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WOMEN IN BUSINESS

10 Influential Women In Finance Share How They Intend To Use Their Influence To Disrupt The Status Quo

"Ideally," shares this one female exec, "learning should a be a lifelong undertaking."



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Jason Hartman

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This story originally appeared on [Authority Magazine](#)

Women constitute a majority of the US population, yet still **less than 20** percent of leadership positions in the finance industry are held by women. Despite enormous progress, the finance industry is still a male dominated industry.

A **recent series** in Authority Magazine profiled hundreds of women who broke the trend and became prominent leaders in the finance industry. In the article below, ten prominent women leaders in the finance industry were asked how they intend to use their position to disrupt the status quo and shake things up for the future. Take a look at their replies below.

These interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

Related: [10 Prominent Women Leaders Share Their Thoughts on How to Close the Gender Wage Gap](#)

Kelly Steckelberg (Zoom CFO)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

I want to inspire a movement that ensures every child gets an education or skills training. I believe education is the greatest way to empower someone and the benefits extend far beyond the individual to ultimately benefit society as a whole. Ideally, learning should be a lifelong undertaking. In fact, at Zoom, lifelong learning is one of our core themes and a pillar in our philanthropic giving. We invest in our employees' and their family's learning by paying for any books anyone in the family would like to purchase. We also give to organizations focused on bettering educational opportunities.

Lindsay Sacknoff (TD Bank SVP)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

I’d like to start a movement for more actual movement in our office lives! Imagine if we encouraged our employees to take time out of their days to walk with each other or schedule walking meetings? I think organizing or coordinating a time for employees and leaders to come together during lunch or to take a morning break to exercise, network and build relationships by simply taking a walk with one another would go a long way in terms of encouraging a healthy workplace -- physically and mentally.

Cynthia Loh (Charles Schwab VP)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

One of the biggest issues affecting consumers today is that the financial planning and advice that so many people need isn’t accessible, or consumers don’t have a clue where to start among a myriad of options. It’s our obligation to future generations to lower costs and other barriers to entry so that more people can feel confident in their

financial futures. This is one of the many things that drives me at Schwab as I lead the teams that build our robo advice offerings, in our mission to leverage the best of people and technology to democratize access to financial advice.

Julie Fox (UBS Financial Services Director)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

It excites me to see more women enter the financial services industry because we don't have enough! I would love to see more interest in our industry from millennials and see more women come into and stay in this industry. The only way we can change that is by helping each other and working together to do this -- no matter what age, firm or gender you are! The industry has made a lot of strides in doing this but there is still a long way to go, and if we can get it right, it will change the way we work with clients in the future.

Lisa M. Buckingham (Lincoln Financial EVP)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

The movement I would love to inspire is to be yourself fearlessly. Authenticity is something so important and often so lost today's society. To be yourself is to have the courage to define your version of a successful life. It is not the same for everyone -- some thrive in stressful jobs, some like laid-back lifestyles, some desire to expand their families, and so on... and you need to know what is right for you despite what others may define as success. As famously stated, diversity is the one true thing we all have in common -- celebrate it every day. At Lincoln, I've been a champion for Diversity and Inclusion and our "dress-for-your-day" policy. The policy enables our employees to determine how they want to dress to come to work and what makes them feel most comfortable for that day. Even something that may feel simple, such as the option to work in casual clothes, can unleash someone's creativity. I cannot even imagine how beautiful of a place the world would be if we could all just always be ourselves and be celebrated for it.

Chikako Okada Tyler (California Bank & Trust VP)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

If you are a woman, take a risk and say something. Too many women are concerned with what other people think about them or how they will be perceived if they say the wrong thing. You are an intelligent, worthwhile human being and your thoughts have value.

Also companies and societies need to start signaling that both men and women can take on non-traditional roles at home and in the workplace. The more our society sees role models either through media, workplace or the home that are different, acceptable and of nontraditional gender roles, the more this will become “normal” and acceptable.

Melissa Stevens (Fifth Third Bank Chief Digital Officer)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

About 20 percent of children in the U.S. live in poverty, and that number rises to nearly 30 percent in states like Mississippi, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Growing up in poverty has serious consequences that can affect a child for life. If I could start a movement, it would be to focus on America's children. We're the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world, yet our children suffer more food insecurity than in most nations. This has a long-term negative impact on all aspects of their life and stacks the odds against their ability to live a better life than their parents do. It makes me sad to know that American children go to bed hungry on a nightly basis. I personally want to find a way to be part of solving this, and I'd welcome others joining the movement.

Luvleen Sidhu (BankMobile Founder)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

For the business that I am in, there are over 65 million unbanked and underbanked in the U.S. These individuals are not part of the traditional banking system. They do not trust banks and are skeptical and also, because of the monthly fee requirements, often locked out of the system. Due to these circumstances, they often opt to work with payday lenders and alternative banking solutions where 10% of their income goes towards the exorbitant fees of these providers. I hope to inspire the movement of providing banking services that are affordable without outrageous fees, to have financial education, to not be in the business of making money by having our customers mismanage their money. I hope that a movement starts that will help people manage and grow their money, and achieve dreams that they can set for themselves, to be a banking partner that wants to help. That is the movement we are trying to create.

Cynthia C. Merkle (CEO of Union Savings Bank)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

It would be on the education front. I know what a good education did for me, and I was fortunate to be able to have parents who supported that. I have learned a great deal about the inequalities in education over the years but more so in the last ten years from my oldest daughter, who has been with Teach for America. We need to do better, and in some small way I hope the things we are doing at USB for educational programs in our community can help.

Chloe McKenzie (CEO of On a Wealth Kick and of BlackFem, Inc.)



Image credit: via Authority Magazine

Black Feminism teaches us that if we direct our efforts to liberate the most systematically disadvantaged (i.e. women of color), then we liberate everyone. My dream is to make more of me, and that’s going to take some ambition. It’s a big goal, and a small step on the journey towards creating a world where wealth -- and wealth literacy -- are equally and equitably distributed across all our communities. I started BlackFem and On A Wealth Kick because I think we can -- and *must* -- work towards a future where every girl and woman of color has the tools to start building wealth, even in elementary school. If we invest our resources and knowledge in our girls and women of color, they’ll invest them right back into their communities.

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