

Women Sales Leaders of Lincoln: Sheree Lavelle Discusses Controlling Her Own Destiny

Growing up in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, Sheree Lavelle was never one to sit back and take it easy. From student council president to captain of the volleyball team, she not only kept busy, she excelled. From a young age, Sheree and her three siblings understood the value of a broad-based education. Their mother was a teacher, so education was highly prized at their house. When Sheree enrolled at Villanova University, it came as no surprise that she pursued a double-major in Political Science and French and planned to enroll in law school after graduation.

"I didn't want to be a corporate attorney, but I was thinking of law school as a way of prepping me for some type of political-adjacent type of aspiration," says Sheree. "The thought of continuing education and incurring the debt of graduate school was a bit daunting, so my parents encouraged me to defer for a year or two and get my feet in the corporate world to make sure that was really what I wanted to do."



By this point, Sheree had grown to love Philadelphia, so she began applying to financial firms in the area, hoping to be accepted into a management development program. An interview with Lincoln Financial led to an offer to participate in Lincoln's Professional Development Program (now the Lincoln Preparation Program). She spent her first year working under the marketing umbrella with a conference and event planning team, which she enjoyed because it allowed her to stay in Philly, while providing exposure to different parts of the business.

Finding Her Way

Sheree's second year as an LPP saw her return to her dream of a career in politics, as she worked with Lincoln's lobbyists in a small office in Washington, D.C. While she appreciated the opportunity to get a taste of the world she once aspired to, the pace at which things progressed was much too slow for this go-getter.

It was during her third year that Sheree discovered the career that would ultimately bring her great satisfaction and success – as a sales professional in Lincoln's world-class distribution business. As an LPP, she was assigned to the MoneyGuard distribution team, starting out by covering a small territory. Here she gained product knowledge, developed relationships and grew her confidence as a wholesaler. From that point on, she knew what she wanted to do.

"I felt like I could really thrive in this type of environment where the sky's the limit and you're in control of your own destiny," says Sheree. "It's a really empowering position because you're able to directly impact the lives of financial professionals and their clients."

Bringing Out the Best

Following graduation from the program, Sheree secured a permanent position with Lincoln as an external wholesaler. From the beginning, she felt supported as a woman working in a field predominately made up of men. She also found Lincoln to be a safe place to voice her aspirations and find mentors to encourage her ambitions.

"Starting at the company as a very young professional, not knowing any better, you do have that 'I'm going to take over the world' mentality," Sheree recalls. "No one ever told me 'no.' In fact, my experience has been the opposite. At Lincoln, I've always found leaders and managers who have taken interest in helping me get better, and have supported me in exploring my curiosity to learn more about how we run our businesses, and how I can be a part of that growth"

In 2010, Sheree relocated to sunny southern California, where she currently serves as regional marketing director. Today, 14 years after joining Lincoln, she still exudes excitement and enthusiasm about her role and eagerly awaits what's in store for her future.. And, just like as a child, she finds she is most fulfilled when she is busiest. With three small children,

a 9-year marriage to her college-sweetheart husband, and a successful career, she is exactly that—busy!

Sheree's story is the second in our "Women of the 20s" series featured this month to commemorate Women's History Month. Keep an eye out for our next two profiles that will feature women sales leaders of today – the 2020s – representing Lincoln Financial Distributors' Retirement Solutions Distribution and Life & Executive Benefits businesses.