

# PRO FILE

PROFILE MAGAZINE Q1/16



**Annemieke  
van der Werff**

---

CHRO

---

MUFG Americas

---

New York, NY

# Investing in Inclusion

Annemieke van der Werff backs up diversity talk with groundbreaking action at MUFG in the Americas, where strength means more than numbers

Words by AMANDA GARCIA ■ Photo by CALEB FOX

**T**he Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) is one of the largest financial groups in the world, specializing in virtually every area of banking. Its operations in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and Mexico contribute significantly to its prospects for long-term growth and profitability, and since July 2014, those operations have been integrated to form one united MUFG in the Americas.

Annemieke van der Werff was hired by Union Bank in 2012, bringing valuable insight and knowledge through her international experience as both a banker and human resources professional. It was that experience, coupled with her education, drive, and innovative ideas that also made her an ideal candidate for chief human resources officer for the Americas when MUFG merged Union Bank, its primarily West Coast-based subsidiary, with its Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Americas division that had offices on the East Coast and in Canada, Latin America, and Mexico.

Today, in her new role as CHRO for the Americas, van der Werff prioritizes diversity on several levels: from cultural backgrounds, dispersed geographies, and various legacy ways of operating, to more traditional forms of diversity, such as race, gender, and age. "Inclusion is an investment in our company's long-term success," she says. "It allows us to be more responsive to our customers and to the communities we serve." She believes that her most important work is developing a culture of inclusion across the new bank and throughout the global organization.

Inclusion is an action—recognizing the value in a diverse workforce, empowering the growth of every colleague, and leveraging unique voices and perspectives to grow the business. By focusing on inclusion, MUFG in the Americas opened its doors to a

truly diverse environment. People of color constitute more than half of the workforce, and more than 50 percent of employees are women. Millennials encompass 30 percent of the workforce.

The bank's diversity is a testament to the values that MUFG lives by every day—values that guide how van der Werff influences the company's culture. "Values aren't something to communicate once—they need to be demonstrated in action," she says. "It comes back to who we are as a company and as an employer." MUFG recently launched an employer brand in the Americas, the "Momentum of You," which emphasizes that investing in employees at every level contributes to the success of the company overall. "It's about how each individual contributes to the future of the bank," she says. "Working as a team, we are greater than the sum of just one—together we create the 'Momentum of We.'"

As an organization aiming to be "the world's most trusted financial group," MUFG has fostered an environment of collaboration, high performance, and continuous improvement. It seeks to develop leaders at the deepest levels of the organization, identifying talent beyond top-level management. All of this is incorporated into MUFG's culture to create a pipeline for future leadership, propel the company forward to achieve its goals, and create a financially stronger organization.

On the surface, it may seem that all banks are similar, offering the same services and focusing on numbers. But for van der Werff, banking is a people business, and inclusion is the key to achieving shared objectives—particularly for a company that has changed its size and shape through intentional integration and is now working together as one, united MUFG. ■

## HOW TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Chief human resources officer Annemieke van der Werff knows her team plays an integral part in developing a company's value system. Here, she shares the key tenets of her inclusion philosophy at MUFG:

- **Prioritize stewardship of the future.** The things you do today are creating your future. If you're trying to make a place that's better tomorrow, a risk management mind-set needs to be in every part of what you do.
- **Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement.** Build a team that is strongly connected to its business partners across all lines of business—a team that supports all internal customers. Make sure all people have the resources to grow and flourish in their careers.
- **Always focus on the customer.** Create solutions that are geared toward delivering to an internal customer first, so they can best support the external customer who creates revenue.
- **Create a pipeline of leadership.** Develop programs to continue the development of people in the organization and manage expectations around performance, and then support that dialogue.
- **Collaboration is number one.** Create an environment where people are expected to continuously improve, which is only possible if they're open to receiving feedback. Collaboration is the key to inclusion.