

Inclusive Leadership

An Interview with Janet Foutty, Chair of the Board, Deloitte US

EDITORS' NOTE Janet Foutty most recently served as Chair and Chief Executive Officer for Deloitte Consulting LLP. She previously led Deloitte's Federal practice as well as Deloitte Consulting's technology practice. She has also held leadership roles on Deloitte client programs that span retail, technology, government, energy, and financial services industries. Foutty is a frequent author and popular public speaker. She is a passionate advocate for inclusion in the work-



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place; women in technology; and the need for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and founded Women in Technology groups in India and the United States. Foutty serves as a member of Deloitte's Global Board of Directors. She currently serves on the boards for Bright Pink, a nonprofit dedicated to women's health, Catalyst, a global nonprofit working to build more inclusive workplaces, and NYU Stern's Tech MBA program. She is also on the executive committee for the Council on Competitiveness, and an inductee of the Kelley School of Business Academy of Alumni Fellows, Indiana University. Foutty holds a B.S. from Indiana University, and an M.B.A. in finance from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University.

FIRM BRIEF Deloitte (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 5,000 private and middle market companies. It works across the industry sectors that drive and shape today's

marketplace – delivering measurable and lasting results that help reinforce public trust in capital markets, inspire clients to see challenges as opportunities to transform and thrive, and help lead the way toward a stronger economy and a healthy society.

What have been the keys to Deloitte's consistent strength and leadership in the industry?

It starts with our values, which is the commitment to serving our clients with distinction and quality. We are

in four major businesses which have lots of interconnectivity, an audit business, a tax business, a risk consulting business, and a broad consulting business. Quality has really helped define our brand for the 175 years that our organization has been in existence. 2020 will mark our global firm's 175th anniversary.

This commitment to client service is in every fiber of who we are and what we do and has transcended the generations.

How has Deloitte been able to maintain its culture as it has grown in size and scale?

If I go back to a point in time, when I was a newly promoted manager in Chicago and our Chicago office had gone from 100 staff and 10 partners to 150 staff and 15 partners, I attended my first management meeting. The whole focus of the conversation and the meeting was about having an absolute laser-like focus on maintaining our culture as we continue to experience monumental growth.

Today, we have more than 100,000 talented people in the U.S., with 6,000 working from New York, our largest office, and our U.S. headquarters.

We have embedded into our core values our commitment to our clients and to our people. The other core value has been a commitment to our partnership. I believe that a partnership culture, with our partners as owners of the business, has allowed us to be really focused on maintaining such a strong dimension of culture, both in how we treat each other and how we treat our clients.

Another key factor is Deloitte's very deliberate programming through Deloitte University. This is our physical training and development center and is a place where we focus on leadership, learning and development for our people, and a place that really embodies how we maintain our culture.

How critical is innovation to Deloitte's continued success and where is innovation taking place in the firm?

Innovation is happening in every part of our business each and every day. Technology disruption is affecting our business on an unprecedented scale, as it is for all of our clients. We've been focused for many years on expecting and planning for changes across our solutions, our operating model and our talent models. It's interesting because it is affecting different parts of our business at different paces. Our audit business is using artificial intelligence in combination with our human auditors. Our gain in speed and efficiency has been a critical part of our effectiveness in the audit market.

In the consulting business, which I had the privilege to lead for many years, it's all about how we take our really deep industry knowledge and process expertise to get things done across complex organizations. It is about how we work with our technology alliance partners from SAP to Salesforce, to Apple to Google, to bring differentiated solutions to our clients. This has transformed the way our consulting business works.

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Each one of our businesses has been deeply affected in a very positive way by technology, and this has allowed us to innovate both within the four walls of our organization, and with our alliance partners, to drive a really impactful change for our clients' organizations.

You have a clear passion about and commitment to inclusive leadership. Will you discuss this focus?

I have been on this journey for Deloitte since we were the first professional services firm to start talking about diversity and inclusion back in 1993, so this has been a focus in some form or fashion since the early nineties when I started my career. It has evolved from talking about the development and advancement of women to how do we create a diverse and inclusive workforce. While the conversation has been a constant, the manner with which we talk about it has greatly evolved.

We researched and have defined how we think as a firm about inclusion. It is centered around six signature traits, the six C's of inclusive leadership: commitment, courage, cognizance of bias, cultural intelligence, and then my two favorites, curiosity and collaboration. When you think about how far the conversation has come, when we discuss having a diverse and inclusive workforce, those six attributes are absolutely critical to weave into the conversation.

I recently transitioned into the role as chair of the board. As I was sitting down with our nominating committee who is working on our next slate of board members, we spent time talking about my expectations for our board members and the expectation that they bring these six traits to bear to the boardroom as we think about the role a board plays in an inclusive environment and culture and workplace. It is very much in our DNA as an organization.

You mentioned Deloitte University. What was the vision in creating Deloitte University and how has it impacted the firm?

I was recently with the CEO that led the creation of Deloitte University with the support of our board chair at the time. If I flash back to 2008, we were having a discussion around learning, development and culture. We had an organization-wide debate about whether we should have bricks and mortar as a place to be the foundation of our learning and culture, or should we have clicks online to be that foundation. Our CEO at the time, with the support of our board, made a really brave decision given everything that was happening in 2008, to make a deep commitment to the belief that a physical space, which has now been replicated in other organizations all around the world, would be an important differentiator for how we develop our people and how we develop our culture.

We're now a decade into Deloitte University, and what I can tell you is that it is a very special place for our people. The manner in which the space is laid out, the development of the curriculum, the organic nature of our people spending time with people that they wouldn't run into in their everyday lives, has created a differentiated cultural experience with a focus on continuous learning.

How do you define the role as Chair of the Board and how do you focus your efforts?

Deloitte is the largest private partnership in the world and largest professional services firm in the world. In the U.S., I serve as Chair and Joe (Ucuzoglu) serves as CEO, which are two positions that are elected by the partners of the firm. We are focused on working

to drive a shared agenda, an agenda that is shared between management, the board, our internal partners, our alliance partners and our clients.

There are a couple of things that we are most focused on in the shared agenda. One is absolutely the strategy around technology disruption and how we keep appropriate pace with all the market dynamics and the needs of our people, while ensuring that we're really shaping the market going forward. This is a critical focus of mine from a governance perspective. Given that I come from a technology background, it is a very natural place for me to focus and lead in the boardroom.

I am also focused on the future of work, and answering the questions – what does our future workforce look like? How are services delivered with human intelligence and AI technology? Through the board and in working with management, we are making sure that we're making the right investments and the right decisions that will allow us to maintain our culture while developing the workforce of the future to serve our clients with the same distinction and quality that we've had the privilege to do historically.

I also get the privilege to serve as the chair of the Deloitte Foundation, which is a 90-year-old not-for-profit organization. It supports education, focusing on helping not only our workforce, but our future potential – middle and high school students, undergrads, and grad students – developing their talent and promoting excellence through STEM and through a continued commitment around inclusion. This is something that I get the privilege to do in addition to chairing our board and working with our CEO to drive our agenda forward. ●

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