

LEADING THE WAY FORWARD



■ **JESSICA M. GOVERNARA**
Capstone

Jessica Governara joined Capstone in 2005 and is currently the national marketing director. Her primary responsibilities include the management of business development, due diligence analysis for prospective clients, underwriting of new accounts, credit analysis, development and distribution of marketing materials, as well as oversight for digital outreach campaigns. In addition, Jessica manages and provides training to third-party referral sources.

Throughout her 17-year tenure with Capstone, Jessica has held various executive level roles serving in the capacity of the due diligence manager and investor relations as well as director of human resources and office management. Jessica has facilitated the funding of over \$1B in factoring and purchase order financing related transactions.

Jessica is an active part of the finance community and has memberships with the New York Institute of Credit, Secured Finance Network, Turnaround Management Associate and Women in Commerce.

Jessica matriculated at Fordham University where she first received a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in finance and economics and also went on to receive a Master of Business Administration degree in finance and international management.

What advice would you offer to women just starting out in the industry?

Secured lending covers a vast array of financial instruments from commercial mortgages, home equity lines, to letters of credit and invoice factoring. Most individuals are familiar with the more common financial instruments large institutions offer, but very few know the various trade finance instruments provided by boutique financiers. It is extremely important to fully understand and immerse yourself in your firm's products and become an authority on them. You should be able to explain your firm's products and underwriting criteria in the most simplistic form. No matter what your role, understanding how to help your clients and potential clients is crucial to your long-term success.

What role has mentoring played in your career?

I am lucky enough to have been mentored and to be a mentor. My advice for finding a mentor is that you may need to find a mentor outside your industry. Someone outside of your industry may be able to provide insights on things you and your peers may not otherwise notice. Also, understand your weaknesses and find a mentor who can help turn those weaknesses into strengths.

When I first started in finance my mentor was an attorney. My position required me to read contracts and I needed help understanding the legalese. My mentor took the time to explain the language to me and to show me where the important aspects and red flags of the contracts were. Now, when I find myself reading contracts, I'm able to do it much more efficiently and help others. It is important to spend the time mentoring new employees and sharing your knowledge with them. I enjoy being able to create opportunities for others as a mentor and I take pride alongside them when they receive accolades for their work.

What effect, if any, has working remotely had on your career and/or your industry?

Working from home has been both personally challenging and beneficial to the industry.

Prior to COVID, screaming children and barking dogs in the background were not widely deemed professional. Today, when someone apologizes for their child crying or screaming, I always laugh and say, "I am glad it is yours and not mine." Working remotely brought a human touch that was missing in daily work life. It's sometimes easy to forget that people are not robots and have actual lives outside of work. The overlap of professional and personal life deepened my relationship with my colleagues. It was and still is extremely refreshing to hear life outside of business during a call. I would stress that anyone who finds themselves upset when they hear non-work noises on calls to be sympathetic as you never know when it's going to be your child or dog in the background.

Tell us something about yourself that may surprise people.

I earned my Bachelor of Science and my Master of Business Administration from Fordham University, both with a concentration in international finance and economics. I am a mother of four highly energetic boys. I started a local community garden to provide fresh produce to local homeless shelters.