



Jane A. Chmielinski

AECOM's Growth

**An Interview with Jane A. Chmielinski,
Executive Vice President-Americas Operations and Chief Corporate Officer, AECOM**

EDITORS' NOTE Jane Chmielinski transitioned from President of AECOM's legacy DMJM Harris operation to serve as Group Chief Executive-Corporate Development, during early 2008. In that role, she led the AECOM Office of Corporate Development. Chmielinski is a member of the AECOM Enterprise Management Team. She is involved in a number of professional associations, including the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). She also currently serves on the Mineta Transportation Institute Board of Trustees, the New York Building Foundation Board of Governors, and the ACE Mentor Program Board of Directors, and as an Advisory Board Member to the Rudin Center at New York University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Chmielinski was recently appointed Chief Operating Officer and President of the Americas effective October 1, 2011.

COMPANY BRIEF AECOM (www.aecom.com) is a global provider of professional technical and management support services to a broad range of markets, including transportation, facilities, environmental, energy, water, and government. With approximately 45,000 employees around the world – including architects, engineers, designers, planners, scientists, and project/construction management professionals – AECOM provides a blend of global reach, local knowledge, innovation, and technical excellence in delivering solutions that create, enhance, and sustain the world's built, natural, and social environments. A Fortune 500 company, AECOM serves clients in more than 125 countries and has an annual revenue run rate of approximately \$8 billion.

Is there a strong understanding of the size and scale of the AECOM brand today?

That's a real challenge. When I joined, AECOM was primarily known by our individual operating companies; those were the strong brands. We have spent the past three years

working to solidify and unify the AECOM brand. So we're still making refinements, but we are seeing the energy growing behind the AECOM brand, and we're winning jobs and attracting clients that we would not have attracted under our individual operating company names.

How strong is AECOM's business in the Americas and where will growth come from?

Right now, the Americas make up 54 percent of AECOM's business, so it's a large portion of our overall footprint.

Latin America – especially Brazil – is the big growth area outside the U.S. We are also growing in selected markets in Canada, where it's not as much about more geographic expansion as it is a move into mining, oil, and gas.

In leading the Americas operations, how close is the coordination with other markets and is there a heavy focus on delivering seamless consistent messaging or does it differ region to region?

We are a matrix organization so we have what we call a balanced matrix between geographies and business lines. We're very well coordinated, but because we respect the diversity and differences of the various regions, we work around the core values of AECOM while leveraging our talent across all geographies and business lines, which is our biggest success factor.

Are there opportunities to broaden into new markets?

We're expanding in the hospitality market, and we're seeing growth in our sports portfolio and also in public/private partnership offerings.

How did the AECOM safety program evolve and how is it a differentiator?

Safety is one of our core values. This goes beyond protecting our employees and the workplace; it encompasses how we approach work across all of our businesses.

It has been fascinating to develop a safety program across a global platform because you have certain cultures that traditionally don't formally codify safety programs – it seems odd to them. That has posed interesting challenges for us.

But safety is so built into everything we do. Some people feel we only pay attention to safety because we're a U.S.-based company and OSHA requires it, but that is not the case. It's because we feel that working safely is the right way to do business.

As the company has grown, is the message getting out about the opportunities your industry provides and is the next generation of leaders coming onboard?

We have engineers, architects, planners, scientists, and a number of other professional disciplines at AECOM. In fact, we have such a broad range of skill sets that we have become a very attractive place for people who work and thrive in multidiscipline, multi-diversified, end-market firms.

But we also have great opportunities for folks who are interested in putting together deals, such as public/private partnerships, so we also are of interest to people in the finance world.

When young people come out of school, especially in engineering, it's not so difficult getting them into the industry – it's difficult keeping them in the industry. The truth is that, most of the time, because of our diverse structure, progression is not up a corporate ladder; it's more working within a corporate lattice.

How critical is being engaged in the community and addressing broader issues in society?

We have always been a firm that, if we go in and pursue a big job, also wants to grow roots – we don't just pick up and leave after that project is finished; we embed ourselves within those communities.

We also believe that what we do makes the world a better place and not just on the business side of it. We encourage our senior-level staff to sit on philanthropic boards and serve on committees in the community, not all of which are necessarily correlated back to our business.

We also find that this policy is great for retention. The new generation of talent wants to be with a firm that gives back.

One of the best incubators for leadership is involvement in those programs.

What are you most focused on to make sure the growth and results continue?

Any company that isn't thinking about getting the next level of sustainability-focused leaders in place is probably going to have a hard time moving forward.

Those skill sets are going to be very different. Working in a global company like this, you can't use the last decade's solutions because they don't fit the current world and the markets we're in today.

Also, when I look at our 2020 plan and where we want to be, up until now, we've always doubled in size every five years. But the last thing anybody would ever want to do is to be 100,000 people strong just for the sake of being big. So it's about getting smarter and better, not necessarily bigger. ●