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2021 Women in Commercial Real Estate: Bethany Lyons, The Washington Trust Company

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Bethany Lyons
Vice President,

What led you to your current profession? I have one of my college professors to thank for that! I graduated with a degree in Finance but was unsure what path to take. After helping to set up an informational interview with the CEO at Washington Trust, I accepted a job and entered a management training pilot program. One of the rotations was in commercial lending, which I really enjoyed. The bank split CRE lending from C&I shortly after to expand the division and grow our footprint. We've since grown from a team of two to a team of 12 and now lend throughout all New England!

What time management strategies do you find to be the most effective for you? Prioritization and organization are a must have for effective time management. I constantly have a "to do" list that keeps me on task and allows me to visualize what needs to be done and in what order.

What is one characteristic that you believe every woman in commercial real estate should possess? Tenacity. This will lead to overcoming obstacles and finding the knowledge and skill set to do so.

What are some of the benefits of being a mentor or having a mentor? Mentoring is crucial for developing your knowledge base and skill set and is also a great way to expand your network. It is always helpful to have someone you trust to discuss career goals with, or to simply ask questions and get feedback. Being a mentor is a great opportunity to give back to others, of course, but it also helps you to build leadership skills and learn to become a more effective manager, too. As a mentor, you are actively listening to someone else's perspective, communicating to help foster growth and development, and practicing problem solving and constructive feedback.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months? In the banking industry, I think there will be continued investment in a digital infrastructure for banking operations. The pandemic accelerated the need to not only meet rising customer expectations, but also the need to provide seamless remote work environments for employees. On the lending front, deal volume will continue to be strong as rates remain low and developers seek opportunities to fill demand in sectors that have been bolstered by the changes in working and shopping habits over the last few months, such as industrial and housing.