

# Recruiters target women as financial advisers

By Tim Simmers, Business Writer

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Sherri Du Mond is on a mission: She is recruiting female financial advisers.

With more women starting their own businesses, and controlling family wealth, many prefer a woman financial adviser. But fewer than one of five in the industry is female, said Du Mond, recruiting specialist for Securian Financial Services Group.

“This is a male-dominated field, and we're trying to change the face of the industry,” said Du Mond, vice president of national recruiting at Securian Financial. “Women want that nurturing, caring part in their financial advisers, and women are good listeners.”

Nationwide, only 20 percent of financial advisers are women, according to the National Association of Personal Financial Advisers. Ten years ago, it was between 10 percent and 12 percent, Du Mond said. A recent survey by Securian found that women prefer female advisers over a male adviser by a 3-to-1 margin.

“Women don't walk in like they already know everything, and presume they already have the answer,” said Du Mond. Her company, through its independently owned and operated San Mateo affiliate, SGC Financial, held a recruiting event last Tuesday for women interested in exploring the career option.

Why would women want to get into the field? For one, it's lucrative, with the average adviser making more than \$120,000 a year. There's also lots of independence, and a “chance to make a difference,” advisers say.

“I like providing a sense of security for my clients,” said Xiomara Vielman, a financial adviser in San Mateo for SGC Financial. “When we find a solution, my client can sleep well at night.”

“Vielman, a 27-year-old Hispanic woman, grew up in San Mateo and watched her parents work hard and struggle with their own house cleaning business. They didn't have time to participate in her childhood events because they were so busy, and that stuck with her. She was thinking there had to be an easier way.

“I wanted to work smart, rather than work hard,” said Vielman, who noted that she's in a great position now to build a career around family and children.

Though she's still single, in the future she will have time to have children, go to a soccer game and take time out for a charity event. Plus, she likes using the nurturing skills that come naturally to her.

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“Women are a lot more emotional than men, and money is emotional,” she said. “There's a lot of fear and greed involved, and it's definitely tied to emotions.” She also likes listening to people, and building relationships with them. But cautions the field can be “intimidating,” because there are so many men in it. She works in an office with 20 advisers, two of whom are women.

Brandy Navarro is also a financial adviser at SGC in San Mateo, and loves the ability to work her own hours.

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“Women are juggling so many things, and I like the flexibility this field gives you,” she said.

A Redwood City resident, Navarro has been in the profession for six years. She finds it rewarding to see people reach their financial goals. But even more so, she likes to see them “get empowered” about money as she helps them with their nest egg.

Navarro, Vielman and others are also attracted by potential six-figure incomes in the field. To be sure, men also can be terrific financial advisers, they say. But they think more women should consider it as a career.

Why are women getting control of more wealth? They usually outlive men, and frequently inherit assets and family wealth, Du Mond said.

She pointed out that a lot of women don't recognize financial services as a career option. They think you must have an MBA, or background in finance and economics to enter the field, Du Mond noted.

“But being bright, energetic and able to grasp concepts is a great start,” said Du Mond, whose company requires a college degree for financial advisers and

planners. Still, she thinks some teachers, Realtors and others with common sense and some savvy about numbers can make the transition.

“I think it's a natural for women,” said Lehua Greenman of Foster City, who attended the recruiting event. “I like to do my homework, and see what options are out there.”

Currently a Realtor, Greenman spent 15 years in the banking business and liked “helping investors map out their plan.”

“I wanted to know if that rewarding feeling of helping investors is still there, and I think it is,” she said.

Greenman is looking at options for the future, and said: “There's always a possibility of a shift.”

She also plans to tell some friends and coworkers about the field.

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DOFU 12-2007  
A06746-1107