

## Driving Impact

An Interview with Kwasi Mitchell, Chief Purpose Officer, Deloitte U.S.

**EDITORS' NOTE** Kwasi Mitchell serves as the Chief Purpose Officer of Deloitte. He is responsible for driving a firm-wide strategy around Deloitte's commitments to include diversity, equity and inclusion, sustainability and climate change, and education and workforce development. He is also responsible for engaging our people to live their purpose daily, supporting our clients on their purpose journey, forming alliances with key partners to co-create solutions to address systemic societal issues, and driving internal policy and process changes to achieve our purpose aspirations. Mitchell formerly served as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion leader and the Pro Bono and Social Impact lead for Deloitte Consulting. He currently advises clients within the government and commercial sectors. Mitchell has a PhD in inorganic chemistry, sits on the board of several global nonprofits.



Kwasi Mitchell

**FIRM BRIEF** Deloitte ([deloitte.com](https://www.deloitte.com)) provides industry-leading audit, consulting, tax and advisory services to many of the world's most admired brands, including nearly 90 percent of the Fortune 500® and more than 7,000 private companies. Deloitte's people come together for the greater good and work across the industry sectors that drive and shape today's marketplace – delivering measurable and lasting results that help reinforce public trust in the capital markets, inspire clients to see challenges as opportunities to transform and thrive, and help lead the way toward a stronger economy and a healthier society. Deloitte is a part of the largest global professional services network serving clients in the markets that are most important to them. Now celebrating 175 years of service, Deloitte's network of member firms spans more than 150 countries and territories.

### Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?

I was just named Deloitte's first U.S. Chief Purpose Officer – a newly created position to guide, inspire and drive progress and accountability in our continued journey to empower our people to lead with their passions and help position Deloitte as a purpose-driven enterprise. My key focus areas are twofold. First and foremost, I want to enable our 110,000+ professionals to engage in purpose-driven work

that's meaningful to them. That goes beyond volunteering – it's harnessing our people's skills to help solve some of the world's most complex challenges for the benefit of society.

Second, my key focus is impact. The marketplace increasingly sees corporate social responsibility as table stakes – we're going far beyond that. How do we make sure we have the size, scale, and breadth of our brand to drive progress against societal issues taking place more broadly within the world? How do we direct

our resources so they have maximum impact to our communities? Through the Purpose Office, we can better funnel our resources and investments to really change the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the globe. A large part of that will be working with our clients, alliances and even competitors to collectively bring our capabilities together to help solve institutional challenges beyond the capabilities of a singular organization. For example, we have a workforce development initiative with one of our major alliances that trains individuals, regardless of background, demographics and socioeconomic status, with technical training

and mentorship to help prepare them for new careers. Workforce and education development are key priorities for Deloitte and our Purpose Office, and this initiative is one way we can address the growing skills gap in technology fields by collaborating with other marketplace players.

**Deloitte is a purpose-driven organization. As the U.S. Chief Purpose Officer, how do you define Deloitte's purpose and why is purpose a business imperative for Deloitte?**

When I think about what purpose means, I think of it from both a personal and organizational perspective. Personally, it's the alignment of my passions, what I do on a daily basis for my profession, and the mission and the outcomes that we're trying to drive. For purpose at Deloitte, it's driving impact at scale for the societal issues that are truly aligned to our values. As a large, complex organization, Deloitte has had different aspects of purpose embedded in its business since day one 175 years ago. What we have an opportunity to do now with the Purpose Office is to truly align those activities and elevate them to drive a broader impact for our people, within our communities, and with our clients.

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When I think about why we are doing this now, purpose has been front and center, not only from a talent perspective with our people wanting to find meaning and fulfillment in the work they do, but truly it’s a business imperative that’s top of mind for most CEOs and organizations who have the resources and scale to positively impact our communities and broader society. To address some of the world’s most complex societal issues, it’s crucial for purpose-driven companies to vocally proclaim core values and demonstrate them on a daily basis in order to cultivate a culture of purpose.

**How will purpose be embedded throughout Deloitte?**

We have a great foundation already, so we’ll be elevating many of the activities that already take place across Deloitte, including corporate citizenship impact areas, what we do with our clients within Monitor Institute, and how we support education through the Deloitte Foundation. For example, “Impact Every Day” is our year-round commitment for our people to engage in meaningful pro bono or skills-based volunteer activities. It was once focused on a single day of the year, and we have evolved how we show up in our communities in order to make a bigger impact year-round. Another example is Deloitte’s *WorldClass* ambition which aims to impact 50 million futures by developing job skills and improving educational outcomes. There is a lot of opportunity to expand on these existing efforts.

In addition to that, the Purpose Office will be the single point of contact for alignment of these efforts across our different businesses, how we go to market and serve our clients as they go on their own purpose journeys, and simplifying how our people can engage in purpose work so that they can really live, talk and think about purpose and the impact that it has in the broader world. As we examine our internal processes so that we are truly delivering on our aspirations to our stakeholders, as well as further embed purpose in our offerings and how we work with our clients, our people will directly benefit through more meaningful work. For example, we continually evaluate and implement ways we can enhance our support to Black-owned businesses, and we are also pursuing the Management Leadership for Tomorrow’s (MLT) Black Equity at Work certification. These are just a few of the many

efforts where we are investing to ultimately foster a stronger sense of purpose for our people and make an impact that matters for our communities.

**Will you discuss your career journey and what interested you to take on the role of Chief Purpose Officer?**

Most people are surprised to learn that I am a PhD Chemist by training – I definitely took a nontraditional career path but am able to apply my scientific training and background to the way I approach complex problems daily. I joined Deloitte approximately 14 years ago and have held a variety of roles that are aligned with leading our Purpose Office, including leading diversity, equity and inclusion for our consulting practice in addition to acting as our pro bono champion. I’ve held roles as the champion of our education and workforce development efforts and spent several years within the energy industry.

From a personal perspective, which is the most important, I have been the recipient of support similar to what our firm provides to our communities in so many ways – from mentorship as a youth through programs like Deloitte Academy and through grants such as those provided by the Deloitte Foundation. I find purpose by providing pathways for youth who grew up in poverty like me to becoming a leader in the largest professional services firm. I’m really looking forward to harnessing all elements of my background and experience to prioritize purpose for Deloitte and communicate the value it brings to our clients, people and communities.

**The ability and responsibility for business to impact communities and society has come into the spotlight over the past year. Where do you see Deloitte having the greatest impact?**

What excites me the most about the establishment of a Purpose Office is that we can take bold actions and drive impact at scale. We’re focusing our efforts around several key core commitments, such as diversity, equity and inclusion, climate change and sustainability, and education and workforce, to name a few. One investment we just made that I’m particularly excited about is OneTen, a coalition of companies committed to upskill, hire and promote one million Black Americans over the next 10 years into family-sustaining jobs with opportunities for

advancement. This is the largest ever private sector-led mobilization of this type, and a great example of how purpose is bigger than philanthropy – it is companies stepping up and leading the change to create a more equitable society. I’m also incredibly excited about bringing forward bold new solutions around climate change, which we all know is such a key challenge that is going to require focused and collective action to change the path that we are on.

**Deloitte has placed a major emphasis on building a diverse and inclusive workforce. How important is it to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when addressing client needs and how will Deloitte’s diversity, equity and inclusion efforts be incorporated into the Purpose Office?**

The events of last year have highlighted how critical it is for organizations to address the inequities that have become systemic in society. The impact of COVID-19 on communities of color in the U.S. has been staggering, with inequitable access to healthcare and a higher likelihood that people of color have frontline jobs that cannot be completed virtually. These factors are contributing to rising cases and a disproportionate number of deaths among minorities. Without focused attention, the wealth gap for these communities has the potential to increase even further. That’s why it’s important for organizations to look at diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) not only to improve our respective workplaces, but also to influence positive change more broadly. Building a diverse workforce provides an opportunity to drive prosperity inclusively across multiple segments of society.

It is proven that diverse and inclusive teams perform better and, ultimately, positively impact the bottom line. When everyone thinks the same, we get group think. By unlocking creativity through a diversity of perspectives, better results are produced. Our clients also expect us to show up as a diverse and inclusive organization, which is another reason why supporting DEI will be a critical component of what we’ll be doing in the Purpose Office. When we really embrace DEI as an organization, it fuels passion and purpose, enables innovation, and helps deliver well-rounded client solutions. By advancing our purpose, we can show that we are a force for good in society. ●