



Kelly S. King

EDITORS' NOTE Kelly King has served as Chairman of BB&T Corporation since January 2010, and President and Chief Executive Officer since January 2009. Earlier, he served as Chief Operating Officer and President. He has been a member of executive management since 1983. King's unwavering commitment to the company's mission, vision, and values led to a nationally recognized associate volunteer program, called *The Lighthouse Project*. He received his B.S., Business Administration and his M.B.A. from East Carolina University.

COMPANY BRIEF BB&T (bbt.com) is one of the largest financial services holding companies in the U.S. with \$186.8 billion in assets and market capitalization of \$26.8 billion. Based in Winston-Salem, N.C., the company operates 1,839 financial centers in 12 states and Washington, D.C. It offers a full range of consumer and commercial banking, securities brokerage, asset management, and mortgage and insurance products and services. A Fortune 500 company, BB&T is consistently recognized for outstanding client satisfaction by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Greenwich Associates, and others.

BB&T has a long history and is known as an industry leader. What has made the company so special?

The secret to our success has been our longstanding, deep commitment to our culture, which we define as our mission, our vision, and our values. For 40 years, our vision has been to create the best financial institution possible, and to help our clients achieve economic success and financial security. Our vision is to create a place where our associates can learn and be fulfilled in their work, while making the communities we serve better places to be. Finally, we look to optimize shareholder value.

The third part of that culture is our values, which most people would say are the most distinguishing characteristics of BB&T. We have 10 core values in terms of character, judgment,

Mission, Vision, and Values

**An Interview with Kelly S. King,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, BB&T Corporation**

success, and happiness, and we recognize and believe that fundamental values or beliefs of an organization guide the behaviors that drive results. This is a key differentiator for us.

Has it become harder to maintain the culture of BB&T as the company has grown?

It takes an absolute commitment to ensure that we don't lose that culture. In 1995, we were a \$10-billion company, and following our current merger, we'll be a \$210-billion company. We put tremendous energy into making sure our culture stands out. I do a quarterly video for associates where I talk about how we're doing and I also spend a good bit of time talking about our culture. It's one way to get the message directly from me to every one of our employees.

I also conduct regional visits to discuss culture and our other executives similarly engage with our associates.

The way we sustain beliefs is consistent and continuous conveyance of a credible message by a powerful source.

Where is innovation taking place within BB&T's operations?

Over the past five or six years, our industry has been besieged by change coming from the recession and flowing out from the Dodd-Frank act. The industry has had the challenge of staying focused on innovation and putting the client first.

There are many things we have to do today that are required by virtue of the changes in the business, but our purpose every day is to have our clients be successful. Innovation comes from continuously looking for better ways for our clients to achieve that success.

If our clients are successful, it's not only good for them but it's good for us because, to the extent that our clients are growing, we are inherently growing with them.

How critical is it to have a diverse workforce?

We're a service business, focused on helping our clients and communities through the efforts and talents of our associates. We can't really help our clients and be as engaged in the communities as we want to be if our associates aren't a representation of our clients in the communities.

This is required if we are to be able to effectively accomplish our mission. It is morally right to have a diverse workforce and it makes us a better company.

We have an executive diversity counsel that every member of our executive team sits on. We have various affinity groups that meet and host many activities. They provide us updates on what they're doing and we give them feedback.

We're regularly meeting with our associates and getting feedback in terms of various diversity activities. We're also focused on recruiting a diverse workforce.

What approach have you taken to address technology while ensuring that the personal touch is not lost?

There are two aspects to technology today: one involves investing in technology with regard to running the back room.

We spend a lot of money to meet our client needs. We try to think about how to meet the clients where those clients are and in the way they want to do business with us.

Historically, banks were very rigid, this is no longer the case. People are very demanding in terms of their convenience requirements and in terms of how they want to interact. It's a given today that you meet them in the manner that they want to be met in the marketplace.

On the one hand, we're still running the traditional distribution system. However, especially over the past 10 years, we have been building a parallel distribution system around digital technology and interfaces. This has had an impact on the profitability of companies, and it's also the right thing to do today. Going forward, as people change in terms of their requirements for technological interface, we must change too. If we do not, we would simply lose touch, and then we would lose the relationship.

It's an economic challenge we face today but this is what's required, and we're doing it well.

Would you talk about the importance of community engagement for the bank?

We started out focusing on the community as one of the four pillars of our mission. It is a primary focus because, if the communities we serve don't do well, the bank cannot do well.

We feel very strongly that we should invest in and help our communities be the best they can be because that's the right thing to do. Our communities have been good to us for 143 years and we would not exist without them. ●