



# Women Shaping the Family Office Ecosystem

*How women are redefining influence, governance, and legacy*



Across the global Family Office and Private Wealth landscape, women are not just participating in wealth creation; they are redefining how it is governed, deployed, and sustained.

According to the 2025 UBS Billionaire Ambitions Report, the number of female billionaires grew by 8.7% in 2025, outpacing their male counterparts. Research from Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and McKinsey estimates that women now control roughly one-third of global wealth, a figure set to rise significantly amid the largest intergenerational and horizontal wealth in modern history.

Make no mistake, women are not only inheriting wealth; they are also creating it. A recent Julius Baer article found that 45.2% of female Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals are self-made. This is not simply a demographic shift; it represents a structural shift in influence.

From principals directing capital to senior leaders who guide governance, culture, and long-term strategy, women are influencing decisions at every level of the ecosystem. In celebration of International Women’s Day and

Women’s History Month, this year’s feature highlights the incredible women helping define what modern stewardship looks like. The voices featured here, including wealth owner, social entrepreneur and Co-founder of The Beam Network **Michelle Yue**, Family Office leader **Polina Shvarts**, and Creator, EQ of Wealth®, Coach and Family Advisor, **Wendy Wecksell**, reveal how influence today extends far beyond titles.

## Capital as Responsibility

**Women are earning more, inheriting more, and building more than ever before.** As wealth accumulates, women are redefining what they can achieve. For many, stepping into wealth is not simply about financial control; it is about stewardship and stepping into responsibility.

For Michelle Yue, investor, philanthropist, and co-founder of The Beam Network, that responsibility has unfolded gradually and intentionally. She reflects on the questions that shaped her journey: How can capital create opportunity? How can women feel confident, informed, and connected in spaces that have historically felt closed or intimidating?

Through The Beam Network, Michelle has built a peer community for women wealth holders to learn collectively, build financial confidence, and engage in candid conversations about money and governance. The platform offers financial literacy education and a global community for UHNW women, and emerged from her own experience of navigating wealth and recognising how isolating that journey can feel. “The Beam came from recognising that many women were being advised on wealth, but not truly empowered to shape decisions around it,” Michelle observes. Rather than accepting that isolation as



**Michelle Yue**

Wealth owner, Social Entrepreneur and Co-founder of The Beam Network

inevitable, she and her two friends and co-founders, Ana and Bertha Morales, created a space where women could share experiences, ask questions, develop knowledge, and strengthen their participation in financial and governance decisions.

Beyond community-building, her investment strategy reflects the same intentionality. It is a very well-known fact that venture capital remains heavily dominated by men, often described as a “boys’ club” due to the low percentage of female decision-makers and high concentration of funding for all-male teams. Seeing that,

Michelle has allocated capital to female-led venture firms, not simply as a statement, but as a strategic decision to reinforce female leadership pipelines. In her view, where capital flows shapes who gets funded, and ultimately who shapes the future.

Her philanthropic work mirrors this philosophy. Focused on improving access, safety, and opportunity for women and girls, her giving is highly values-driven. It reflects a belief that wealth can be used to expand participation and possibility, not just preserve legacy.

What stands out in Michelle's perspective is not only what she does with capital, but how she talks about it. Wealth, for her, is intertwined with identity, legacy, and responsibility. Through her work, Michelle embodies a broader shift in the ecosystem. Women are no longer simply participating – **they are active architects in the ecosystem.**



## Shaping Leadership Inside the Family Office

While wealth holders shape capital allocation, senior leaders like Polina Shvarts offer a perspective from within the operational heart of Family Offices.

Having begun her career at Goldman Sachs, Polina transitioned through private wealth management before stepping into a Family Office leadership role following a chance meeting with a principal. What followed was a dramatic shift: from large institutional teams to a tight-knit environment where every decision carries personal, financial, and emotional weight.

Family Office roles, by nature, demand adaptability, continuous learning, and a broader definition of leadership. “At first, I worried it might be too small or boring,” she reflected. “But suddenly I was doing everything, investments, taxes, real estate, even family matters.”

For Polina, leadership is defined by inclusivity, communication, transparency, and teamwork. Working at the heart of a Family Office, she quickly realised that everything becomes more personal. Relationships and culture cannot be separated from operations, and emotional dynamics influence decision-making as much as technical expertise. In the tight-knit environment of Family Office, one



**Polina Shvarts**  
Head of Family Office

misalignment can ripple across decisions and family relationships, making psychological safety and trust essential operational tools rather than abstract values. Women leaders, in Polina's experience, often adapt consciously to this intimacy. They pay close attention to feelings, perception, and team dynamics, actively shaping an environment where collaboration can thrive.

This is also where long-standing assumptions about leadership begin to shift. Leadership has traditionally been associated with masculinity, and women in decision-making roles have often felt pressure to suppress aspects of their femininity to appear credible. Polina believes this is changing. Over time, she learned that authenticity, being kind but fair, direct yet collaborative, produces stronger

outcomes than imitation, and this is particularly true in the Family Office space.

On top of that, women leaders bring distinctive qualities into the world of Family Offices and Private Wealth management. Michelle pushes back against the idea that women are inherently risk-averse, describing them as “risk-aware” instead. She argues, “We often ask broader, more long-term questions around impact and consequences, rather than just focusing on short-term financial rewards”.

Polina echoes this observation from her experience in private wealth. She observed that clients often prefer working with women in private wealth management because they are perceived as more trustworthy, thoughtful, and long-term oriented. “Family Offices are about families, not just assets,” she notes. “Children’s well-being and health matter as much as investment performance.” Leadership in these intimate settings requires emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and an ability to navigate complex family dynamics, which are qualities that women often bring naturally into decision-making, governance, and strategy.

Together, these perspectives suggest that women are redefining what strong leadership looks like, shifting the

conversation from authority and control toward stewardship, resilience, and long-term thinking.

## The Invisible Infrastructure: EQ, Trust, and Culture

While capital and governance structures are visible parts of the Family Office ecosystem, much of what determines success happens beneath the surface.

This is where Wendy Wecksell’s perspective comes in. As an advisor working closely with wealth owners, she focuses on what she calls the “EQ of wealth”, the conversations, relationships, and trust that sit beneath financial decisions. If the IQ of wealth determines asset allocation, Wendy argues, the EQ of wealth determines whether families can collaborate effectively across generations and whether capital actually moves.

With a background in fundraising, Wendy came to see that often, it is relational hesitation, lack of confidence, or unspoken dynamics within families that block capital. She recalls working with a woman wealth holder over the course of a year, focusing not on financial mechanics but on inner clarity, confidence, and communication. The result was extraordinary, as she went on to help raise \$100 million in just two days for a climate-focused organisation. Insights from the 2025 Global Family Office Compensation Benchmark Report, produced by Agreus and KPMG



**Wendy Wecksell**  
Creator, EQ of Wealth®, Coach and Family Advisor

Private Enterprise, reinforce this reality: 60% of Family Offices operate with less than ten employees, meaning interpersonal dynamics have outsized influence. Trust can be built or broken in small moments.

Wendy emphasises that emotional intelligence and storytelling are not soft extras but assets that enable stronger governance and better long-term outcomes. Her work shows us another way women shape the ecosystem by influencing how conversations happen, not just what decisions are made.

Across both Michelle’s and Polina’s experiences, this theme repeats. Women leaders often bring intuition and relational insight that complement formal structures, turning governance into a living, human-centred process where both people and wealth can thrive.

# Family Offices and Advisors Must Evolve

As capital increasingly shifts into women's hands, engagement models across private wealth and Family Offices are being tested.

Research from the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) indicates that approximately 70% to 80% of women change financial advisors within a year of their spouse's death or following a divorce. This shift is rarely driven by performance alone. More often, it reflects a deeper disconnect, feeling unheard, underestimated, or excluded from meaningful partnership.

For Family Offices and advisors, the message is clear: technical expertise is no longer sufficient. Relevance now depends on relational intelligence, transparency, and alignment. Several structural shifts are emerging:

## 1. From Advice-Giving to Partnership

Women wealth holders increasingly expect to be treated as strategic partners, not passive recipients of advice. Michelle emphasises the importance of being heard before solutions are presented. For many women, particularly those historically excluded from financial conversations, partnership means shared thinking, transparency, and respect for their long-term vision..

## 2. Whole-Family Engagement

Both Michelle and Wendy highlight that wealth decisions rarely belong to one individual alone. Women, especially the matriarch, have long shaped family outcomes informally. Now, they expect formal inclusion. This is why engaging broader family voices is crucial in decision-making and reduces intergenerational friction.

## 3. Clear Communication and Emotional Intelligence

Technical expertise remains essential, but clarity, empathy and cultural awareness are now equally important. In small, high-trust environments, communication style directly affects governance outcomes.

## 4. Values Alignment and Impact Awareness

Like Michelle suggested, women are asking different questions of capital, around purpose, sustainability and long-term societal impact. Advisors who focus only on performance metrics may miss what truly drives decision-making.

## 5. Building Community, Not Isolation

Traditional models often treat clients as isolated units. Wendy argues that peer communities and shared learning opportunities are increasingly important, particularly for women seeking confidence and perspective.

Advisors and institutions that adapt to these shifts deepen trust and longer-lasting relationships. Those who do not may find themselves replaced as women assert greater agency over their wealth.



## Looking ahead

The stories of Michelle, Polina, and Wendy illustrate that influence rarely comes from one role alone. It emerges where capital meets relationships, where governance meets values, and where leadership meets humanity. They are broadening the definition of success beyond short-term performance toward long-term resilience, family, and values-driven stewardship. In doing so, they are challenging long-standing assumptions about leadership in private wealth and Family Offices.

Yet, structural imbalance remains. Our 2025 Global Family Office Compensation Report, produced in collaboration with KPMG, shows that women represent just 22% of professionals working within Family Offices. While capital ownership is shifting, representation within the structures that manage it has not progressed at the same pace.

### ***We believe that must change.***

This year's theme is "Women Shaping the Family Office Ecosystem," and the opportunity before the industry is clear: representation, leadership pathways, and governance models must evolve accordingly. The influence we are

seeing in individual leaders today should not remain the exception; it should become embedded within the system itself.

There is reason to be hopeful. Women are already redefining what stewardship looks like, as demonstrated by the ladies featured in this report. We believe the next era of Family Offices will not be shaped by capital alone. It will be defined by influence, and increasingly, that influence carries the imprint of women who are redefining how wealth is understood, governed, and sustained.



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