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2022 Women in Commercial Real Estate: Bethany Lyons, Washington Trust

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Bethany Lyons
VP, Commercial Real Estate Group

What advice would you offer to women getting into the CRE industry? I would say this is applicable to anyone getting into the CRE industry—build your network and find a mentor. The importance of forging and maintaining relationships cannot be overstated, especially in the real estate industry. It's helpful to have a deep, diverse network of professionals around you to help inform your growth and development, as well as your business opportunities. Securing a mentor is also key; it's very helpful to have an experienced professional on your side to bounce ideas off of and ask candid questions to.

What has been your biggest challenge and how have you faced it? My biggest challenge lately has been time management. With the loan volume we have experienced over the last two years coupled with the labor shortage, the pace has rarely slowed. Typically, we see lulls in new deal packages especially in the summer months, but that has not happened coming out of the pandemic. I find it helpful to have clear communication and to set realistic expectations, both of which are key to maintaining strong customer service, especially when demand is at its peak.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months? In terms of banking, I think prudent underwriting will be at the forefront of most financing transactions. With high inflation, rising interest rates, and the supply that has been delivered to the market in the last couple of years in various asset classes, I think lenders will pause to make sure deals are underwritten with an appropriate amount of sensitivity built in regarding interest rates, vacancies, and rent compression.