

Deloitte's WIN

An Interview with Barbara Adachi, National Managing Principal,
Initiative for the Retention and Advancement of Women, Deloitte LLP



Barbara Adachi

EDITORS' NOTE In addition to her current post, Barbara Adachi is the author of the *Women's Initiative Blog*. Adachi serves on the board of Deloitte Consulting LLP and leads its Human Capital practice for the West region. Before taking on this role, she led the Northern Pacific regional Women's Initiative activities for five years. Adachi joined Deloitte in 1990 to start the Bay Area Human Capital practice. The San Francisco Business Times named her one of the "100 Most Influential Women in Business" from 2003 to 2008. She also serves on the boards of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, Professional Business Women of California, Santa Clara University Human Resources Leadership program, and Blue Cross of California Consumer Relations Committee. Most recently, she was appointed to the national board of the Girl Scouts of the USA. She was chair of the 2007 American Heart Association (AHA) Go Red For Women Luncheon for the San Francisco Bay Area and continues to be active with the AHA.

COMPANY BRIEF Deloitte LLP is a member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (www.deloitte.com), an organization of member firms focused on client service through a global strategy executed locally in nearly 150 countries. Employing 165,000 people worldwide, Deloitte delivers services in four professional areas – audit and enterprise risk services, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services – and serves more than half of the world's largest companies.

Can you describe the development of the Women's Initiative [WIN] at Deloitte?

WIN was launched in 1993 to address two key issues: retention and advancement. We were losing more women than men, resulting in a gender turnover gap of approximately 7 percent, and the representation of women in the partner, principal, and director ranks did not reflect the overall composition of the firm. At the time, we would hire 50/50 women and men from campuses, so we needed to understand why women represented less than 7 percent of our partners and directors. For the past three years, we have maintained a zero gender turnover gap and currently, women represent 22 percent of our U.S. partners, principals, and directors. Today, WIN is deeply embedded in our culture, and I believe that WIN has played a significant role in our firm's growth and success. Since its inception, WIN has been driven as a business imperative at Deloitte, led by our top leaders. Our U.S. CEO, Barry Salzberg, is the ultimate champion of WIN, and has kept it at the forefront of the organization. WIN is about the business, and in order to compete effectively in today's marketplace, we strive to have more women in leadership roles.

What do you attribute such dramatic numbers to? Have you focused on systems such as work/life balance, inclusion, and flex hours?

We have focused on a broad range of areas, but the consistent leadership commitment from the top for the past 15 years is what has differentiated us. In addition, WIN has been an innovation engine for the entire organization and has introduced many programs for all of our employees, not just women. Our newest innovation is Mass Career Customization (MCC), which is a framework that recognizes how careers are built over time, addresses the convergence of a number of trends in the workforce today, and understands that flexibility is an issue not only for women, but also for men. MCC started in WIN recognizing that women wanted flexibility to achieve a better career/life fit. While we have had flexible work arrangements since launching WIN, we also learned that they were not scalable, nor did they address issues like career advancement. MCC essentially changes the model and aligns the workplace with our current and future workforce.

In addition, we believe deployment is a key factor affecting women's advancement. In our organization, women's progression is impacted by their assignments, what clients they serve,

and how they build their internal and external networks. For many years, we have instituted a very rigorous annual assignment review process that focuses on who serves our top clients, making sure there is good representation of women and minorities on the teams.

The third thread is our development programs, which are in place for women at every stage of their careers. For example, we have an intense one-week program for our female partners and directors that focuses on leadership skills, negotiation skills, and how to move to that next level in the organization. We have similar programs focusing on advancement for our managers and senior managers that are delivered nationally and regionally. Currently, we are examining programs for our seniors and staff. With the goal of developing a strong pipeline of future women leaders, we recognize the need to strengthen our programs at earlier stages in women's careers.

How critical has communication been to engaging your massive number of employees, across all genders?

Communication and visibility of WIN has been absolutely essential. For example, we produce an annual report that summarizes our achievements and activities for the year, and highlights our leaders, including our WIN External Advisory Board, and the progress that we are making over time. We continue to sponsor key external events which align with our WIN strategy and provide development opportunities for our women. Our WIN Web site on the internal Deloitte network can also be accessed externally. We also have a WIN blog, which had more than 45,000 visits last year. We have utilized webcasts to communicate our WIN strategy, but one of the most enjoyable parts of my role is to visit many of our offices to connect with our women and men about WIN. It has been very enlightening to hear directly from our people about what is important to them, which helps shape our priorities and take WIN to the next level.

What has made Deloitte a place where you've wanted to stay for 18 years?

For me, it's the culture and the values of the organization. What I found at Deloitte was a place where my own personal values aligned with those of the organization. From the very top, our leaders demonstrate the highest level of integrity and a sincere caring about our people. I couldn't ask for anything more, and I feel extremely fortunate to be at Deloitte and have the opportunity to serve in my current role. ●