Northwestern Mutual Announces Executive Leadership Changes

MILWAUKEE, Jan. 9, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Northwestern Mutual has announced executive leadership appointments to advance its commitment to innovation and transformation.

Alexa von Tobel, chief innovation officer, has announced she will leave the company to launch a new venture in the innovation and start-up space, an area of her personal passion. This opportunity will enable von Tobel, best-selling author of "Financially Fearless," to continue on an entrepreneurial path and expand her leadership in the broader innovation community. As founder of LearnVest and a key member of the company's senior leadership team, von Tobel has been instrumental in accelerating the client planning experience and advancing company-wide innovation efforts.

Souheil Badran is joining the company as chief innovation officer and executive vice president. He will be a member of the company's senior leadership team and report to John Schlifske, chairman, president and chief executive officer. Badran is an accomplished executive leader with extensive financial and operational leadership experience in both Fortune 250 and high-growth venture organizations. Most recently, he was president, Americas, of Alibaba's Alipay Ant Financial, the world's largest third-party payment platform. He will be responsible for identifying opportunities in innovation communities and overseeing the company's venture capital funds.

"I want to thank Alexa for helping us think bigger and expand our lens on innovation and our digital experience work. We plan to continue working together in business ventures as she takes this next step that she's chosen to pursue in the innovation space," said Schlifske. "We look forward to having Souheil join our senior leadership team – his experience and track record make him the perfect successor for our top innovation role."

"I could not be more proud of the work we have done together over the last four years of merging LearnVest and Northwestern Mutual and the work we will continue to do together in the future. I love this great company, the amazing people who work here, and everything our mission stands for," said von Tobel. "I feel deeply honored to have been a part of that important work for people across America, and I'm thrilled for this next chapter and excited to hand the torch to Souheil."

Additional leadership promotions

Several senior leaders who report to Schlifske have been promoted to executive vice president roles. They include:Tim Gerend, head of career distribution leading growth and development of the company's financial advisor system; Aditi Gokhale, chief marketing and communications officer; Beth Rodenhuis, chief transformation officer; and Emilia Sherifova, chief technology officer. In addition, Don Robertson, chief human resources officer, has been promoted to executive vice president and joins the senior leadership team reporting to Schlifske. The other members of the company's senior leadership team are: Souheil Badran, Mike Carter, Jo Eisenhart, John Grogan, Ron Joelson, Ray Manista and Christian Mitchell.

"As we transform our company to give clients what they need and deserve, the breadth and depth of knowledge on our senior leadership team is critical," said Schlifske. "This team brings diverse backgrounds and perspectives to the table, with a shared commitment to innovate and deliver results."

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