

Women in Finance: Driving Connection and Productivity Through Uncertainty

[This article first appeared on the OneStream blog by Jaelyn Proctor](#)

As we near 2022, uncertainty remains a steady theme for the year ahead. Finance leaders are tasked to become more strategic with decision making and planning to get ahead of the uncertainty, while also driving connectivity among teams through a hybrid work environment.

In OneStream's third [Women in Finance webinar](#), we discussed how women in finance can empower one another to advocate for themselves and serve as leaders to drive connections across geographies. Moderated by Pam McIntyre, Corporate Controller at OneStream, the webinar featured a panel of three innovative leaders across various industries including [Moonsun Park](#), Chief Financial Officer at Sharp Electronics; [Beth Elwell](#), VP of Financial Planning & Analysis at Trane Technologies; and [Amy Corbin](#), Chief Financial Officer at Surescripts. Below are highlights from the panel discussion, including the importance of connection, driving productivity through flexibility, and becoming an advocate.

Creating Lasting Connections in a Remote Environment

The Women in Finance webinar kicked off with questions on the importance of mentorship and making connections – especially in today's hybrid work environment.

Moonsun Park highlighted the importance of mentorship and having an advocate in the development of her career, crediting her mentor as a sounding board for her both professionally and personally.

Beth Elwell discussed the importance of business partnership and connecting with individuals outside of your job function. Her mentor was a leader within her organization outside of finance. Elwell explained how her mentor served as an incredible resource and friend in her career. "Business partnership is so important. Just because someone isn't in your function doesn't mean they're not going to help you in your career. They absolutely are – you never know what door they're going to open," said Elwell.

Amy Corbin encouraged listeners to think of mentors and sponsors as influencers and connectors. "Sometimes you need someone to connect you with someone else in your organization or within the community," she said. "Look through the lens of who is connecting you and who is influencing you."

Empowering Women in Finance

The panelists were then asked for a piece of advice they have for women aiming for the top of their careers – especially while facing the challenge of a hybrid work environment where access to leaders can feel more restricted.

Corbin encouraged women in finance to reduce reliance on talking purely about numbers when working with business partners and turn it into a business conversation. “To go far in your career, make yourself relevant to the business in the business’s conversation and language. Stakeholders are looking for a business partner, not a numbers person,” she said.

Focusing on connectivity, Elwell recommended that women build relationships across team members, managers, customers, mentors, and sponsors. To build these connections in a hybrid work environment, Elwell said “Don’t underestimate the power of video. Communicating through video allows people to be more engaged in the conversation, creating more powerful and lasting connections.”

Park added to Elwell’s perspective by saying, “It’s definitely out of sight, out of mind – even if it is unintentional. So be visible and be present as much as possible.” Elwell encouraged people to be okay with going out of your comfort zone”

Beating Burnout Through Flexibility

The panelists were asked how they balance the demand of work that needs to be done within their teams with the flexibility to prevent burnout. Park encourages her teams to take time off and to focus on delivering the quality of work versus the quantity of completed projects. She credits OneStream’s unified and scalable [CPM technology](#) as “a huge benefit in terms of time savings.” Park explained that “turning manual processes into more automated ones has enabled the team to do more value-added activities and serve as business partners.”

“The key to this balance is prioritization,” added Elwell. She advised teams to focus on understanding what the customer needs in terms of data when they need it and the level of accuracy required. “It’s important to understand dependency – who is waiting on data and who is making me wait on data – and making sure management reporting is streamlined as much as possible to eliminate waste,” she said.

Corbin shared the importance of remaining flexible in meeting stakeholders where they are. “It’s about setting realistic timeframes, meeting your teams and stakeholders where they’re at, and being realistic about turnaround timeframes,” she said. Corbin also emphasized the importance of being open to change. “It’s ok to try something new, possibly make a mistake and try again.”

Advocating for Yourself and Empowering the Next Generation

The conversation then focused on the panelists’ best tips for how women can advocate for themselves, and the next generation of women, in order to level-up their careers. Corbin advised that “It starts with making yourself invaluable to an area of business and being known for some area of expertise that you can go wide and deep on.” She also urged listeners to take any and every volunteer opportunity to try something new, to be willing to take a risk, and to create opportunities for exposure to others.

Elwell advocated for leaders to empower their teams to share their ideas, accomplishments, and the work they're doing within the organization. She added that, "Diversity is top of mind for companies right now, so opportunities are more abundant than ever before - but we have to make the opportunities continue to be abundant." She also encouraged leaders to act as role models for younger generations. "As leaders, we should create safe environments for people to take risks. If you believe in someone, how do you get them to believe in themselves," she said.

As CFO of Sharp Electronics, Park recommended that women reach out to leaders within the organization. She adds, "If we don't know you, we won't have visibility into what you do unless you make that conscious effort." She also leverages her position within the company to bring people into meetings and share individuals' accomplishments to provide visibility to the rest of the company.

Learn More and Get Involved

To hear the full Women in Finance discussion, check out the [full webinar replay](#). Continue the conversation and stay connected with the Women in Finance community by joining our new [LinkedIn group](#) and stay up to date on future events.