

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN OF TAVISTOCK

March 2024

From Tech to Financial Empowerment: Laura Hobbs



In celebration of International Women's Day 2024, Tavistock Investments is shining a spotlight on some of our colleagues and their journeys within the finance and investment sector. From overcoming challenges to taking control of their careers and championing gender equality, these profiles aim to inspire and highlight the integral role women play in driving forward our industry. Here, we speak with Laura Hobbs, Financial Adviser.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY IN THE FINANCE AND INVESTMENT INDUSTRY?

After 20 years of being a business development manager in the IT hardware/software and consumer electronics space, I stumbled across the IFA world. My previous career included a lot of travel and staying away from home. Once I became a mother, I realised I needed a career change that would equally stimulate me, but importantly afford me the life balance of being a mother.

I did a short stint in commercial finance, where I met an IFA who explained what they did. He invited me to his office for a

deeper chat and not long after that, I was signed up to an IFA apprenticeship scheme with his company. That was in 2018.

WHAT ARE YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR CAREER SO FAR?

I have a can-do attitude. I'm head strong and I have an ability to find a way of getting things done. I believe skills can be learnt with the right attitude. I continue to read books on financial planning, setting goals and never stop trying to learn new things. You can never know enough, 'every day is a school day.'

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED AS A WOMAN IN FINANCE AND INVESTMENT?

When I immigrated from South Africa in 2001, the work environment and cultural outlook was very different, but I just got on with it. I can't really remember any obstacles as such.

Sport is a big part of my life (watching and participating). That has helped me get through some early year's insecurities and even now, I use it to remodel my thinking and 'destress.' My faith is also a good source of support and strength in challenging times.



I have found the financial services industry in general, and specifically Tavistock Private Clients, welcoming of new talent and keen to support my growth.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE FINANCE AND INVESTMENT INDUSTRY CAN BETTER SUPPORT AND EMPOWER WOMEN?

I believe financial education should be starting at school. Kids in general are leaving school with little to no knowledge of the basics of financial planning and budgeting. More women would be entering the industry if it were discovered early on at school.

Also, financial planning initiatives should be more readily visible for woman in divorce and in bereavement. Historically, men have held the financial role in the house and when that ends in divorce or death, woman are often left with pots of investments with little understanding of what to do.

HOW IMPORTANT IS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE FINANCE AND INVESTMENT SECTOR?

You need people from all walks of life entering this industry simply because financial planning is needed for everyone at some level. Again, if this were initiated at school, the pool of potential entrants would be more diverse from all sectors of the community.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY MENTORS OR ROLE MODELS WHO HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER?

Everyone I have worked for has had an influence in what and how I work. Some bad, some good. The ones I found good, I listened to and grew from that.

Mentorship can be a helpful building block to support woman in the industry, but it needs to be structured around the development needs of the mentee. If done well; it combines industry knowledge but also helps the mentee understand the art of how to deliver the message of financial planning.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG WOMEN ASPIRING TO BUILD A CAREER IN FINANCE AND INVESTMENT?

It's a fantastically exciting industry that caters for many varying skills. Whether you are in marketing, HR, finance, management, admin.

It is dynamic and I have found endless training models of support. Your mindset must be that of any mindset who wants to do well in life. If you work smart, have integrity and you are ambitious, anything is achievable.



We do need to see more women in leading roles and inspiring women from all backgrounds.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, WHAT CHANGES DO YOU HOPE TO SEE IN THE FINANCE AND INVESTMENT INDUSTRY REGARDING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP ROLES?

We do need to see more women in leading roles and inspiring women from all backgrounds in schools, universities, networking groups, media, and importantly forging relationships with the legal sector.

This would have a knock-on effect with the younger female generation entering the industry.

It is still predominantly a male-led industry but there is no reason, certainly not lack of skills, why more women cannot share the podium.