

# Michelle Brennan Hall: Two realizations that shaped the businesswoman I am today

## Having a mentor who sees the "future you" and good relationships are key to a strong career

My career began in 1990 in my family's financial advice business. After a two-year mentoring program during which I became fully licensed, it was time to build my practice within our company.

While growing a client base, my father also challenged me to become a leader in the firm. I upgraded the firm's technology, negotiated radio contracts and numerous leases, supervised staff and compliance, hired and fired personnel, designed marketing pieces and developed processes for efficiency. I touched every department. It is during this time that I learned not only how to be a financial adviser, but to also be a business owner.

Early in my career, two important realizations shaped my focus and the businesswoman I am today: 1) Having a mentor who believes in the "future you" is important and 2) Good relationships make for stronger forward progress.

I never once thought about my gender as a negative — didn't give it any thought. Being a female has opened doors for me and enabled me to serve investors in a caring and comprehensive way — characteristics women innately possess. Many of my executive clients have confessed that they chose me as their financial adviser specifically because I am female.

I am fortunate to have had mentors along my career path who always saw tomorrow's version of me that I could not see. My father saw the top producer and responsible leader in me early in my career. A business coach saw the business owner in me forging out on my own and bringing an initiative for women to light. Achieving these milestones was tough, difficult and rewarding, and it all started with someone planting a seed for me to water.

It became time for me to drive my own initiative with my fingerprint on it. I envisioned a firm focused intently on the financial needs of female executives, business owners and high net worth families. I established Brennan Wealth Advisors, an RIA, in 2007 to provide investors with a wide array of investment and insurance options and a custom service model that would ease their busy lives.

Brennan Wealth Advisors was like typical start-ups with a few bumps along the way. The financial crisis of 2008 was looming, and building a new firm presented its share of challenges. The perseverance of our team was inspiring during that time; dedicated to calming clients concern was our only focus. Out of the chaos came a firm strengthened by our resolve and the gratefulness of our clients. Deep relationships both in the industry and the community brought knowledge, new connections and new clients.

Recently, my firm conducted a nationwide survey on women to debunk certain myths about women and money and to document the attitudes females have about wealth. The overall purpose is to change the thoughts of women and men about women and money. I expect this research to be pivotal for advisers and female investors.

Today's female adviser has great opportunity. Investors value advisers who are honest, open, driven and capable. Women excel at these skills. As I look out over the next 30 years of my career, I hope to be able to mentor the “future you” of many women in our industry and to plant seeds for others to water and nurture.

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