

A Spirit of Purpose and Professionalism

An Interview with Joe Echevarria,
Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte LLP

EDITORS' NOTE Joe Echevarria was named to his current position in June 2011. He joined the Deloitte U.S. Firms in 1978 and became an audit partner in 1988. Since that time, he has held a wide range of leadership positions, most recently as U.S. Managing Partner-Operations. Before that, he served in a number of leadership roles such as Regional Managing Partner of the Southeast Audit Practice, Audit Partner in Charge of Florida, and Audit Partner in Charge of South Florida. Echevarria has also led the firm's Strategic Relationship Management program and led the enabling area of the firm. His leadership responsibilities extend to approximately 50,000 professionals in nearly 90 U.S. cities and India. Echevarria chairs the U.S. Executive, is a member of the Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL) Executive and DTTL Board, and serves on the Americas Executive. He serves as a corporate advisory board member of the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting. He was named Executive of the Year by that organization in 2007. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida.



Joe Echevarria

COMPANY BRIEF Deloitte (www.deloitte.com) is the brand under which 180,000 dedicated professionals through a global network, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL), collaborate to provide audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, and tax services to select clients. Deloitte LLP is the member firm of DTTL in the United States. Deloitte LLP does not itself provide services to clients but coordinates the activities of its following subsidiaries: Deloitte & Touche LLP; Deloitte Consulting LLP; Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP; and Deloitte Tax LLP.

You recently assumed the role of CEO of Deloitte LLP. What are your key priorities for the firm as you look to this new role?

I want to ensure that we respond effectively to marketplace changes in an uncertain environment, balancing the demands of the present with need to build for the future. What our firm looks like in 2015 or 2020 will be defined by the choices we make today. Our clients are at the center of these choices.

I believe we can serve our clients best by focusing on three priorities: grow our scale and

resources in critical markets; offer innovative ideas that help our clients achieve their goals in a changing global economy; and lead the audit profession in improving audit quality, enhancing the protection of the capital markets, and defining the role of the auditor in the 21st century.

With respect to growth, we want to be a top seed in each of our key service lines and businesses. To excel in this marketplace we must have the global breadth and depth of capabilities executives require. We will continue to build up our core businesses even as we move into ad-

acent markets and make investments that give us strategic options on the businesses of tomorrow.

What does success look like? That's an interesting question in an era when the attributes of success are shifting – clients expect more, society's needs are evolving, and technology is altering how we live and work. But for us, the answer is what I call "leading from the front." We want to be the leading professional services organization, not just the largest. We want Deloitte to be recognized as the most respected and influential firm and remain the standard bearer of quality across our practices.

As CEO, I'm dedicated to this vision. I know that people, markets, and clients will trust and respect our Deloitte brand to the extent we prove our leadership in all that we do.

When you look at the industry today and the Big 4, how challenging is it to differentiate from your competitors and how do you define what makes Deloitte unique?

Our business portfolio continues to be our number one differentiator. Overall, the combination of our audit, tax, financial advisory, and consulting practices gives us the depth and breadth of resources necessary to help clients find solutions for the complexities of today's marketplace. Our unique perspective on the business environment equips us to lead the audit profession in improving audit quality, enhancing the protection of the capital markets, and defining the role of the auditor in the 21st century.

Another key differentiator is our culture. Within Deloitte, there is a sense of ownership among our senior leaders and a sense of belonging among our people. We are a partnership, but a partnership is a legal structure; ownership is a state of mind. Our partners, principals, and directors know that as the owners of our organization they hold Deloitte's future in their hands.

With leaders who agree on clearly defined commitments, it is easier to bring the people of the firm along on the journey. It helps to sustain a spirit of purpose and professionalism.

Many refer to future growth coming from the emerging markets (BRIC). Do you see the greatest opportunities for Deloitte internationally or is there still strong growth for the firm in the U.S. market?

We need to keep both opportunities in sight.

I have no doubt that the global opportunities in front of us are substantial, beginning with serving our current clients already based in emerging markets and those expanding into these markets. We are actively investing in global markets, including the Americas, China, and India.

This includes aggressive talent recruiting, training, and deployment. It also involves collaborating on the tools and methodologies that we use to deliver our services, as well as seeking out the right alliance and acquisition opportunities.

At the same time, we believe that opportunities in the U.S. extend beyond our current client base. We recently established Deloitte Growth Enterprise Services with the specific goal of serving U.S. mid-market companies and the initial results have significantly exceeded our expectations.

So it's not about choosing one market over another; it's about leading in all those in which we chose to compete, as well as continuing to enhance the quality of our services, wherever we operate.

Deloitte places a major focus on being a catalyst for innovation. How are you able to keep an innovation culture at the firm, especially with the size and scale of Deloitte?

There's definitely a culture of innovation at Deloitte that's heavily dependent upon our talent, as we view innovation as fundamental to the health and strength of our business. Thousands of our people innovate for clients every day as they work to help them solve their problems. These ideas range from small changes and improvements to radical, breakthrough advances. And we see social media playing a very significant role in differentiating Deloitte and providing a platform for innovation.

We've also made a significant investment in Deloitte University (DU). DU officially opened its doors this fall. It's a core differentiator for Deloitte and will be central to our continuing efforts to lead with innovation. It provides an environment where our people can come together, meet with colleagues face-to-face, and share ideas and build our culture of innovation. ●