

Fund Finance Friday



WFF US Fireside Chat Recap: Managing Teams Remotely

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Women in Fund Finance hosted a virtual fireside chat this week on “Navigation and the Redesign of the Future Workplace & Managing Teams Remotely.” The event featured Macquarie Senior Managing Director Erin Ledger-Beaupre, who gave the audience an insider’s look at how she has successfully led Macquarie Asset Management’s Real Estate Investments team on a remote basis. Her team has been successfully functioning in a remote/hybrid environment for over 10 years. The event was moderated by Jeannie Kim, Vice President at Macquarie.

The conversation started with a discussion on communication challenges. Erin’s view is that over-communication is key, so that everyone is on the same page regarding what is getting done and when. She noted that not everyone is remote, and Macquarie has made a point to keep junior members on the team in the office as much as possible so they can learn from one another and help to maintain and shape the culture. Erin emphasized that it is important to be more intentional about communication, because when everyone is in an office together, it’s easy to turn around and ask a question or run things past one another. On the other hand, when that is not the environment, it is important to carve out a little piece of time every day to check in as a team. This can be as easy as having a group chat via messaging software or a phone call to connect on what was accomplished that day and to address any questions that may have come up. Erin and Jeannie discussed that it can be challenging to find a system of communicating that works for everyone on the team and to stick to it, holding team members accountable. Erin said that rather than sending multiple emails throughout the day, she will keep an email draft which she updates during the course of the day with notes for her team, and then will send one consolidated email summarizing everything.

The next topic was making sure everyone on the team can see the bigger picture and ensuring that no one gets tunnel vision in their role. One way their team has had success with this is by mixing groups of people who do not normally work together. Macquarie also pairs mentors and mentees from different roles on the team, and this gives everyone on the team the opportunity to learn from someone they wouldn’t typically get to know.

The conversation then turned to attracting and retaining diverse talent. Providing flexibility to your team members and allowing for maximum productivity with work-life balance is key, they said. Erin does this with her team by building and exemplifying a culture of trust. She knows that work for everyone doesn’t always fit in a 9-5 time frame, so understanding that and being open about flexibility is essential. As long as the work is being done correctly and on time, there is no reason to expect everyone to work all at the same time.

The session ended with a speed round of “This or That,” where Erin shared that she still uses a paper calendar and balances her checkbook by hand. She also talked about having not only a standing desk but also an under-the-desk treadmill for it. She also said that she prefers Charlotte over New York and fully enjoys both being a mom (she has three kids) and her career and is grateful to have found a way to achieve success in both roles!

To summarize, the key takeaways are:

- Over-communicate intentionally;
- Use mentorship to maintain visibility; and
- Build and exemplify a culture of trust.