

Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Talent

An Interview with **Kim R. Chiodi**,
Senior Vice President, Human Resources,
Western & Southern Financial Group



Kim R. Chiodi

EDITORS' NOTE Kim Chiodi was named to her current post in 2012. She joined Western & Southern in 1982 as a manager of training and personnel research. She left to pursue a career in consulting in 1995 and returned as Vice President, Field Human Resources, in 2008. Chiodi earned an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Xavier University and a Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Akron.

What emphasis has this company placed on attracting and retaining top talent?

In human resources, our mission is to build a world-class workforce to support the attainment of our business objectives across all of our member companies. We do this in three ways: attracting talent, developing talent, and retaining talent.

Our talent acquisition team works hand-in-hand with our hiring managers. HR does not own talent. HR shares responsibilities for our people with our business units. The goal is to ensure that we are not just hiring for the right skills but for a strong cultural fit.

In addition, we aim for all candidates to have an outstanding candidate experience. Whether or not they are hired, they are potential ambassadors and recruiters of other talent, as well as potential policyholders or clients.

Our education and development team works closely with our business unit partners to combine classroom and online training with a really strong industry education program. They also consult with individual departments on team development and strategy execution. We have never downsized this team, even in tough times; that's how important talent development is to Western & Southern.

Also, our associate relations team focuses on talent management to ensure our associates have a full, rewarding, and impactful career. When someone finishes their career at Western & Southern, we want them to be able to say they could not have enjoyed their careers more or done better anywhere else.

In the long run, talent retention is owned by everyone in our organization.

Do young people today understand the exciting things happening in insurance?

There is an entire universe within financial services so the career opportunities are endless. At Western & Southern, a full one-third of our positions are filled from within our ranks.

I also think the industry and those in it provide really good support for developing skills.

Financial services is also a great career because of the positive impact one can have on customers – it's a place to make a difference.

How critical is it that diversity is mirrored within your workforce?

We believe that for our organization to be successful, everybody has to own the business. One of our cultural values is collaboration. We look for and reward people who can work well with others, value multiple perspectives, and are team players. Our experience shows us that when everyone works hard and contributes, we win.

We need diverse perspectives and hard work from everyone. ●

The Evolution of the CIO

An Interview with **Karen A. Chamberlain**,
Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer,
Western & Southern Financial Group



Karen A. Chamberlain

EDITORS' NOTE Karen Chamberlain attended DePaul University in Chicago. She holds FINRA Series 6 and 26 licenses. Her career spans 27 years in information technology and operations with assignments at Allstate Insurance Company, JPMorgan Chase and, most recently, The Hartford Insurance Group.

In regard to driving business and business strategy, would you talk about that function and for you, has the CIO role evolved over the years?

The role has evolved significantly over the years and one of the significant changes is that CIOs are now assuming a lead role. We are expected to deliver on the strategic vision of the organization. Technology can drive the outcomes that are important to corporate strategy.

This gives CIO's an influential place at the table because they have a breadth of understanding of the total organization and how technology is going to enable business strategy.

What impact has technology had on the delivery of the business?

Western & Southern's core technology has to drive 24/7 capabilities. We have cross-channel capabilities that have to be up and running in the mobile digital world of today. Securing that and the organization, and creating a much more data-rich environment that harnesses data both internally and externally, is highly important to our ability to differentiate.

Are there opportunities for women today to grow within IT?

It's a slow-moving target, but there are incredible opportunities for women. The technology space is so broad now. When I talk with women about careers in IT, I try to help them understand that it's about bringing a diverse perspective and being able to use their skills in many ways. Whether it's technical skills, creative skills, innovation, or the ability to manage projects, their business acumen is used every single day because technology is so integrated into all of our businesses. We need people who can speak not only the technical language but can translate that into business language.

How challenging is it to address cyber risk today?

Cyber threats evolve every day so we have to be prepared by investing in the right tools, processes, and education. It is also important to understand what is going on in the industry and to stay close to law enforcement. We also have to rethink the roles and responsibilities in the organization because that has changed as well.

We are flexible and can change our course in certain areas if we need to because there is such a global risk now. Our core infrastructure can be disabled quite quickly if we're not focused on it.

We make sure that we secure our classified data, but we're prepared if incidents do happen. We work to understand how they can develop into a crisis by doing tabletop scenarios.

The most important deterrent is employee education and awareness because people can be one of our vulnerabilities if they don't understand what it means when they click on the wrong link. ●