

Fostering Community and Connectivity

An Interview with Jill Zucker,
Managing Partner, McKinsey & Company's New York Office

EDITORS' NOTE *Jill Zucker leads McKinsey's New York office. Prior to this role, she directed McKinsey's work on wealth management in North America for seven years. She recently helped establish the Dual Career Network, an initiative to support the personal and professional advancement of McKinsey colleagues and their partners as they balance two careers. As a member of McKinsey's Partner Election Committee, she helps to identify and nurture future leaders of the firm. Zucker earned a B.A. in economics from Barnard College and an M.B.A. from Columbia University.*



Jill Zucker

FIRM BRIEF *McKinsey & Company (mckinsey.com) is a global management consulting firm committed to helping institutions in the private, public and social sectors achieve lasting success. With consultants in more than 133 cities in 66 countries across industries and functions, it brings vast expertise to clients anywhere in the world. McKinsey works closely with teams at all levels of an organization to shape winning strategies, mobilize for change, build capabilities and drive successful execution.*

What have been the keys to McKinsey's leadership in the industry?

A few things stand out for me during my time at the firm. One is our commitment to our values. Our values constantly inform how we think about long-term strategy for our firm, our people, and how we serve our clients.

In addition, we have made a major commitment on investing in knowledge, innovation and learning. For example, we spend nearly \$600 million in firm resources on building knowledge for ourselves and our clients – and this continues to put us at the forefront of helping corporations, public sector clients and governments around the world.

Does the word consulting still effectively define McKinsey's business today?

We have put a significant amount of thought into our mission. Historically, we had a reputation as insight partners. We thought about our client's business and helped derive insights on what the future direction may be.

We've really shifted our focus and the way we partner with clients from being insight partners to impact partners where we partner with our clients to deliver impact of those insights through their organizations.

Consulting is a name that's been used for several decades, but the reality of what we do is much more partnership than consulting.

What are some highlights of McKinsey's New York office?

I'm very proud of our New York office. We have nearly 2,000 colleagues in New York and a network of more than 3,000 alumni from McKinsey in the New York area, many of whom are business founders and CEOs.

The strength of our New York community is an integral part of our firm. It allows us to play a role in the city and help foster growth in New York, which is something that we continue to seek out opportunities to do.

We are really at the forefront of innovation for our firm in the New York office. We develop new service lines and, most recently, we created a growth tech service line where we help pre-IPO technology companies.

Will you discuss McKinsey's commitment to developing a diverse and inclusive workforce?

In our New York office, we have a number of affinity groups that foster community across people of diverse backgrounds. They include members of LGBTQ communities, colleagues from different minority ethnic groups, parents of special needs children, veterans, colleagues with disabilities and more. The reason I mention all of these affinity groups is that we think about how our colleagues need different types of support and a sense of community to be at their best. It is something that we continue to prioritize and invest in.

We have one initiative that I'm personally proud of: our Dual Career Network, which I helped found to support colleagues and their partners in balancing two careers. It's an extension of the Women in the Workplace work that we've done over time, and we've already seen significant interest in the program.

Will you share more about the Dual Career Network?

I was inspired by my own experience and conversations with colleagues to expand the options available and the conversation around dual career couples to help these firm members find new ways to tackle the challenges of juggling work and home life with an equally busy partner.

The initiative originally launched in our Northeast offices and has been so well received that it's expanding throughout offices in North America and globally. It includes a handful of offerings designed to facilitate connections and make life easier for colleagues in dual career households. Each location can customize the offerings based on needs, but they may include concierge services for small, local tasks; EA support to help coordinate couple's schedules and travel; and community-building opportunities for couples, including professional development courses for significant others and networking groups to share advice.

McKinsey places a major focus on innovation. Where is innovation taking place at the firm?

We have hired thousands of engineers, data scientists and other colleagues who support our client work across all aspects of new technologies and expertise.

For example, we have become one of the largest design firms globally through a mix of acquisitions and the recruitment of leading design talent with a diverse range of skills. That is a huge leap from being the insight strategy partners of the past to helping our clients innovate on the front lines with new technologies and new ways of reaching customers through digital and design capabilities.

We are taking those steps to stay at the cutting edge of what's happening in corporate America and here in New York City.

How critical is pro bono work and corporate responsibility to the culture of McKinsey?

The firm is committed to helping drive impact on social issues that are important to the neighborhoods where we live and work. We continue to support the community and non-profit organizations through our pro bono consulting efforts, opportunities for our colleagues to serve on non-profit boards, and knowledge sharing to help address society's most urgent challenges. For example, we recently hosted a roundtable for leaders of non-profits in the New York area to share our research surrounding the future of work and discuss how disruption from technology will impact the populations they serve. ●