

Deloitte.



A farewell letter to Deloitte – Interview with Sophie Mitchell

May 2020

Alumni



In a few words describe...

...yourself...

Not surprisingly, it will be “Réviseur d’entreprise”.

...your career at Deloitte...

Challenging, rewarding and people-centric.

...your leadership style...

Consultatory but also instructive. The goal is to strike the right balance between the two.

...the Grand-Duchy...

International, agile and smart.

A typical day...

...starts with...

my family and a healthy breakfast, which ensures a good start to the day. Once I’m in the office, my first move is to check my agenda and confirm the day’s schedule.

...and ends when...

I always plan to end my day 30 minutes before I actually leave the office. This gives me a stress-free moment to reflect on the day, take the time to chat with my colleagues, and make sure what needed doing was, in fact, actually done.

...includes a passion or hobby which helps you relax after a hard day’s work...

I am a true nature lover. Whatever the season, I always make time to go for a walk or do some gardening. It is an incredible way to disconnect from work, empty your mind for a moment and gather energy for what’s next.



Deloitte and me...

Why Deloitte?

I will be open about the fact that in 1991, when I started my career as an intern at Deloitte, it was purely coincidental. It could have been Deloitte or anywhere else. When I left the firm in 1996 and returned one year later, I knew that I wanted to be nowhere else but Deloitte. My return to the firm was driven by its respect for the utmost professionalism of its people, its strong team spirit, and its unique ability to offer a structured working environment where there is space for an entrepreneurial spirit.

What makes the firm unique in your opinion?

Globally, over the last 30 years, Deloitte has successfully safeguarded its multidisciplinary model. It is the most distinctive feature of our firm, alongside the entrepreneurial spirit I just mentioned. The rich variety of skills and expertise that coexist and work together on a daily basis in the firm always amazes me.

Your vision on the evolution of the firm since you joined:

In 1991, when I first joined Deloitte, people were talking about the Big Eight or the Fat Six, and Deloitte was the little one. Today, there are only four of us left and we now rank first globally. Our growth has been exponential and constant, allowing us to move from challenger to leader. This is not a matter of luck. Our constant search for quality and excellence, always going that extra mile for our clients, is a clear differentiator. At the local level, I think our humbleness, the strength and diversity of our talent, and the respect and leverage of our differences have been key to our collective success.

Looking back

A challenging situation that you successfully overcame?

When I became Partner in 2003. One of our major clients experienced a crisis; my predecessor had just left and I had to find solutions within a very short time frame. With many hours of hard work, but also common sense, I made my client's problem mine and helped them overcome it. I learned a lot from this experience.



Your most notable achievement?

Without any doubt, our move to D.Square, our new headquarter office! It was a six-year project and we successfully and seamlessly transitioned from Findel to the Cloche d’Or in less than a week. It was hugely satisfying and I had the chance to work with great teams from various departments to make this happen.

Another notable achievement was taking over the leadership of the Audit department in 2010. At that time, our Consulting branch was rapidly expanding and Audit was challenged in terms of profitability. As a team, we managed to demonstrate through hard work that Audit had a future, had value, and could still be profitable.

Finally, I personally feel proudest of having accompanied some colleagues through their career to new leadership positions. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside them and help them grow into the inspiring leaders they have become.

A memory from the day you became Partner?

My predecessor advised me to save, in a separate file, all the emails of congratulations I received. He told me that on difficult days, it would help me to look over them again. I also felt a great sense of pride from my predecessor when I was appointed. It was such an encouraging feeling when you know that others want you to succeed and grow within the firm.



Looking at tomorrow

Where will we see you next?

In France; Brittany, or more precisely in the Golfe du Morbihan. I have really fallen in love with the place, as it has everything I am looking for: the seaside and old houses with tons of charm. I am also about to embrace a new career: renovating the traditional houses of the region and transforming them into guesthouses. This will be quite a radical change from my corporate life!

The most important piece of advice for young professionals?

To find pleasure in what you do, you must be vigilant in preserving the right balance between your personal and professional life. This will allow you to stay the course. This is a decision that everyone has to make for themselves—it cannot be made for you.

Your advice for tomorrow’s female leaders?

Always believe in yourself and in what you can achieve. There are no limits and I don’t agree with the idea that you have to restrict yourself. You can live fully both personally and professionally. It is a matter of choice and how you act upon these choices.

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As you are about to become a Deloitte Alumni; a word for our community?

I am actually already in contact with many alumni; I am very impatient to meet them and not virtually if that is possible! I think our Colleagues for Life are an essential component of who we are at Deloitte. Once you have been part of the Deloitte family, it is something that stays with you.



To end

Your favorite quote

“The unripe grape, the ripe bunch, the dried grape, are all changes, not into nothing, but into something which exists not yet.” – Epictetus

A word to conclude this interview?

I would like to stress the gratitude I feel for the firm and its people for allowing me to become who I am today ... for everything that they have brought me over the years, the joy, the laughs, the team spirit, the collaboration and the trust.



Sophie Mitchell in seven key dates:

1991: Post-graduate internship at Deloitte in Paris

1997: Leads portfolio of client engagements

2003: Appointed Partner

2009: Enters the firm’s Executive Committee

2010: Takes the leadership of the Audit department

2016: Nominated to pilot the move to D.Square

2018: Appointed as first Chief Operations Officer of the firm



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