

Diverse and Dynamic Teams

An Interview with Jennifer Hayes, Partner, Bain & Company

EDITORS' NOTE Jennifer Hayes is a partner based in Bain & Company's Atlanta office. She is an expert in the firm's Retail and Strategy practices. Since joining Bain, she has been involved in growth and transformational strategy work across a variety of industry segments including retail, auto, consumer products and hospitality. She has extensive experience in large-scale, multi-year retail transformations, with a focus on omnichannel retailing, category strategy, customer journey redesign, store operations, digital transformation, sustainability and innovation. Hayes was recognized by Consulting Magazine as one of its 2017 Women Leaders in Consulting for her client service capabilities. She currently serves as the Chair of Bain's Global Women's Leadership Council and is an acting member on Bain's Global Compensation and Promotion Committee. Prior to joining Bain in 2001, she was an associate at the First Reserve Corporation, a private equity fund. Hayes is a graduate of Wellesley College, where she earned a B.A. in Economics and English. She earned an M.B.A. from the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business, where she received the Faculty Award for Academic Excellence and was a member of the Raven Society.



Jennifer Hayes

FIRM BRIEF Founded in 1973, Bain & Company (bain.com) is a global consultancy that helps the world's most ambitious change-makers define the future. Across 58 offices in 37 countries, it works alongside clients as one team with a shared ambition – to achieve extraordinary results that outperform their competition and redefine industries. It complements tailored, integrated expertise with a curated ecosystem of digital innovators to deliver better, faster and more enduring outcomes to clients.

How do you define the Bain difference?

I think it has to do with our culture and mission, which is about having diverse and dynamic teams that bring a unique perspective to clients. We have a unique collaborative approach, which speaks for itself when you look at the fact that we have in the neighborhood of 85 percent repeat clients.

How do you focus your efforts at Bain?

I focus my efforts at Bain today in three areas. My main focus is as a retail partner. I work with different retail clients on a broad range of issues. Retail is clearly an exciting industry to be in right now with lots of change, and it's a passion for me. Another passion for me is serving as chair of our Global Women's Leadership Council, which focuses on all of our programs around the world that ensure we set up our women to thrive. This includes making sure that we have the right voice in the marketplace and that we're doing research to create the right platform for change for our clients as well as within Bain. I also serve on our Global Compensation and Promotion Committee.

about five years ago that women were oftentimes talking to other women about their most important professional and personal challenges. As much as that was helpful and empowering, it excluded men from the conversation, including those in leadership positions. We knew that to set a best practice for our industry, we needed the men at Bain to be deeply involved in our gender parity efforts and to be a part of the ongoing dialogue about these issues.

How is technology impacting the way Bain delivers its services and how will it impact the workforce of the future?

Technology has had a big impact on how we operate and the speed with which we drive solutions for our clients. Everything has a digital component in it. One of the biggest changes is the ability for data to solve problems. It changes the speed with which you can answer questions. It changes client willingness to try things faster.

Technology is impacting the workforce for the future and the types of jobs that are going to be in demand are changing. For almost every retail client we work with, one of the biggest resource challenges today is recruiting and retaining product designers and engineers. These fields will continue to become more important as we are harnessing data and using AI and machine learning which creates the need to bring all these new disciplines into companies, including Bain.

How critical is corporate responsibility at Bain and will you highlight Bain's commitment to pro bono work?

We have a commitment to invest a billion dollars in pro bono consulting by 2025. We're about a quarter of the way there, and we focus on working with innovative organizations that address some of the world's most pressing issues. Our focus areas are education, economic development and the environment. Every office at Bain is involved in pro bono work. For our staff, being able to work on a pro bono case provides a nice change of pace and offers the opportunity to make a difference while working on different issues.

In addition, we have been certified a hundred percent carbon neutral for a very long time. We have robust green programs within all of our offices to make sure that we're doing our part to support the environment, focusing on both sustainability and environmental responsibility. ●

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Will you highlight the Global Women's Leadership Council?

The Global Women's Leadership Council aims to ensure women are thriving at Bain. We have been at this for a decade because, at our core, we are a human capital business and attracting and retaining women is critical to the success of our business model. We realized