

Building a Better Working World

An Interview with Kelly Grier,
EY U.S. Chairman and Managing Partner-Elect and EY Americas Area Managing Partner-Elect

EDITORS' NOTE In December of 2017, Kelly Grier was named U.S. Chairman and Managing Partner and Americas Area Managing Partner—Elect, effective July 1, 2018. She is currently Region Managing Partner for the U.S. Central Region. Grier graduated with an accounting degree from Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame. She previously served as a member of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship and was recognized by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader. At EY, she has worked in Germany and Switzerland and was EY Americas Vice Chair of Talent and Managing Partner of the firm's Chicago office.



Kelly Grier

COMPANY BRIEF The global EY organization (ey.com) is a leader in assurance, tax, transaction, and advisory services. In the Americas—EY's largest area—member firms employ more than 70,000 people across 30 countries and generate \$14.5 billion in revenues. Globally, EY member firms employ nearly 250,000 people and generate \$31.4 billion in revenues.

You joined EY in 1991. What has made the firm so special for you and a place where you have wanted to spend your career?

I've always been incredibly proud to be part of EY. We have amazing people, a unique culture, and we work with exciting clients in a complex and dynamic marketplace. I've stayed because of the many opportunities to grow, develop and learn and to do so with the best and brightest people in the business. The opportunities at EY are vast and rich and I've experienced that throughout my career.

I've served in a variety of roles in the U.S. and abroad and have had the privilege to learn from the best leaders along the way.

EY has an inclusive culture that emphasizes integrity, respect and teaming. This differentiates us in the marketplace. As leaders and professionals, we are inspired by our deep sense of purpose: we seek to build a better working world. We take this purpose to heart and live it with each other, our clients and our stakeholders in our communities every day. This translates into very strong business momentum—we are growth leaders among the Big Four firms both globally and in the Americas.

You have referred to EY as an “innovative and dynamic organization with a unique culture.” How is EY able to maintain this culture with the size and scale of the firm today?

There is a direct link from our culture to innovation and how we collaborate on our clients' most challenging issues. Our culture is our greatest asset and through our culture of inclusion, everyone has a seat at the table, and all voices are heard and valued. This is the foundation of what we call high-performance teaming, and

it leads to better solutions and endures as EY grows. It's a privilege to serve the best companies in the world and attract the most talented professionals. Our clients expect us to ask better questions and they push for innovative solutions. Our people thrive in this environment and it's enabled by our culture.

This is a transformative period for EY. Our profession will look different in the future than it does today and our people are helping to shape that transformation. They are on the leading edge, driving innovation across EY and challenging leadership to maintain an agile and inclusive environment across the firm.

How critical is innovation to the future success of EY?

This is an incredibly exciting time for EY and our clients. Innovation is the future of EY. Sector convergence and business transformation enabled by technology presents opportunities for clients to grow in ways they have never imagined before. Our goal is to help clients thrive in this transformative age.

We pride ourselves on understanding our clients' needs, asking better questions and delivering the most effective solutions. When you couple a high performance culture with innovation, the results are truly powerful. Our people are helping our clients shape their business strategy and vision and enabling that with emerging technologies.

We are collaborating at the forefront of innovation, while innovating our own business. This is creating new career opportunities for our people.

Professional services is known as a people business. How much of an impact will technology have on the industry, and how will technology impact human capital?

Technology is indeed the 'super sector' cutting across all traditional sectors including ours. Our recent Capital Confidence Barometer, EY's global survey of business leaders, shows that digital companies are among the hottest targets of M&A activity across all industries. At EY, 35 percent of our new hires are now STEM professionals.

Against this backdrop, our people are bringing passion and exceptional client service to our change agenda—innovating the way we deliver our services and bringing entirely new, highly innovative services to our clients enabled by technology. It's been gratifying to see that while technology continues to change our world, our culture of teaming transcends that change and remains our greatest asset and is what will secure our bright future.

You will assume the role leading EY in the U.S. and Americas in July of this year. What excites you about this opportunity and how well is EY positioned for growth in the Americas?

I can't tell you how thrilled I am about this incredible opportunity. What an exciting time to lead in a truly transformative period for our firm and the world. I am humbled and honored to succeed our current US Chairman and Americas Managing Partner, Steve Howe. Under his leadership, EY in the Americas has incredible momentum in executing its strategy and is posting market-leading results across growth, talent, brand and relationships. We are uniquely positioned with a set of assets, skills and culture to really lead this transformation of our profession and build on our purpose and the great strength of EY.

Are there strong opportunities for women to lead at EY and what do you tell young women about the career possibilities in the profession?

EY is a place where all people, including women, have opportunities and outstanding career opportunities. I believe fundamentally in the power of high performing and highly diverse teams that contribute in an authentic way. With our inclusive culture, all voices are sought out, heard and valued. This creates an environment for significant opportunities for professional growth. When you can bring all of yourself to work every day, you undoubtedly bring the best of yourself. That opens the door to countless career and professional opportunities for our women and for everyone. ●