

Women in WM: Zurich PM head on the importance of staying nimble

By [Ashley Lowe](#) 04 Mar, 2019 at 09:42



An increasing number of women are pursuing a career in financial services, however, few of them reach leadership positions.

Ahead of International Women's Day, Citywire Switzerland has spoken to the women leading wealth management firms across the country to find out what inspired them to pursue their career, how they reached their current position and the lessons they have learned along the way.

In this profile, ISGAM's head of research and portfolio management, [Marianne Rameau](#), explains how a change in circumstance pushed her into finance, why she believes an emphasis on math is key and the importance of staying nimble.

How long have you been in your current role?

I've been head of portfolio management since 2001.

How long have you worked for the company?

Our current company was registered in 2001, but I've worked with the same business partners for much longer than that.

What are your key responsibilities?

We're a small wealth management company, so the interesting thing is that all of our clients are completely different. I need to research a large number of investment funds, and also direct instruments on both the equity and fixed income side, in different base currencies, and get together a macro-economic picture to estimate things like potential returns, risk premiums and more. It's very broad.

When did you begin your career in this field?

The start of my career in the financial services industry was in 1987. I had never expected to be involved in this work. I studied psychology in the Netherlands, and after having worked as a psychologist, I moved to a different country, where I didn't speak the language. So, I couldn't work as a psychologist.

I ended up in administration for an IFA company. I found it much more interesting than I thought I would find it, and started actually studying the IMC, and then got my ASIP qualification.

Why did you choose a career in wealth management?

It was really by chance. I bumped into working in it while working in an administrative office, and wanted to look under the hood. As I was working and studying at the same time, I could immediately apply what I was learning. When we started this company, it enabled me to start off with an interesting role in portfolio management.

It was a surprise career for me – I hadn't set out to do this.

What are the biggest challenges you face in your job?

Some of the biggest challenges are also some of the things that make it really interesting. At the end of the day, working with investment markets is a humbling experience. However much you try to put together the perfect portfolio or picture of the future, life, and the world, is full of unexpected twists and surprises.

What is one of the most important lessons you've learned throughout your career?

Be nimble. You need to keep learning and keep an open mind. Look at the facts and have a strategy, but be flexible enough that when the facts change you can adjust your strategy.

What advice would you give other women embarking on a career in wealth management?

It strikes me still that, while there are many more women in wealth management than there used to be, we are still a minority. It starts in elementary or middle school, and girls need to be encouraged to study the exact sciences. Math is extremely important.

Also, I think networks are very important. It is incredibly helpful to know other women in the business – to support each other, talk to each other, recommend each other for things. It's good to have a network, and good for women to have their own network.