

# Making an Impact that Matters

An Interview with Alicia Rose, Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Strategic Initiatives, Deloitte U.S.

**EDITORS' NOTE** Alicia Rose oversees and drives priority initiatives and special projects for the U.S. firm, including leadership of Deloitte's strategy as a purpose-driven enterprise to amplify the collective impact we are making for our people, clients, and more broadly within our communities. She is a member of the U.S. Executive Committee. Rose also serves as a global lead client service partner where she oversees the delivery of all services to a prominent, global financial services company. In her more than 25 years with Deloitte, she has served in several leadership roles, including client leadership leader; Deloitte & Touche LLP board member; and member of the Risk and Financial Advisory Executive Committee. She is known for empowering and developing client leaders and account teams and supporting our clients' missions and voices throughout Deloitte. Rose is a graduate of Smith College and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.



Alicia Rose

Deloitte's Purpose Office and naming our firm's first Chief Purpose Officer, Kwasi Mitchell. As purpose has consistently ranked as a top priority among Fortune 500 CEOs, as well as for our people, we recognized the opportunity to define in clear and certain terms what purpose means to us as an organization and amplify the collective impact we are making for society.

**Deloitte is the largest professional services firm in the world. How does the company maintain its leadership position?**

Throughout our 175-year journey, we have looked to our shared values as our North Star to guide every decision we make and action we take. Two of those values that I see as fundamental to our position in the market are "serve with integrity" and "take care of each other." As a professional services business, we provide services to the market based on our

people's skills, capabilities, knowledge and experiences. Acting ethically and with integrity requires that what we say and what we do with our clients and within the marketplace should always be aligned. We know the trust placed in Deloitte by our clients and by the capital markets should not be taken for granted.

Today, Deloitte U.S. has more than 110,000 professionals. We are a people business, so we have always focused on fostering an inclusive culture and workplace that offers meaningful experiences for our professionals. More than ever, employees want to work with purpose-led organizations where they can bring their talents and do work that reflects their passions and personal values. We're on a journey to connect our people with the missions and causes they care about, where we're able to make a greater collective impact in society. We believe that as long as we position client impact, purpose, and our people at the heart of our strategy, we will continue to thrive in the marketplace.

**FIRM BRIEF** Deloitte ([deloitte.com](https://deloitte.com)) provides industry-leading audit, consulting, tax and advisory services to many of the world's most admired brands, including nearly 90 percent of the Fortune 500® and more than 7,000 private companies. Deloitte's people come together for the greater good and work across the industry sectors that drive and shape today's marketplace – delivering measurable and lasting results that help reinforce public trust in the capital markets, inspire clients to see challenges as opportunities to transform and thrive, and help lead the way toward a stronger economy and a healthier society. Deloitte is a part of the largest global professional services network serving clients in the markets that are most important to them. Now celebrating 175 years of service, Deloitte's network of member firms spans more than 150 countries and territories.

**Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?**

As Deputy CEO, I oversee and drive priority strategic initiatives for the U.S., working closely with our U.S. Executive and U.S. Board to drive greater impact for our people, clients, and more broadly within our communities. These strategic initiatives include areas such as future of work and workforce, capitalizing on technology, and most recently, establishing

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**You have spent over 25 years at Deloitte. Will you highlight your career journey and how you landed your current role as Deputy CEO?**

I joined Deloitte right out of college because I saw the opportunity to combine my passion for continuous learning and helping companies solve their problems in different industries around the globe. The great thing about Deloitte is that there are such a range of diverse opportunities to push yourself out of your comfort zone and grow your skills. I've developed service lines, designed early audit technology tools, lived in the Czech Republic and London for global assignments, and served as the Quality Risk Management leader, all while having the privilege of serving clients across multiple industries and sectors. As I've grown throughout my career here, I always really enjoy coaching and mentoring our people, especially when I served as our Women's Initiative Leader.

Regarding how I landed my current role, in a partnership like Deloitte, there are dozens, if not hundreds of leaders who are qualified to serve in management positions. Ultimately, it comes down to having the right experiences and capabilities and combining those strengths with those of other leaders to form the right fit for our organization at any specific moment in time. I am fortunate to have been given the opportunities in the past that uniquely position me to help lead the organization forward in this area.

**How do you describe Deloitte's purpose and how has this evolved over Deloitte's 175 years of history?**

Purpose is not new to Deloitte. We were founded more than 175 years ago with the mission of ensuring trust in the capital markets during the birth of professional accounting. Over the years, we've expanded our business beyond audit to include consulting, tax, and advisory services, but what's remained consistent is that we're helping solve some of society's greatest challenges. We describe our purpose as "making an impact that matters" – meaning we always aim to deliver tangible, measurable, attributable impact with our clients, in the communities we serve, and within broader society through the strength of the relationships we build and the innovative thinking of our people. What is different today is that clarity

of purpose is what our clients expect, what our people want and what our communities need. We already have a robust corporate citizenship program that has been supporting our communities, in addition to the Deloitte Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports education initiatives. We are now creating our U.S. Purpose Office that will amplify, scale and broaden those efforts. Purpose is embedded in our business and will continue to be a crucial component of how we're going to succeed in the future.

**How has Deloitte adapted its business, culture and how it supports its people to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?**

The safety and well-being of our people and clients is always our number one priority. This continues to drive our decision-making under current challenging circumstances as we balance considerations like what will help the economy, our business and our people thrive. Last year, the ways in which we successfully pivoted and virtualized our organization overnight was nothing short of inspiring. As a business, we were strongly positioned to pivot virtually because of the very nature of our business and the technology infrastructure that we invested in for years prior. Now, we're using the learnings to reimagine how we engage with clients, deliver our services, and the experiences we create for our people in a post-pandemic world. Regarding our culture, again, we already had a great foundation and have had to navigate better defining what that culture is without four walls – and purpose is at the center. The work we do to help improve the lives of others, to help solve complex business and societal challenges, is core to who we are as an organization and is a mission that drives our people each day.

Still, we know our people have faced a lot of personal challenges throughout the pandemic – health and well-being related, child-care or other dependent care needs, and more. We recognize our responsibility to support our people's unique needs and foster inclusive collaboration through flexible working arrangements and enhanced benefits. To name a few examples, we provided financial support for dependent care needs, reimbursement programs for virtual work, and extra hours of paid absence for individuals unable to work virtually due to personal

or health reasons. As a leader, the pandemic has really reinforced the importance of agility and empathy with our people. We don't know when we will be "post-pandemic," but we know that we can't go back to the way things were. While the past year has been incredibly challenging, there are a lot of positive lessons learned about putting humanity at the center of leadership that makes the future look incredibly bright.

**How is Deloitte collaborating in the marketplace with other companies and non-profit organizations to influence change in society and address the many complex challenges the world is facing?**

In 2019, the Business Roundtable updated its purpose of a corporation statement to align with the premise behind stakeholder capitalism – that organizations serve not only shareholders but also customers, suppliers, workers and communities. There were and continue to be skeptics of whether organizations would actually follow through or if its empty rhetoric. But what we've seen this past year shows how impactful it can be when companies come together to help solve major societal issues. Take, for example, the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry – companies, competitors, the government and nonprofits all collaborating to address the world's largest health crisis. The virus was the competition, not each other, and the speed at which vaccines and therapeutics were developed was nothing short of miraculous.

There are many ways that Deloitte is also modeling this notion of supporting multiple stakeholders by collaborating with clients and organizations that share our values. One example is we teamed with an alliance to create a business solution for COVID-19 incident response to help organizations monitor staff exposure, build a risk profile, and create an internal information forum as a component of their COVID-19 response plan – which we offered at no cost to clients. Another example is we donated unused credits for previously canceled flights to help airlines assist frontline workers traveling to COVID-19 hotspots, as well as to facilitate the transportation of personal protective equipment and medical supplies to areas of greatest need. As a purpose-driven organization, we want to create greater impact by delivering our purpose and our people's passions to help address society's greatest needs. ●