

Public Policy

An Interview with Roslyn Brooks,
Principal - Government, Regulatory Affairs & Public Policy, PwC US

EDITORS' NOTE Based in Washington, D.C., Roz Brooks is responsible for ensuring PwC US has a voice in important debates at the nexus of business and government and helping the firm successfully execute its business strategy. Brooks serves on PwC's Global Regulatory & Policy Board, where she collaborates with her international counterparts to set direction of the global network's strategy on engagement with regulators worldwide. She also serves on the Board of Directors of GlobalWIN, a nonprofit organization that helps women lead in the global innovation economy. Brooks holds a B.A. in English and Psychology from Stanford University, a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School at Ann Arbor, and an L.L.M. in Taxation from Wayne State University in Detroit.



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FIRM BRIEF The purpose at PwC (pwc.com) is to build trust in society and solve important problems. It is a network of separate firms in over 140 territories with more than 250,000 people – 50,000 in the U.S. – who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services.

Will you discuss your role at the firm and your key areas of focus?

I lead PwC's government, regulatory affairs, and public policy efforts in the U.S., which deals with interactions on behalf of the firm with government officials at the state, local and federal levels, as well as the regulatory agencies as they impact us in a number of ways.

I think in the last 10-plus years, government affairs has gained in prominence for many of the firms because of the realization of the impact that government actions can have, not only on the bottom line, but also on how we are going to grow as a firm in the future.

Are you solely focused on addressing the needs of PwC or do you also collaborate with other leading firms in the industry to work together to address industry issues?

I think that every industry has a certain amount of cooperation in terms of what's best for the industry, whether it be insurance, financial services, banks, etc., and then you have your own parochial interests.

When it comes to policy issues and engaging with government at the federal and state level, we recognize that you have a bigger megaphone if you're talking to members of Congress from a larger employee base and with a recognition that it is a consolidated position, so we do work closely with the other firms from a policy perspective.

Will you highlight PwC's commitment to diversity and inclusion?

I started with the firm in the Detroit practice, and I can honestly tell you that I have seen the spectrum in terms of our commitment to diversity and inclusion and the way this has evolved.

When you look at PwC today, I give a ton of credit to Tim (Ryan, PwC Chair US), for his leadership on diversity and inclusion and making it a priority for the partnership, and making it a priority within the firm.

What do you tell young people about the innovation taking place in professional services and how dynamic the industry is today?

I don't believe the industry is as well understood as we would like it to be, and I think that is a major endeavor that we are undertaking. I know that our recruitment team is focused on raising that awareness which has been really tremendous.

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When I first started, I remember a group of us wanting to reach out to a partner or two who were also African-American and get together as a group and talk. Their advice to us at that time, in the mid-'90s, was that they did not know if it was a good idea because we would not want to be seen as separatists.

If you then fast forward five years, programs existed, whether it was diversity circles, minority circles or women's circles, where you actually recognized that it wasn't exclusive for people to get together in the workplace and talk about issues that were impacting them and how they felt about the firm and ways to navigate the firm, and that there were differences that we should embrace and not look at as a reason to exclude one another.

We are starting to tell the story about how we are transforming ourselves and are tech enabled, that we are innovative, and that this innovation runs through all of our service lines. People are starting to get it. PwC is also recruiting from different places than in the past and attracting different skills, such as technology backgrounds.

I think early on there were people who questioned whether we would ever be a place that would be of interest to people with tech backgrounds, but the recognition is growing about the broad opportunities in the industry around technology, data and AI. The fact that we are hiring people with computer science backgrounds is really exciting.

I hope that the word starts to spread much more. ●