

A Holistic Perspective

An Interview with
Joe Echevarria, Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte LLP

EDITORS' NOTE In June 2011, Joe Echevarria was named to his current post. He joined the Deloitte U.S. firm in 1978 and became an audit partner in 1988. Since that time, he has held a wide range of leadership positions, most recently as U.S. Managing Partner-Operations. Before that, he served in a number of leadership roles such as Regional Managing Partner of the Southeast Audit Practice, Audit Partner in Charge of Florida, and Audit Partner in Charge of South Florida. Echevarria has also led the firm's Strategic Relationship Management program. Echevarria chairs the U.S. Executive, is a member of the Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL) Executive and DTTL boards, and serves on the Americas Executive. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Miami.



Joe Echevarria

FIRM BRIEF Deloitte (www.deloitte.com) is the brand under which 180,000 dedicated professionals through a global network, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL), collaborate to provide audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, and tax services to select clients. Deloitte LLP is the member firm of DTTL in the United States. Deloitte LLP does not itself provide services to clients but coordinates the activities of its following subsidiaries: Deloitte & Touche LLP; Deloitte Consulting LLP; Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP; and Deloitte Tax LLP.

How is the global economy recovering today and what is your outlook for the firm's growth in today's environment?

The global economy is a mixed picture and recovery remains a work in progress. The economies of the BRIC countries are growing, but at slower rates than before, while European markets continue to struggle with debt and growth issues.

We need to be pragmatic, but there are reasons to be optimistic. The U.S. economy has continued to grow, demonstrating its resilience in a challenging environment. This growth has been helped by a domestic manufacturing renaissance, driven by the modest rise in manufacturing employment, an increase in manufacturing's share of GDP, and a rise in the construction of new manufacturing facilities. Technology transformation and increased energy production have also contributed to our recent economic growth.

At Deloitte, we have developed growth strategies tailored for each business to help us steadily grow in the face of global economic challenges. We're always looking for opportunities with strong long-term potential – like those in developing markets – and striving for seamless service across borders as globalization continues to connect our clients, our businesses, and our world.

Are the greatest opportunities for Deloitte international or is there still strong potential in the U.S.?

Both. Operating effectively across borders is critical for long-term growth. We work closely with our network of member firms to improve the strength of the global Deloitte network and our ability to provide seamless service to all of our clients. We are committed to developing the scale and scope of capabilities of the Deloitte global network because our clients are increasingly global and they demand it.

We also have strong growth opportunities in the U.S. market. We continually explore ways to better serve our existing clients and continue to deliver innovative services that leverage capabilities from our diverse, but complementary, businesses. Examples are market offerings that integrate expertise from two or more of our practices, such as business analytics, risk management, and enterprise sustainability – we see significant growth in all of those areas. We continue to augment our existing capabilities through strategic acquisitions in emerging areas such as the design and development of mobility applications for business, and electronic discovery management and litigation support solutions for federal government clients.

How do you differentiate within the industry and what makes Deloitte unique?

One of our key differentiators is our unique combination of professional practices, which includes audit, tax, financial advisory, and consulting. This affords us a holistic perspective on the business environment and, as a result, we work with 70 percent of the Fortune 500. Our audit services are crucial to maintaining the investor protection that promotes the efficient functioning of capital markets. We also provide trusted counsel and develop innovative solutions for our advisory clients across a wide range of industries and functions, helping these clients meet the complexities of today's marketplace and take their businesses to the next level. The scope of services we provide and our ability to implement integrated solutions differentiates us.

Another differentiator is the Deloitte commitment to our people. This benefits our clients because they receive services from professionals with exceptional skills and it benefits us by ensuring that we grow and attract the best in the industry. At Deloitte, we depend on skilled talent, which is why we make major investments in our people. A recent example is Deloitte University, a leadership center we opened last year near Dallas, which has already delivered about one million on-site learning hours to our people. This commitment to cultivating tomorrow's leaders is a key component of the Deloitte culture.

How important is innovation to Deloitte's success?

Success in professional services, as in any industry, is more like a decathlon than a single event: you have to be good at most things and great at a few things. Innovation is one of those areas where we have to be great. This demands that we pay attention to all the elements that combine to create a culture of innovation. It begins with our people: we focus on recruiting and retaining the best talent.

Leadership is next. Great people can only thrive with great leadership and our partners, principals, and directors as a group are truly world-class leaders. It's their job to strike the right balance between guiding and directing while providing the right degree of flexibility, latitude, and freedom to explore.

And finally, surprisingly enough, is process. Once we have the right people and the right leadership, we build processes so that we can be consistently and predictably innovative across our organization. People, leadership, and process create Deloitte's culture of innovation.

How critical is diversity and inclusion to the culture of Deloitte?

As the nation's largest professional services organization, Deloitte's ability to attract, develop, and deploy high-performing talent is critical to delivering superior performance and quality services for our clients.

Diverse talent brings different experiences and ideas to our clients, which helps them make better informed, more productive decisions. We see the impact of this every day as we work to build trust, protect capital markets, and strive to deliver innovative solutions for some of the most complex business problems.

We all have something unique to contribute to our success. A diverse workforce brings the skills, knowledge, and viewpoints we need to learn from one another, serve our clients, and grow in an increasingly competitive and global marketplace. ●