

BMO Financial Group Wins 2017 Gender Equality Award

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- Award presented by the United Nations' Global Compact Network Canada (GCNC)
- BMO recognized for industry-leading products and business practices that support and empower women

TORONTO, April 5, 2017 /CNW/ - BMO Financial Group was named a 2017 Gender Equality Award winner by the United Nations' Global Compact Canada Network at the Gender Equality Awards in Toronto on April 4. BMO was recognized for Principle 5 for its industry-leading efforts in implementing enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.

Each year, the Gender Equality Awards recognize the efforts of businesses that aim to achieve the United Nations' sustainable development goals related to gender equality and the advancement of women as part of their national and global business operations.

"With a large percentage of women saying they are unhappy with the financial services industry, we identified the need to engage our women customers differently," said Joanna Rotenberg, Group Head, BMO Wealth Management. "Building on our strong belief in the value of diverse teams and women in leadership, we increased our focus to address the different needs of our female clients. We appreciate this recognition of the work we are doing to lead change in our industry."

BMO initiatives focused on gender equality and the advancement of women:

BMO Women in Leadership Fund: Launched in 2016, it is the first impact investing mutual fund offered by a Canadian bank focused on gender diversity. The Fund invests in North American companies that have a female CEO or a board of directors with at least 25 per cent female representation.

BMO for Women: This group consists of bank leaders – both women and men – to provide BMO's female clients with a differentiated value proposition. In 2016, BMO partnered with Carleton University on the ground-breaking study, *A Force to Reckon With: Women, Entrepreneurship and Risk*, which studied gender differences in the risk-taking behaviours of entrepreneurs and found that the notion of women being risk-averse is unfounded. BMO has also taken a number of additional steps to help support and connect with women business-owners including the development of workshops for entrepreneurs and workshops focused on goal planning to help women articulate their personal, professional and wealth goals.

BMO and Partnerships: BMO is committed to enabling mentorship and networking opportunities for women by partnering with organizations such as Women President's Organization and was a founding sponsor of GroYourBiz and SheEO. BMO is also a member of WBE Canada (Women Business Enterprise Canada) and has implemented a number practices with the aim of ensuring an inclusive procurement process.

About BMO Financial Group

Established in 1817, and currently marking its 200th year of operations, BMO Financial Group is a highly diversified financial services provider based in North America. With total assets of \$692 billion as of January 31, 2017, and more than 45,000 employees, BMO provides a broad range of personal and commercial banking, wealth management and investment banking products and services to more than 12 million customers and conducts business through three operating groups: Personal and Commercial Banking, Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

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SOURCE BMO Financial Group

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