

XLNC Partner Portraits – Interviews with Members

Joanna Loizidou



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Founded in 1946, **Gerald Edelman** is a London-based advisory and consulting firm serving middle-market companies in the United Kingdom and abroad. By providing a wide range of business advisory and professional services, (including accounts, audit and tax), it is a one-stop-shop for its clients' strategic business needs. Gerald Edelman supports the people behind businesses, striving to become their first port of call. Through building real relationships and taking the time to understand what people really want to achieve, Gerald Edelman is able

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to challenge and advise individuals and businesses to achieve greater success.

” **XLNC: Ms Loizidou, who are you and what is your firm doing?**

Joanna Loizidou: I grew up in Cyprus and moved to the UK to study Economics at the University of Manchester. Upon graduating, I moved to London and joined Gerald Edelman's Audit Department as a trainee. My plan was to complete my accountancy qualification and move back to Cyprus, however the opportunities and experiences London offers are unparalleled and here I am 12 years later. I have worked my way up, firstly through the firm's Audit Department where I worked for seven years and then to our Business Services Department, where I now manage my own team.

Our Business Services Department looks after the day-to-day accounting for SMEs and owner-managed businesses whilst offering strategic advice for a business's growth. After five years in a managerial position, I was promoted to Partner in April 2020.

At Gerald Edelman, we offer a variety of services to our clients, from traditional compliance services (including preparation of annual accounts, VAT returns and taxation advice) to strategic and development advice, corporate finance and deal advisory, HR consultancy, and asset and debt finance. Our philosophy is to invest in long-term relationships with our clients.

” **XLNC: Why did you become an accountant?**

Joanna Loizidou: The business world has always fascinated me, and I did not want to compartmentalise my experience and growth into one sector or one area of finance. I find that as an accountant and business advisor I can have more impact on several different businesses across a variety of sectors. I learn through interacting with my clients and feel personally invested when I see a business grow and become successful. I gain so much satisfaction

through my clients achieving their goals and knowing that I had a part to play in their growth.

XLNC: What were your dream professions when you were a child?

Joanna Loizidou: I had always wanted to become an airline pilot. Apart from the obvious reasons of being able to travel and explore the world, I always wanted to be in a leadership position. Growing up it wasn't common to have women flying airplanes and I was always keen to break new ground.

XLNC: What is special about your firm?

Joanna Loizidou: The relationships we build both internally and with our clients, as well as with our wider networks. Being a mid-sized firm, we see the people behind the business, their struggles and concerns -- and we support them in overcoming these. We believe in nurturing long-term relationships with our clients; in this way we can truly be part of their business, have an input in its sustainable growth, and be in a position to challenge them to greater success.

XLNC: What was your most difficult professional experience and why?

Joanna Loizidou: As a young woman in a traditionally male-dominated profession, I felt I had to prove myself, more so than my male counterparts, to be taken seriously. As a young female accountant, I had to persevere and commit to driving my own career to reach my own personal goals. I had to be more assertive during meetings to have my voice heard and I had to push for opportunities to demonstrate my ability. Thankfully, times have changed since then, and finance is much more open and diverse.

There has definitely been a cultural shift and there is a clear, positive change in the way that women are seen in the workplace. We have made a concerted effort to work on creating a nurturing environment and level the playing field at Gerald Edelman, ensuring women are treated equally, heard, and given the same opportunities.

XLNC: What was your most exciting or rewarding professional experience and why?

Joanna Loizidou: When I was admitted to the partnership at Gerald Edelman. I joined the firm straight out of university and have been able to grow as an individual and a professional by working my way up through various departments. Being admitted to the partnership in recognition of my hard work, dedication and ability to contribute to the future growth of the firm, is extremely rewarding. I'm looking forward to playing a part in the future of Gerald Edelman and seeing the business continue to progress.

XLNC: Which two or three personalities influenced you the most and why?

Joanna Loizidou: My grandfather who was an accountant himself has instilled in me the value of hard work and honesty. He taught me that nothing is offered in life unless we work hard for it. He has also taught me that any success earned without good intentions and motives is only temporary and we need to build strong foundations in life to sustain our future development.

I have been incredibly lucky to work alongside a charismatic business advisor. My mentor has also helped me to get where I am today and without him, I wouldn't have achieved as much as I have in my career. He has given me time to learn and has continually challenged me to improve myself. His guidance has been invaluable on career matters but also to develop me personally in order to achieve my goals.

XLNC: What are your most developed professional skills and why?

Joanna Loizidou: I am good in understanding people and 'speaking their language'. I can easily adapt to those around me in order to deliver the best possible advice. The more attuned I am towards a client, the better we can understand each other. After all, we are working with people and for people.

“ XLNC: *The best professional advice you received was... and from whom?*

Joanna Loizidou: I have learned a lot of valuable lessons from working closely with one of the other partners at Gerald Edelman. One of the best pieces of advice he has given me is to truly listen to my clients and their concerns. He has taught me that by being present and approachable you can build trusting and long-lasting business relationships.

“ XLNC: *What is your business credo?*

Joanna Loizidou: That every day has something new to teach us. We learn something new every single day and with today's technology there are so many sources of knowledge. In my opinion the best way to learn is through one's mistakes; how many times have you repeated a mistake?

“ XLNC: *In your spare time, what is your passion and why?*

Joanna Loizidou: Reading anything and everything. Reading is a gateway to the world and helps me tune out and relax.

“ XLNC: *What do you collect, if ever, and why?*

Joanna Loizidou: My friends would say too many handbags!

“ XLNC: *Beer, wine or water?*

Joanna Loizidou: The easiest question so far, definitely wine. Either a Chateaufort Du Pape for red or a Greek Assyrtiko for white.

“ XLNC: *Your favourite cuisine?*

Joanna Loizidou: Cypriot of course! It is the food I have grown up with and takes me back home.

“ XLNC: *The best place to be other than your home or your office:?*

Joanna Loizidou: On a sandy beach with crystal clear waters. It is the only place I can truly switch off and nothing beats the feeling of swimming in the open water; it gives me a feeling of freedom like no other.

“ XLNC: *What is your greatest concern?*

Joanna Loizidou: The future of the global economy following the pandemic. Every single person has been affected by it and it is scary to think what the future holds for millions of people who have worked hard all their working lives and invested everything in their businesses.

“ XLNC: *Where do you see your firm in the next five years?*

Joanna Loizidou: Anyone who knows Gerald Edelman, will know that we are passionate about describing ourselves as not just accountants and that we are committed to developing our “beyond compliance” services.

We want to continue to increase value for our clients and our team. Therefore, in five years, I would love to see us established in the market, having better brand awareness and being known for delivering exceptional services, yet with a personal touch.

I would like to see us break into the top 40 accountants in the UK and to be taking market share away from the current top firms.

Alongside this, we are continuing to improve the working environment for our team with our new work-from-home policy and countless other benefits. By continuing on this path, I would like to see us create a dynamic, challenging and inspiring culture and workplace where the team thrives. Breaking into the Times 100 Best Places to Work would be the ultimate achievement.

” XLNC: *Your best advice for clients?*

Joanna Loizidou: Have trust in our guidance. Our clients are excellent in what they do, whether that is property investment, retail, creative etc, but finance may not be their strongest point. We are here to take that pressure away from them so that they can concentrate on what they do best.

” XLNC: *Your best advice for younger professionals?*

Joanna Loizidou: The key is to be confident, believe in your own ability, and persevere. Additionally, you should work in an environment that persistently challenges you. This will ensure that you maintain that drive and enthusiasm for your career. But always stay humble and remember that you have a lot to learn from your seniors.

” XLNC: *What is your favourite movie and why?*

Joanna Loizidou: *Gone with the Wind* because “After all, tomorrow is another day!”

” XLNC: *What is the quality you most like in a person?*

Joanna Loizidou: *Philotimo* is a Greek word without a direct translation as it encompasses an array of virtues. The official translation is love of honour and doing good to everyone around you.

” XLNC: *Which talent would you most like to have and why?*

Joanna Loizidou: Singing! I have a terrible voice, but I love to sing.

” XLNC: *What is your greatest regret?*

Joanna Loizidou: I don't like to think of my past mistakes as regrets but rather as lessons which help me evolve into a better professional and individual.