



**Carol Widger**  
Partner

**Dechert**  
LLP

**Education:** Bachelor of Civil Law & Post-graduate Diploma, financial services, University College Dublin

**Company Name:** Dechert LLP

**Industry:** Law

**Company CEO:** Henry N. Nassau

**Company Headquarters Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Number of Employees:** Over 2,000

**Your Location (if different from above):** Dublin, Ireland

**Words you live by:** Make sure you see the wood for the trees, don't lose sight of the bigger picture.

**Personal Philosophy:** Be true to yourself and be kind to others.

**What book are you reading:** My choice of reading tends to be easy escapism; the last book I read was *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens.

**What was your first job:** First ever job was babysitting; first "official" job was in a bookstore

**Favorite charity:** Peter McVerry Trust

**Interests:** Pilates, gym, and spending quality time with my kids (if my teenage daughter can fit me into her schedule!)

**Family:** Married to Malcolm; one daughter (Lea) and son (Robert)



## The Best Advice I Ever Received

I have received lots of helpful advice over my 20-year career, but here are two pieces that stand out for me:

### **Everyone needs to have a mentor and a sponsor.**

People often ask me what the difference is between a mentor and sponsor, and I would say a mentor is someone who speaks to you and a sponsor is someone who speaks for you. I believe that, in anyone's career journey, it is important to build a support network. Your mentor could be someone who works with you (and indeed could also be your sponsor), but you can find a mentor outside your organization (which can often bring an element of objectivity).

Having a sponsor within your workplace is essential in my view to succeeding. You could be doing a stellar job, but if no one is speaking

up for you, promoting you, and helping you push yourself forward, then you can find yourself being left behind. Throughout my career I have had very supportive sponsors who perhaps believed in me more than I believed in myself. I am now very conscious of my responsibility to be an effective sponsor for the associates who work with me—the obligation I have to help them flourish in their careers and make them feel supported.

### **Push yourself out of your comfort zone.**

Throughout our careers, opportunities present themselves that we know are going to be a big challenge and the fear of not nailing it makes us hesitate. However, we stagnate if we don't move forward. So if we don't put our hand up for things that make us feel a little insecure

about our ability to do a good job, we will never know what our true potential is.

While there have been multiple instances where I have challenged myself, for me, the ultimate leap out of my comfort zone was to take on the role of managing partner in Dechert's Dublin office. I had never been head of a practice group before or run an office and Dechert was a new firm to me. Of course I checked in with my mentors and my wider support network, which really helped me look at things objectively, but more importantly I thought about what would happen if I didn't take the role—nothing! At that point I realized that I did want to make a change, to push myself to the next level and hopefully beyond that. Eighteen months later, I have no regrets. My new role has been the challenge I expected, but the firm has also lived up to expectations.