



AWARDS & RANKINGS

Witad Awards 2024: Rising star (vendor) – data, engineering & product development—Roberta Bill, SmartStream Technologies

Roberta Bill, product manager at SmartStream Technologies, wins rising star (vendor) – data, engineering & product development, in the 2024 Women in Technology and Data Awards.



By Witad Awards

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How long have you been in the financial services industry?

Roberta Bill, product manager, SmartStream Technologies: Over 10 years.

How did you get into the industry? Was it a conscious decision or did you “fall” into it?

Bill: At the age of 18, I was uncertain about my career path. However, a friend introduced me to a leading pensions firm, and I was fortunate to have developed my skills having worked across different departments of the business. More specifically, I focused on enhancing their processes and functionality, which led me to my career in product management within fintech, and I never turned back.

What does your day-to-day role entail?

Bill: As a product manager, I oversee the development and enhancement of financial technology solutions within SmartStream. I analyze market trends, gather feedback from stakeholders, define product requirements, and ensure alignment with the company's business goals. The role includes collaboration with cross-functional teams, including engineers, designers, and marketers to execute product strategies. Finally, I monitor product performance and prioritize enhancements to optimize user experience to help drive business growth.

What single project/piece of work are you most proud of during your career in the industry to date?

Bill: SmartStream AIR, our cloud native, data reconciliations solution. It behaves like a consumer app and requires no training or IT skillset to use and is the fastest AI and machine learning data quality application available today.

What are you currently working on and what makes it significant in the context of your position?

Bill: During my time at SmartStream, I've come to understand that the company is always evolving. This forward-thinking mindset is particularly exciting for me because it means I'm continually learning from my colleagues. As we embark on a new phase in our solution development, this aspect has become even more evident to me.

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To what extent were you helped during your career by a mentor/role model within the business?

Bill: I've admired various individuals throughout my career, but I never had a significant mentor. This has inspired me to be a mentor for other women who aren't necessarily getting the help or indeed encouragement they deserve. Further, this has fueled my dedication to empowering young women in Stem.

To what extent does your firm have a formalized framework that seeks to identify and promote talented women and ensure they have every opportunity to realize their ambitions and contribute to the business?

Bill: As a truly international company, SmartStream actively encourages diversity and inclusion in the workforce, including initiatives to identify and support talented women. Women are fulfilling their ambitions and continue to make a significant contribution to our business, across all teams and departments. We continuously strive to further empower women and promote gender equality across all levels of our organization.

What was the greatest obstacle you had to overcome during your career in the industry to date?

Bill: One of the significant challenges I faced was overcoming anxiety and the urge to overcompensate in a predominantly male-dominated industry. However, this has gradually changed over time as I've come to appreciate the value I bring to a company. I've grown more confident in effectively asserting my voice and contributions.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned so far during your career?

Bill: Over the years, I learned that I can be my own worst self-saboteur. I overcame this with some great advice from an old colleague who said: "Trust in your capabilities and your wisdom. Inside you resides a force surpassing any obstacle." This helped me gain confidence in my knowledge and skills and to empower others to realize their own potential.

What would you advise women just entering the industry?

Bill: Never lose sight of the future. There will be times in your career where you may be made to feel inferior or ignored, but don't let that blind you from your future vision. Don't forget where you're going and that no one but you has the power to stop you.

What does this award mean to you?

Bill: In my early 20s, I might have pursued recognition that I felt was deserved. However, I've grown beyond that self-centered perspective. Now, I understand that these awards symbolize progress within the financial industry, moving toward equality in the workforce. I am truly grateful to contribute to this transformative journey.