



David Anderson

**EDITORS' NOTE** David Anderson is the President for Mercer's Growth Markets Region. His role spans the firm across Mercer's Health, Wealth and Career businesses. Through colleagues and offices in 35 cities and 22 countries, Anderson's team serves clients in 84 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Turkey, Africa, and Latin America. Accelerating profitable growth through the Growth Markets is one of Mercer's four strategic priorities globally. Anderson is also a non-executive Director of Alexander Forbes Group Holdings Limited, a Johannesburg listed financial services company in which Mercer has made a strategic investment. His career experience includes advising organizations and foreign governments on investment and retirement savings matters and leading businesses in life insurance, financial services and professional services in Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Anderson has qualifications in marketing, insurance, superannuation and management. He is a Certified Insurance Professional, a Certified Practising Marketer, a Fellow of the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, a Fellow of the Australian and New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance, an Associate of the Australian Marketing Institute and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Mercer ([mercer.com](http://mercer.com)) delivers advice and technology-driven solutions that help organizations meet the health, wealth and career needs of a changing workforce. Mercer's more than 22,000 employees are based in 44 countries and the firm operates in more than 130 countries. Mercer is a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies. With more than 60,000 colleagues and annual revenue over \$13 billion, through its market-leading companies including Marsh, Guy Carpenter and Oliver Wyman, Marsh & McLennan helps clients navigate an increasingly dynamic and complex environment.

### What has led to the strength of the Mercer brand?

All of our companies, including those within Marsh & McLennan, were founded by pioneers

# A Growth Mindset

## An Interview with David Anderson, President, Growth Markets Region, Mercer

who wanted to transform the industries in which they were operating. However, they didn't have a grandiose agenda. It was about changing the entire client experience.

In every case, the Operating Companies (Mercer, Marsh, Oliver Wyman and Guy Carpenter) are named after people who transformed the industry. They revised the entire model. William (Bill) Mercer was a pioneer in the Canadian marketplace as an actuary establishing defined benefit pension plans for Canadian corporations and their workforces. Until that point, no one had established a category for that – they had either no coverage for the workforce or there was incidental coverage that was sold by insurance company agents to anyone who would buy.

We all know that story and understand that the real reasons behind Mercer's continued success stems from always acting in the client's best interest and thinking about how we can get a better result for the client that has not been thought of yet.

This speaks to how we will navigate our future as well.

### How do you define the sweet spot for Mercer?

It's shifting because of changes in technology, the economy around the world, and the incumbent landscape via consolidation and new partnerships and ventures.

Our digital initiative is about declaring technology that is externally oriented toward our clients as being a battlefield on which we need to be great. We want to be the leaders in the converged space of people plus technology. This is where technology can have a real impact on our clients' workforces or the way they manage their health, wealth and careers.

With regard to growth economies and emerging companies, the landscape is really changing. By 2025, half the world's largest companies will be headquartered in the growth economies. With their expanding cities, middle class, and consumer spending, growth economies are creating extraordinary opportunities for companies and their workforces. We partner with our clients to navigate these structural shifts, regulatory policies and volatility of a changing marketplace to help them face increased competition, create new markets and be optimally positioned for growth.

### What are the growth markets for Mercer?

We define them as Asia, the Middle East, Turkey, Africa, and Latin America. Within those areas, we're serving clients in 84 countries. We see it as an interesting portfolio in that there are some things that apply from country to country within a certain region, and there are other things where the country next door is very different from their neighbor.

There are great opportunities but the biggest challenge is working out the priorities in those areas. It's about knowing we're in the right place and making the right investments in a relative sense. There are short, medium and long-term measures we use to make those assessments.

### How do you manage your long-term vision with the short-term pressures?

We declared our five big bets. We need to have a holistic portfolio across each of our businesses – health, wealth and career – and we need to invest for the short, medium and long terms in those countries.

Our big bet countries are China, Japan, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, which is also a staging location for sub-Saharan Africa.

Then we have what we call our seven fastest growers, which are growing at 30 to 100+ percent per year. We help them sustain and accelerate growth but we don't want them to win at the expense of being short in the five big bets.

### What are the areas Mercer is looking to for growth in the future?

There is still growth in the traditional markets, probably not in the legacy solution set, but in adjacent solution sets.

Our fastest growing spaces in our business include cloud implementation, digital assessments, employee engagement, delegated investment solutions and everything related to health.

Some of these areas are ones in which we weren't experts five years ago. We're making strategic acquisitions and developing talent now in each of those spaces.

### How do you maintain an entrepreneurial spirit throughout the company?

It is challenging. It's about promoting that spirit but also encouraging the right degree of risk taking. We will always be working on that. We have a CEO that sets the right tone and expectations.

We are increasingly focused on a growth culture and mindset because that is what our clients are seeking.

The growth mindset is about looking for people with an open mind and then creating exponential impact from their input. Real power is generated as this is distributed around the world.

### Do young people entering the workforce understand how dynamic the industry is and the type of career it offers?

Part of their common experience is they've been users of consumer-grade digital experiences all their lives. Many coming out of school today are at the apex of being familiar with that technology.

However, I don't think they understand how an organization has to be moved internally and externally so clients and employees continue to have improved experiences. It is incumbent upon us to engage new colleagues in that change program. ●