

True Drew

RBC Centura is the personal and commercial banking operation in the U.S. for RBC Financial Group, the seventh largest financial institution in North America. Ms. Drew Putt, newly promoted CEO and Managing Director of RBC Builder Finance, opened up in a recent interview on work, family and the value of doing more than what's expected.

On the economy:

Over the next few years, we will keep an eye on several factors driving the economy in the South. Job growth has been spotty everywhere except Florida. Manufacturing continues to shift away from textiles and furniture and toward more automotive, food and chemicals. We're watching the real estate sector, but with interest rates rising, we don't foresee any significant dangers. Oil and gas prices hover near record highs, but strong corporate profits and higher incomes have mitigated the effects of higher prices. This will certainly change. And finally, we're watching consumer confidence and spending, since it accounts for 2/3 of the economy. Today, confidence is healthy but volatile.

On banking:

The banking industry has changed considerably in the past 25 years. In 1980 there were 13,000 commercial banks. Today there are 7,600. We average about 400 mergers and acquisitions a year. Companies are leaner, more efficient, which forces you to think about how you deploy your resources. But banking is still a very personal business. People want to bank with someone they know and trust.

On service:

Service is the cornerstone of what we do. We have to earn the right to be the customer's first choice. We have to deliver a better experience than our customer can find with another bank. It's simple to say, but it takes hard work to make it happen.

On hiring people:

The most important thing we do is hire good people. When I hire someone, I look for energy—lots of enthusiasm. I look for someone who consistently exceeds goals in everything they do. And because we operate with a lot of autonomy, I look for someone with an entrepreneurial spirit; someone who wants to be part of building something.

On Atlanta and international trade:

Atlanta is a growing presence on the international stage. RBC is working to help raise Atlanta's profile; that's why I serve on many Boards including the Board of Councilors for The Carter Center, an organization working to help build relationships between governments and business leaders throughout the world.

Best advice you've ever received:

There is no substitute for hard work. If you want to get ahead, you have to consistently deliver more than is expected. And make your boss look good. I see too many young people who are worried about where they will go next. I say worry about today, not next year.

On balance:

Being both a CEO and a woman with three small children, I'm asked quite often how I balance everything in my life. But I don't look at my life in terms of balance. To me, it's all part of one whole—it's all intertwined so that nothing can be separated from the rest. I've had to learn to live with some things that I can't control, but it's all a joy.

On Burr & Forman:

When I think of Burr & Forman, legal advice and reputation are merely starting points. I expect flawless execution, dependability and a proactive nature. I want my firm to understand our business and bring us ideas rather than take orders. I get all of that with Burr & Forman. And more.

At Burr & Forman, we know that client relationships are the foundation of our firm; our lawyers are proud to represent RBC Centura. We are also delighted by Drew's recent promotion, though we are sad to see her leaving Atlanta. Congratulations, Drew!

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