SFNet's 40 Under 40 Profiles

PORTFOLIO/RISK MANAGEMENT

■ **SHERRILL HORNETT**
Director of Portfolio
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*S*herrill Hornett is a director of Portfolio Management at Context Business Lending. Based in New York City, she is responsible for managing a portfolio of diverse ABL borrowers with changing liquidity needs while managing unique risk profiles.

In March 2021, Sherrill made the leap to Context Business Lending to experience the non-bank side of ABL lending with an opportunity to be part of their growth story and formation of the Portfolio team.

Prior to that, she spent 15 years at Wells Fargo Capital Finance and predecessors, starting her career in Operations and moving through the ranks to a Senior Relationship Manager in the Corporate ABL Division.

Sherrill earned degrees in finance and Spanish from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and grew up in Charlotte, NC. While she is not working, Sherrill enjoys spending time with her husband and three-year-old daughter.

What is the best professional advice you have been given and how have you implemented it?

Do not be afraid to take risks and it is ok to fail.

When I hear senior leaders share their career path and story, a consistent theme in their defining career moments were a result of taking risks, and they only took those risks because they were at peace if they failed.

Throughout my life, the biggest leaps of faith I have taken to push myself outside of my comfort zone have returned the biggest rewards. When looking back, regardless of success or failure, these decisions have always provided the catalysts for growth and development, and the hardest part of it all was taking that first step.

What is your definition of success?

Success in my opinion is a feeling of absolute fulfillment where your focus brings out the best of your natural abilities and strengths, you feel rewarded and challenged, and you find an equilibrium to balance it all against the demands of life that come at you from all angles!

When I get the sense that I am thriving and I have reached this rock star status, to me that feeling is success! Whenever I lose the balance, I know it is time for change, and once the balance becomes easy, I know I am ready for a new challenge.

Did you change the way you approach work while working remotely during the pandemic? Have these habits stayed with you as we emerge from the crisis?

Like many, it was a shock to the system and initially was a hard transition, since you felt like you were always on with no divide between work and home.

I quickly realized I needed to create boundaries to define work hours and use the extra time I had because of not commuting for things that made me happy. I started taking afternoon walks, worked out in the morning, cherished the random five-minute breaks to play with my daughter and tried to not work in the evening unless I absolutely had to.

The transition has ended up being a welcome change and I accepted a new job this year that is fully remote. I have more time for myself and my family and, if anything, I am more productive!

What advice do you normally give to the junior talent you mentor?

Listen, do not be afraid to ask questions, have the humility to realize you do not know everything, and always do the right thing!

When interviewing newcomers to the industry, what do you say to pique their interest on why they should accept a position in this industry?

To me, I have always enjoyed working with the ABL product because it is not industry-specific, and it is formula and logically driven.

The detail that goes into the structure and required monitoring forces you to drill into the business. In addition to learning a lot about all sort of companies and industries, it allows you to build your credit skills in a unique manner. Monitoring and understanding the risks involved with leveraging collateral requires a different skill set compared to traditional financial statement analysis. If you can do both, you will only strengthen your credit experience, developing an excellent foundation for many careers within and outside this industry.