



Women in Finance

Keynote Remarks for the Variant Perspectives Value Investing Conference

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Amanda Pullinger, CEO, 100 Women in Finance

May 3, 2019

Many thanks for inviting me to give the keynote speech at the Variant Perspectives Value Investing Conference. It's been a number of years since I was last in Omaha for the Berkshire Hathaway investor weekend, and I appreciate the invitation to return.

I'm the CEO of 100 Women in Finance, a global association of over 15,000 members (women and men) working in the broad finance industry. We operate in 23 locations across 4 continents. Our mission at 100 Women in Finance (100WF) is to empower women in the finance industry, at each career stage through unique programming and industry connections.

I'd like to talk about two things today - 100WF's efforts to highlight the existence of female fund managers and the investment opportunities they represent, and secondarily, how the finance industry should be both recognizing and pursuing this opportunity to far greater effect.

Let's start with female fund managers.

Despite the presence and achievement of women fund managers, they remain somewhat invisible to the public eye. This anonymity is a problem, and my organization has been working for a number of years to make these women – and their achievements - more visible.

Before I explain 100WF's initiatives, I'd like to provide some context for why anonymity for women is so problematic.

- Women remain under-represented in the finance industry as a whole, and particularly on investment teams, which of course, lead to executive roles. Everyone has heard the expression, "*You can't be what you can't see.*" If we want teenage girls and early-career women to have an interest in a career path toward our industry's highest levels, we need to show them what's possible. 100WF aims to demonstrate that female investment professionals are not mythical creatures – we exist, we perform, and we are thriving in our roles. These roles are accessible only when they are more visible for women.
- Reason #2 anonymity is a problem is that women portfolio managers are underfunded. This obviously bears some relationship to Reason #1. Numerous credible studies have shown that women managers currently outperform in terms of their investment returns, and we know that diverse investment teams produce better performance. Nonetheless, the level of capital allocation to female managers do not reflect this knowledge.

In order to be seen as credible, we must be seen as *normal* first, and not exceptional one-in-a-million superstars. Female investment professionals must be publicly visible – via appearances on TV, on the radio, at an industry conference podium and in the public eye – in order to be seen as “*investable*.” Politics watchers are familiar with the challenges highly qualified female candidates face on the issue of “electability.” Our industry’s version of this is *invest-ability*, and we believe that one of the ways to move past this barrier is by creating *unconscious comfort* through enhanced exposure and familiarity. Our media work helps to address this opportunity – we want to normalize female investment professionals, to evolve the default perception of what an investment expert looks like and to become, collectively, comfortable with the idea that women portfolio managers are more than up to the task of generating alpha.

So, how do we do this?

We do this in a number of ways, and as I explain our methods, I invite you to imagine how you might get involved in one or more of our initiatives.

Investment Conferences

For the past six years, we have run investment conferences in which we offer a platform and forum for female fund managers to present their strategies to capital allocators. We know that diversity in manager selection leads to *stronger* portfolios, *better* returns, *deeper* client satisfaction and *greater equity* in capital allocation. Our conferences are win-win-win – they simultaneously serve the industry, the investor and the fund manager.

We’ve now hosted these conferences 11 times – in our large markets of San Francisco, New York and London – and have enabled thousands of connections between female-managed and -led funds and institutional allocators, such as managers of fund of funds, pension and endowment funds and investment consultants. You can learn more about this on our website.

Female Fund Manager Directory

Just last year, 100WF launched a new project, conceived in response to hearing repeated statements from conference planners and institutional managers, that they couldn’t find female investment professionals to speak publicly or in whom to invest. Accordingly, we invited our members and all senior women in the finance industry to be more visible.

We started with female portfolio managers across private equity, hedge funds, VC, real estate, long only and mutual funds. We asked them to simply submit a head shot image and basic information about themselves, which we posted to the front page of our website as visual proof of their existence. Today, 300 female fund managers have uploaded their photos, which you can also view on our website, preferably after my speech!

This directory is growing, international, and publicly accessible. I hope you spend some time checking it out, and submit your details if you happen to be fund manager, or perhaps encourage a friend or colleague to do so.

Conference Sponsor and Media Support

We also work directly with conference organizers, helping them to identify under-the-radar female investment talent to sit on conference panels, to provide keynote speeches, and to contribute to industry thought leadership

opportunities. Since the start of the year, we've made more than 100 introductions for such opportunities – connections that would not otherwise have happened.

We additionally work directly with the financial media, to identify female sources of insight and commentary on market, economic and investment topics. In fact, next week, I will accompany a group of female portfolio managers, introduced by 100WF, to CNBC for screen testing and for introduction to program producers and media bookers. This work, I expect, will help the fund managers to attract investors, but even more important, it *helps to shift public understanding* of what an investment expert can look like, benefiting women, the industry, and ultimately, investors.

We think of these initiatives as *intertwined*, part of a multi-faceted umbrella effort we call **FundWomen**. It's both who we are, but it also ultimately what we want the industry to do.

So, let's now talk about what the industry – not just allocators – but all of us in the industry - can do to help **FundWomen**.

I'll start with the allocator community – both women and men. If you are an allocator, you can:

- Attend a 100WF investment conference, or any another organization's event that introduces diverse talent to allocators. 100WF's last conference was in San Francisco a few weeks ago and was attended by more than 100 fund managers and allocators. We will host upcoming conferences in New York and London in the Fall. Please consider yourself warmly welcome, and expected!
- Speak at a 100WF event at one of our 23 global locations. Allocator perspectives are critical for understanding how investors view managers and their strategies. It helps our members to serve you better when they understand what you want and need.
- Challenge your data service providers to include fields that address gender so that you can evaluate the diversity quality of the teams you research. Then, use this data to help find diverse investment teams.
- Revisit your investment policy guidelines to determine how they might inadvertently contribute to low diversity metrics – I'm specifically referring to minimum AUMs, tenure requirements, or concentration thresholds.

Other ways to be helpful, whether you are an allocator or have another role in the industry include the following:

- Promote participation in our [Female Fund Manager directory](#). It's easy, there's no cost, and it benefits everyone. It's the perfect trade - all upside.
- Make use of 100WF's [JobBoard](#) to attract female candidates into investment team and executive-track roles. If you are looking for female investment professionals, we have a global network of over 15,000 members.
- If your company sponsors industry conferences, put your female colleagues in for the speaker slots.
- If you are invited to speak at a conference, perhaps on a panel, express to the organizer that you will participate only if that panel is diverse. Help the conference planner find female speakers, and if you have trouble, turn to 100WF for support.
- Commit to diverse slates – when hiring for investment roles within your staff team, and when sourcing external talent.

Finally, I'd like to close with two requests.

- First, if you are a female investment professional or executive, please find a way to get in front of an audience of teen girls or young women who are still figuring out who they might become one day. Attending a 100WF Teenage Girls' Dinner - or perhaps speaking at a 100WF NextGen Group session - would be a great investment of your time, but you can also find opportunities in your own community, at your local high school, at your alma mater, or wherever a natural opportunity might exist. I promise your impact will be exponential.
- Second, I'd like everyone to help figure out how all of us in the industry can better communicate the positives of the finance industry, especially to the younger generation.

Despite what you see on TV dramas and in negative news stories, the finance industry, *for the most part*, addresses the needs and interests of the ordinary person – the public school teacher, the police officer, the office worker, the first-generation college student. If you care about attracting women into our trade, please help to articulate a positive message about how the investment community works to deliver funded pension liabilities, to fund university financial aid programs, to finance infrastructure, to modernize the developing world, to further the missions of hospitals, religious organizations, and museums, and to build secure retirements.

At a number of our Teenage Girls' dinners, I've been struck by how easily we can convert the neutral or negative feelings of teenage girls around the finance industry, to far more positive attitudes towards a career in finance. We do this through introducing these girls to female role models in the industry who clearly communicate not only what they do, but the reason they do it.

Millennial women - and men, by the way - are already making it clear that they will make career choices largely based on how meaningful and rewarding a given profession is going to be. So understanding how the finance industry can give them an opportunity to make a difference is crucial to attracting and retaining the best talent. A career in finance can be a career of deep meaning and lasting impact. So let's all start telling that story.

I am proud of the work the finance industry does, and the extraordinary opportunity it affords to those who choose it for their careers. For that reason, 100WF is working to make our industry stronger and more inclusive.

Please join us in our mission, and I look forward to hearing your ideas for how we might work together.