

Video Transcript: First Business Chicago Interview with Molly Anderson, Co-author of *The Corporate Lattice: Achieving High Performance in the Changing World of Work*

Interviewer: Paul Eggers

Paul Eggers: The corporate ladder is a classic image used when describing the structure of the white collar world. Molly Anderson believes that image is now outdated. She shared her insights in a discussion of her new book, *The Corporate Lattice: Achieving High Performance in the Changing World of Work*.

Well let's get started with the title and the image of a lattice. Describe that image and how it's more appropriate to describe today's corporate structure.

Molly Anderson: We think the corporate lattice is a better metaphor for today's world of work. The corporate ladder was a top-down hierarchical model built for an industrial age. But the world of work has changed. At Deloitte, we believe it's changed fundamentally and irreversibly. We now live and work in an information age. The corporate lattice is more like a high-speed network where every point could connect to every other point. For example, in a corporate lattice, anyone in the company can have a good idea, not just those in the top organizational boxes. Now, why should companies care? Companies should care because in today's economy, we're all under a lot of pressure to perform better. It is very difficult to perform better using a model built for yesterday's world of work. We need the corporate lattice built for today's world of work.

PE: Well you've identified why they should care about this new model, but what changes do they need to make to more fit this new ideal?

MA: There's three areas that we think companies can organize a response. We call them lattice ways. The first lattice way is to build careers. Move careers from top-down to ones that can zig and zag. That makes employees more adaptable and versatile in the face of change. Second, expand the ways of working. Give more options for when, where and even how work gets done. That actually generates cost savings and improves productivity. And third, pay attention to the area of participation. Using social media and other technologies, we can move from top-down to all in and tap the full genius of our very diverse workforce today. And that can drive innovation and growth.

PE: Working at home is one of the work-life balances that you address in the book, where now less than one in five families have a typical traditional role where there's one stay-at-home parent and another out there in the working

world. How does that change to a work-life balance affect corporate change going forward?

MA: So an employer who wants to attract the best talent, retain the best talent, get that talent to deliver the best performance, flexibility is becoming a central strategic issue. And that's what the corporate lattice lets you look at, is how can you offer that flexibility and still drive the business results you're after.

PE: Well you've covered the corporate lattice structure from a business's approach. Now I'm curious to know how what job seekers in this era of unemployment - around 10%, how can job seekers use these ideas to maybe better advertise themselves and get the jobs that they're looking for?

MA: You know, I think today – and I think nothing brings it home more than the economic situation we're in. We all have to be CEO of our own career. There are more options and choices and opportunities out there, but you have to be a lot more intentional about your choices. I think one of the most important things for people to pay attention to in this economy or any other, is to stay market relevant. Skills are changing faster than they ever used to. The Department of Education estimates that 60% of new jobs take skills that only 20% of the workforce has today. If --when we spoke to General Mills, they shared with us that 10 years ago, they didn't have a career built around digital marketing, and yet they do today. So, keeping your eye on the market and how skills are changing is a really critical part of being CEO of your own career.

PE: How about advertising, selling those abilities in job interviews and your resume and things like that?

MA: Yeah and you really have to consciously build your personal brand today. It's not a spectator's sport. You have to get known for what you're good at. It can't be a well-kept secret. And not only are you doing that in job interviews, but you've really got to think through your online presence these days, because guess what? Employers are going out to Facebook and they're going out to LinkedIn and they're looking at what your presence is. And so you have to be, again, much more intentional about how you're getting yourself out there 'cause those mediums can really work for you. But we've all heard the horror stories of also how they can work against you.

PE: Alright, well The Corporate Lattice can work for you. Molly Anderson, the co-author, thank you very much for joining us.

MA: It's a pleasure.