

Women Sales Leaders of Lincoln: Kristen Parks, Giving Her All

Kristen Parks spent most of her childhood in the historic small town of Groton, Mass., which boasted a population of less than 10,000. She described growing up as having lots of “easygoing fun” with her siblings and joked that the big news in Groton was “the arrival of a CVS.”

The daughter of two working parents, Kristen didn’t have a specific career in mind when she enrolled at Villanova University as a Communications major. She knew she wanted to find something that would enable her to provide a good life for her family and maintain a work/life balance. An avid dancer, she enjoyed participating on the dance team, along with her public speaking courses. With a self-described Type A personality, she felt well-suited for a career in sales when she began applying for jobs in the first semester of her senior year. By December of her senior year, she had secured a position in Lincoln’s Professional Development Program (PDP) – a rotational program that allowed employees to explore a few different roles and departments within Lincoln. Now referred to as the Lincoln Preparation Program, these rotations help employees determine their career paths.

“I was on cloud nine, knowing I had a great job coming out of school,” recalls Kristen. “That really allowed me to enjoy the second semester of my senior year.”

In August 2008, Kristen began her PDP experience in Lincoln’s Hartford, Conn. office. Working on the product development team, she gained a great foundation in annuities, which helped her weather the uncertainty that accompanied the Great Recession of 2008-2009.

The following year, Kristen relocated to Lincoln’s Radnor, Pa. office where she worked as a sales training manager for annuities, running the new hire training program. She trained employees on product changes and frequently traveled with Lincoln’s relationship managers to educate the company’s partner firms on changes to Lincoln’s suite of solutions as well.

The Stars Align

As the economy emerged from the recession, Kristen found herself training more new hires each month. She was also planning the next steps for her professional and personal life, and began pondering what type of position would provide her with the best work/life balance.

“I was looking for something that would allow me to flourish as a woman in the industry, while also knowing that I wanted to have a family and that was going to be my priority,” says Kristen. “As I talked to these wholesalers who would come through the door every month, I felt like wholesaling was something I could do. I had the foundation and the background. As a trainer, I certainly knew enough about Lincoln’s products that I could speak to them intelligently. It was just a matter of finding the right opportunity.”



In 2011, Kristen married her then-boyfriend, Rob, and the two settled in New Jersey. Rob had a great job in New York City, so the couple felt somewhat limited in their ability to relocate. Kristen was happy in her role and wanted to build her career at Lincoln, so she continued to network and learn from wholesalers and participated in professional development opportunities. Toward the end of 2013, “the stars aligned” and an external wholesaling position within Lincoln’s annuities business opened up in New Jersey. Kristen began a dialogue with the hiring manager and ultimately landed the role of regional marketing director for Lincoln Financial Distributors.

The Right Balance

As for the keys to her success, Kristen credits her penchant for organization and process for helping her excel. She also stresses the importance of providing “white glove service” and building meaningful relationships with her financial professionals.

“I have so many people that have helped me during my evolution at Lincoln,” says Kristen. “I’ve met incredible people who have given me valuable advice and I still lean on them today for guidance.”

Looking to the future, work/life balance continues to be paramount for Kristen, who is currently expecting her third child. She strongly believes she has found that at Lincoln.

“As a working mom with very young kids at home, this role has allowed me the flexibility to be present for them,” says Kristen. “That’s why I’ve never even thought of looking anywhere else. I’ve had such a great career here and Lincoln has treated me so well. I feel like I owe it to the company to give my all.”

Kristen’s story is the third in our “Women of the 20s” series this month, featuring women sales leaders at Lincoln, then and now – the 1920s to the 2020s. Keep an eye out for our final feature that will spotlight a woman from Lincoln Financial Distributors’ Life & Executive Benefits business.

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