

AN INTERVIEW WITH

ERICA BENJAMIN

MANAGING DIRECTOR
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
BMO CAPITAL MARKETS



Erica joined BMO Capital Markets in 2013 as Managing Director, Global Head of Client Onboarding. In 2016, she took on the role of Managing Director, Global Head of Client Services, where she was responsible Client Onboarding, Client Data Management, CRM Support and Client Data Analytics Reporting. Erica's strong capabilities in process efficiency and effectiveness, led to her promotion in 2018 to Chief Administrative Officer, where she retained her responsibility for Client Services, and expanded her accountability to include the Professional Development, Real Estate, Business Operations, Expense Management and Administration groups.

Prior to joining BMO, she held a variety of senior roles at Nomura Securities, Barclay's and Lehman Brothers. Erica sits on the Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee, Executive Sponsor for the Women's Bond Club, Service Unit Treasurer for the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, PTA Treasurer for elementary school at Harborfields School District and holds various leadership positions across internal employee resource groups and external women's organizations across North America.

Erica is the recipient of Women In Capital Markets (wcm.ca) 2020 Champion of Change award!

For someone who has been working from home for 1-2 days a week for the past 10 years, I have effectively balanced completing all my work obligations, while also attending to family.

This established structure has been completely turned upside down during the COVID work from home timeframe. In the beginning of this full time transition to WFH, it has been very difficult to manage with all added responsibilities - especially with homeschooling two young children and housework. It felt like the day never ended.

Within the past week, I have developed what I call my "enhanced" routine. I have discovered that I can't do everything myself and I need to ask for help - whether it is from my spouse, a friend, or a co-worker.

My new routine also now includes incorporating some "me" time.

This upgraded WFH schedule entails the following Top 10:

- 1. Create an official workspace** – avoid your bed or couch
- 2. Start the day like you're going to the office** - take a shower, get dressed for work and even put make-up on if it makes you feel confident!
- 3. Plan the day** - across needs of family, client, team and self
- 4. Take breaks** – get fresh air, exercise, eat and sleep
- 5. Stay connected with colleagues** – book daily / weekly huddles. Communication is key!
- 6. Organize your week** – set goals, confirm priorities
- 7. Recognize colleagues** – for good work, partnership behavior, supporting the community
- 8. Be social, mentoring and coaching can still occur** – virtual coffee, virtual walks

- 9. Take time for yourself.** Stay healthy, physically and mentally - includes walking the dog, talking to a friend, self-care
- 10. Recognize that you can not be everything to everyone, all the time!** - don' be too hard on yourself, especially during such testing times

For the past 18 months, we have been transforming the way in which we work at BMO, with a focus on mobility supported by technology. This work has been a key contributing factor in how quickly we were able to mobilize our offices into a work from home arrangement.

The learnings from the this recent work from home arrangement will help us make further refinements to our overall workplace **transformation strategy for the future.**