

A Business Imperative

An Interview with Mary Ellen Rodgers, Corporate Responsibility Officer, Deloitte LLP, and Evan Hochberg, National Director-Community Involvement, Deloitte Services LP

EDITORS' NOTE Mary Ellen Rodgers was recently named as the Corporate Responsibility Officer at Deloitte, where she leads initiatives to develop and implement strategies to integrate the values of corporate responsibility throughout the organization. She is also the U.S. Managing Partner of Workplace Services. Active in the community, Rodgers has been recognized as a Michigan Woman of Achievement and Courage for community service as well as one of the 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan multiple times, and as a member of YWCA Women of Achievement.

Evan Hochberg provides strategic direction for philanthropy, volunteerism, pro bono, and workplace giving at Deloitte. He also oversees IMPACT Day, Deloitte's national day of volunteerism, as well as the organization's United Way campaign. Additionally, he is the architect of "Their Future is Our Future," Deloitte's signature initiative for building a college-going culture in low-income schools. A frequent public speaker on philanthropic trends, he is a member of the board of the Taproot Foundation. Further, Hochberg serves on the Points of Light Institute's Corporate Volunteer Council, co-chairs the Leadership Group of Pro Bono Action Tank, is a member of the Conference Board's Corporate Contributions Council, and serves as Education Vice Chair of the United Way Worldwide Campaign for the Common Good.

COMPANY BRIEF Deloitte LLP (www.deloitte.com) and its subsidiaries have more than 50,000 professionals with a single focus: serving clients by helping them solve their toughest problems. Deloitte works in four key business areas—audit, financial advisory, tax, and consulting—but its real strength comes from combining the talents of those groups to address clients' needs. Fortune and BusinessWeek consistently rank Deloitte among the best places to work.

How critical is community engagement to the culture of Deloitte and how is it driven throughout the organization?

Rodgers: We are deliberate in using the term corporate responsibility (CR) as opposed to corporate social responsibility (CSR), because we believe that CR is a business imperative and critical to how we work, attract people, and develop client relationships rather than simply being a philanthropic desire.

We have built this organization based on a set of shared values that are at the core of who we aspire to be and who we believe



Mary Ellen Rodgers



Evan Hochberg

we are. Those values and a strong, supportive culture align perfectly with CR. We focus on a few broad topics, such as promoting human dignity and ethical behavior as one of the cores of the accounting profession, as well as advancing learning and making CR a critical piece of our talent strategy in terms of those we want to attract and retain. It's also advocating sustainability in terms of how we relate to the world we all share.

One of Deloitte's biggest assets is your human capital. Is the work you do primarily about using the resources of your people in these efforts?

Rodgers: It is. Our people get engaged at the local level in their work environments, their industry and client groups, and in supporting the efforts in sustainability. That effort has created a huge amount of capital for us in terms of how the work gets driven down to the grassroots level.

We have a campaign called "Greening Your Footprint", which incorporates a quick online survey to help our colleagues understand how sustainability impacts them not only in the office but at home as well, and over 31,000 of our people have participated thus far.

Hochberg: The heart of our commitment to community from a philanthropic perspective is rooted in the skills and talents of our people. Our strategy starts by saying, we're one of the world's leading professional services organizations – we help other organizations address complex financial, operational, and strategic issues. That same capability is needed by nonprofits. So we made the connection that, while nonprofit organizations are often strategic and sophisticated when it comes to their missions, even the best are resource-constrained.

At the center of our community involvement efforts is the recognition that it's the skills, talents, and knowledge of our people in

addressing a myriad of business and organizational problems that we focus on in our community involvement. By its nature, it's an employee engagement strategy; it's about our people in communities helping on projects that strengthen community-based organizations.

There is also a reflection that throughout all we do, that the same excellence we provide our paying clients is of value in the social sector.

Some of the biggest celebration or communication events we do all year are rooted around community, the biggest one being IMPACT Day. The entire organization dedicates a Friday in June to participate in volunteer projects; this past year, there were more than 800 projects in about 70 cities across the U.S. It is arguably our most significant single day in terms of reinforcing our culture of community service.

Rodgers: We believe that Deloitte is a place "where leaders thrive". CR gives our people early in their careers an opportunity to lead in their communities through engagement on a nonprofit board or by taking the helm of those efforts in the office. There are many ways where it engages our people at a level that allows them to test their leadership skills and build the connective tissue within the organization and their communities to make them more valuable business people.

How critical have these efforts been in attracting talent to Deloitte?

Rodgers: Part of our success is because our reputation is rooted in CR principles. The young people we're attracting from top business schools across the country are looking for challenging work, but also work that puts to use the core values that they personally believe in. More often than not, community, sustainability, ethics, integrity, and a robust learning environment are as important as salary and benefits.

Hochberg: We have surveyed our own people and a third of them say our efforts in corporate responsibility and community involvement positively impacted their decision to come to Deloitte; half of them say it would be a top factor when talking to others about coming to work here; and 78 percent said it's important to their overall job satisfaction.

How critical is it for you to have the support of senior leaders in these efforts?

Rodgers: It's an imperative not only in terms of the programmatic side but in sharing the philosophy that CR and community are not divisible from who we are as a business. ●