaacs as Vice President and Portfolio Manager of its Family Office Wealth Counsel; and Natalie Bisset as Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Development. Each of these highly-capable professionals were selected to lead the firm into the future alongside those who are already regarded as industry trailblazers. Earlier this year, Richardson Wealth was named to the 2021 list of Best Workplaces for Women by Great Place to Work™, a global authority on workplace culture.



“Having a culture of trust and openness was a big contributor to winning that award and that is definitely an advantage of being a smaller, independent boutique firm with people-first values,” says Lynne Brejak, Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer – another strong leader at the firm whose role is to attract and retain their diverse team.

Says Natalie Bisset, “When we look at the wealth management industry in Canada, Richardson Wealth is unique in the number of women we have in senior leadership roles and the tremendous success we have in attracting women to our firm and what’s more, the women of Richardson Wealth are committed to helping drive this change.”

“We have always had women present at the executive level and leading us in key roles like HR, marketing, and tax and estate planning, and we believe that having smart, accomplished women join our team- specifically in non-traditional business-facing roles - is key to attracting more women in the future.”

Brejak and Bisset are both quick to credit the corner office for fostering an “emphatically inclusive” culture, noting that President and CEO Kish Kapoor’s approachability and open-door policy,

as well as being actively engaged in building the strongest team possible, are among the reasons why the firm is over half represented by women.

“Kish is a massive supporter of women and the diversity of thought we can offer,” says Julie Burnham, Vice President, Strategic Communications. “He’s mindful about how we’re going to grow, and strategic about attracting the right leaders with the right skill set. He encourages women to engage and feel empowered to speak up and share their views. In my experience, it’s unique to be given such an opportunity.”

Burnham worked in a bank environment before moving to

Richardson Wealth in 2021. “Large organizations often have targeted programs to onboarding women, but what’s happening here is not about meeting a quota, it’s part of the culture. It’s authentic. The people I’ve talked with share this sense of belonging, knowing we are valued contributors.”

Bisset points out that larger organizations not only tend to resist change, it takes longer to effect change from within.

“When you’ve got passionate leaders like Kish and (Senior Vice President, Head of Wealth Strategies) Sarah Widmeyer championing women at all levels of the organization, the change is clear. It creates a team motivated by a collective vision and mobilized to tell the story about the huge opportunity for women in wealth management.”

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

By 2024, the privately-held wealth of Canadian women is estimated to rise to \$2.7 trillion, representing 50% of total private wealth in the country. Having more women in the financial services industry is imperative to better understanding the mindset, needs and expectations of this influential market

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segment – and Richardson Wealth intends to stay ahead of the curve.

“We’ve got tremendous energy around ensuring we are well positioned for this massive transfer of wealth to women. We want to be sure Richardson Wealth has the diversity at the table to engage with women investors and to be really thoughtful and responsive to what they’re looking for,” Bisset says.

To attract advisors, Richardson Wealth promotes a culture where individuals are encouraged to further their professional expertise, find support, and cultivate vital relationships to help them grow their careers from within.

“Our company is getting noticed for being highly supportive and inclusive across the board. Attracting people with greater diversity of thought, experience and background will not only help us to make better decisions, but to be more adept and nimble,” Burnham says. “We feel confident, respected and valued not because of our gender, but because we are equals, and more people in the industry will feel the pull to us for that reason.”

Brejak says that it’s also important to note that focusing on women does not come at the exclusion of other groups.

“We have a responsibility to use our voices as women to make a better workplace that is trusted, healthy and intentional about things that matter like mental health, wellness and family – and share those benefits with everyone,” she says. “Recognizing that the path for women is not always easy, neither is the path for other groups. That’s why it becomes our responsibility not only to help ourselves, but to reduce barriers to success for others.”

Bisset adds that there is psychological safety in sharing one’s perspective, which is why it is essential to hear both men and women talk about the importance of work-life balance and sharing family responsibilities to encourage a flexible and inclusive work environment.

“There’s a saying that you can’t be it if you can’t see it – and conversely, you can be it if you can see it. As an employer, Richardson Wealth does a great job of celebrating the holistic person, recognizing that there is so much more than work that makes each of us whole,” she says.

“These values reflect those of the Richardson family, and it genuinely feels like family here. It’s heartwarming to be part of a firm where you feel connected and respected on the merits of your talent and capabilities, and still have the comfort of knowing that you are valued and appreciated for being your genuine self.” **jrn**

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