

## Three Horizons

An Interview with Jennifer Steinmann, Chief Talent Officer, Deloitte LLP

**EDITORS' NOTE** As Chief Talent Officer for Deloitte LLP, Jennifer Steinmann has a passion for fostering an environment where leaders thrive. She is advancing this vision for Deloitte as she leads its Talent organization, overseeing all aspects of the talent life cycle, from recruiting to development to alumni relations. Additionally, Steinmann continues to serve external clients, most notably as a Lead Consulting Principal for a large global financial institution. Previously, she led the Financial Services practice for Deloitte Consulting's Western region and served as the General Management national service line leader for Strategy & Operations. She received her M.B.A. from Columbia Business School and her B.A. from Colgate University.



Jennifer Steinmann

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### **Deloitte is developing a new talent strategy. Would you detail that new strategy?**

We employ more than 56,000 people today and recognize there are things we do extremely well for them, and areas where we can raise the bar. We are thinking about our strategy in the context of three horizons: the first is focused on the "here and now", e.g. the immediate strategic and operational improvements we are putting in place to allow us to continue to excel as we increase our head count. In 2011, we hired close to 18,000 people. So we have no room for error in terms of identifying the right people and getting them the right opportunities with the goal in mind of serving our clients.

Our second horizon is thinking about how to best serve the unique needs of our businesses for the next three to five years. We spent a lot of time evaluating the marketplace and talking to our leaders and our people about what is at the heart of our value proposition. For us, it boils down to three dimensions: challenge and deliver, providing a broad range of challenging client experiences; grow and develop, fostering an environment of continuous learning to develop future leaders; and engage and connect, driving engagement and strengthening connections enabled by diversity, transparency, and promoting a flexible work environment.

While this strategy works from an overarching Deloitte perspective, we also recognize that each of our businesses has unique attributes. So while we have developed some broader programs that support the strategy – for example, the opening of Deloitte University in 2011 – we are also working with each of the businesses individually to make sure the programs are serving their unique needs.

The third horizon is focused on "Talent 2020" – what the future market will look like, the longer-term talent implications, and how that ties to where we think we're going from a business perspective. We'll work backwards from there to put ourselves in a position to continue to lead from the front in terms of what we're doing from a talent perspective.

### **Have you seen the role of talent management evolve and how has it changed?**

I spend 75 percent of my time in my Chief Talent Officer role and 25 percent of my time serving clients. So I see our talent strategy and the role that talent plays today as more of a natural extension of our business strategy.

Today, Talent's relationship with the business varies by process – for example, our businesses have greater influence on key decisions and resources for more strategic talent processes; for other more standardized services, we operate through a more cost-effective shared services approach. Today's talent leaders are challenged with the ability to strike that balance between keeping a watchful eye on operational costs and providing the appropriate levels of service to the business. You can't do that effectively without working closely with your business leaders; my internal clients are our business CEOs, and we work hand-in-hand on these decisions.

### **How do you ensure you have an engaged employee base and how do you put metrics in place to track effectiveness?**

The basis for anyone's long-term success is grounded by the people they work with, the clients they are exposed to, and the development opportunities that we put in place around those.

But when you're running the business, you have to make sure you get the right people on the right project at the right time in order to drive the business and best serve clients. So we focus on making sure our people have the work experiences they're looking for and that we develop them accordingly. Our people have been very clear to us about what's important to them: challenging and meaningful work, the ability to work with high-caliber peers, and the opportunities we provide for continuous growth and development. If we can deliver on these commitments, increased employee engagement is a natural outcome.

One measurement tool we use is our annual talent survey, which we just launched. We take our people's feedback very seriously and it sets the agenda for talent every year.

### **How critical is it that the diversity of talent at Deloitte mirror the diverse client base?**

"Strength from diversity" is one of our core values. We have always tried to be on the forefront of having a diverse population and recognize that everyone has something unique to contribute to our success. While looking at diversity requires grouping people into certain categories, we always focus on extending our thinking back to each individual, which leads to our approach being driven around flexibility and inclusion in all of our interactions.

This discussion even extends into office space and how we interact with our clients and each other. So the notion of diversity challenges all of our thinking about how we engage our staff and clients and I expect that definition will continue to expand.

### **What are you most focused on in hiring candidates?**

Deloitte is a very collaborative environment, so we look for people who are comfortable being individual contributors but who are also comfortable functioning on a team and in leading teams. We have four different businesses we run under one umbrella, but there are certain key attributes that hold us together. We look for technical expertise, but more importantly, we look for potential and a servant leadership mentality – we ask, "Can the person across the table contribute to our ability to grow and develop the next generation of leaders?" It's foundational to our strategy and fuels our ability to foster an environment where leaders thrive. ●