

BMO Celebrates International Women's Day 2019 by Empowering Women to Own their Economic Success; Reaffirms Commitment to Fostering Female Leaders
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TORONTO, March 8, 2019 /PRNewswire/ - To mark International Women's Day 2019, BMO Financial Group will be taking part in a variety of initiatives to show its continued support and commitment to gender equality, economic empowerment, and female representation and inclusion in the workplace.

"Women's economic empowerment is crucial for global economic growth," said Joanna Rotenberg, Group Head, BMO Wealth Management. "We know that, if women gain the opportunity to play a full and confident role in the economy, worldwide GDP could rise by \$12 trillion. BMO is deeply committed to supporting these efforts, from our programs to foster female representation and leadership within our teams, to ones helping women be more confident in managing their personal finances and access funding to grow their businesses."

Panel on Women Entrepreneurs & Economic Empowerment

Earlier this week, BMO hosted a panel discussion on personal investing in the era of the gig economy, career planning and financial and leadership advice for women entrepreneurs. The event highlighted BMO's commitment to economic empowerment for women across Canada and the U.S.

Moderated by Joanna Rotenberg, Group Head of BMO Wealth Management, the panel included: Amy Dietz-Graham, Investment Advisor, BMO Nesbitt Burns; Sheri Griffiths, Regional Vice President Business Banking, BMO Financial Group; and Niamh Kristufek, Head of U.S. Business Banking, BMO Harris Bank.

To access a post-event recording, please visit [BMO's Facebook page](#).

\$3 Billion Capital Commitment Drives Increase in Female-Lead Business

In 2018, BMO committed \$3 billion in capital over three years to women-owned businesses across Canada and created programs to ensure they succeed. It continues to stand behind this commitment; in the six months since the funding was announced, BMO's growth in loans to women-owned businesses surpassed the national average by 3 percentage points.

To support female entrepreneurs further, bmoformen.com received a complete redesign to serve current and potential clients more effectively. The online resource centre provides critical advice for building a successful business including creating a business plan, human resources, staffing, borrowing, and how to maintain a positive relationship with their banker.

Additionally, BMO is implementing new training programs for its bankers who serve women entrepreneurs to better understand how to best meet their needs.

Through BMO Celebrating Women Canada, 139 women have been recognized in communities across Canada and the U.S. for their achievements in business growth and philanthropy and community involvement.

Social Campaign Calling Attention to the Women's Economic Empowerment

BMO is hosting an interactive social media quiz that raises awareness on the progress made in women's equality and its impact on the economy. The quiz will be available until March 11, 2019 at <http://bmo-for-women.com/>.

BMO Women in a Supported Environment (W.I.S.E) panel discussions for employees

BMO's largest Enterprise Resource Group, W.I.S.E., hosted events in Chicago and Toronto this week focused on empowering women in the workplace and the 2019 International Women's Day theme of "Balancing for Better". Through panel discussions and networking, BMO team members were enabled to ask female leaders for their perspectives on achieving success.

W.I.S.E is a community of more than 3,000 BMO employees – both women and men – who champion the inclusion, development, advancement, and support of women for the betterment of BMO's business, communities and culture.

BMO's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are core BMO values that guide its thinking and actions, and are integral to the company's long-term sustainability. BMO's approach on diversity is all encompassing - it includes diversity of thought, approach, gender, race, age, ability, sexual orientation, and more.

Teams that are both diverse and inclusive experience higher levels of engagement, diversity of thought and innovation, which lead to better customer experiences and business outcomes. Programs and initiatives exist across the organization through innovative talent practices and ambitious workplace representation goals. Vision 2020 is a multi-year strategy to drive the bank's performance and industry leadership by fostering greater diversity and inclusion across the organization.

Highlights of BMO's Diversity and Inclusion Programs include:

- **Women in Senior Leadership and Board Representation** – 40 per cent of senior leadership roles are held by women, while 36 per cent of independent directors on BMO's Board of Directors are women. 56 per cent of employees are female.
- **Career Development** – BMO believes in growing leaders from within. More than 60 per cent of its senior leaders have completed the Leadership EDGE program since its launch in April 2016.

Follow @BMO on Twitter to join the conversation using #BMOforWomen.

About BMO Financial Group

Serving customers for 200 years and counting, BMO is a highly diversified financial services provider - the 8th largest bank, by assets, in North America. With total assets of \$807 billion as of January 31, 2019, and a team of diverse and highly engaged 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, BMO Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

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SOURCE BMO Financial Group

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