

Alana Klein – 30 year old women, professional, single.

Mortgage - \$650,000 @2.8% 30 years

401(K) – 50,000

Salary - \$130,000 base 40,000 bonus

Debt \$300,000 student loans at ~6%

Savings \$25,000 in bank savings account

Company RSR - \$150,000 / stock options

Women will contribute \$6 trillion globally to the world's economy, according to Boston Consulting Group. In the U.S. they enjoy more power and earning potential than ever before. Women make up the majority of college grads, they represent nearly half the labor force and are the primary breadwinners in 42% of households. Yet women tend to lag behind in reaching their financial goals.

Women's career arcs differ from men's in ways that impact their investing life. They live longer, meaning their retirement capital has to last even more. They're more likely to take time away from paying jobs – usually in their peak earning years – to raise children or care for ageing parents. As a group, women tend to be more risk-averse and less confident in themselves as investors.

What is this group's biggest financial challenge? Putting their own financial needs first. Women are often so busy caring for others and juggling priorities, it's easy to push off their financial plans for themselves to tomorrow.

Our 30 year old women, professional, single is a pragmatist who has learned to live on a tight budget. At the same time, she is an idealist: she wants to live and work in sync with her values, and she chooses products and services that resonate with those values.

This is the “digital native” and mobile generation. Millennials expect technology to streamline their investing experience and demand instant access from all devices.

What is this group's biggest financial challenge? Over-conservatism. It's nearly impossible to save enough money to retire without taking on some investing risk, which makes them anxious and nervous.

What about their biggest financial strength? Thrift is already ingrained. If they can bring themselves to take on appropriate financial risk, and the investment process is easy, online and automatic, they're primed to start meeting their goals.