

Interview with Courtney Jeans, Head of Regions Business Capital

BY MICHELE OCEJO

Courtney Jeans is executive managing director and head of Regions Business Capital. Jeans joined Regions Business Capital in January 2022. With nearly 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, his career has focused on lending activities within the middle-market and large corporate sectors in both banking and specialty finance, where he has held positions in business development, portfolio management and risk management.

Jeans earned a BS and MBA from the University of Texas at Austin with a concentration in finance and marketing. Here, he discusses his first two years as head of Regions Business Capital, his goals for 2024 and his leadership style.

Please tell us a bit about your career trajectory.

I started my career in banking in 1994 as an officer development program trainee with Texas Commerce Bank in Dallas. Texas Commerce became JPMorgan Chase after several mergers over the next decade. My initial assignment was to lead the officer development program in my region, and shortly thereafter, I became a commercial banker focused on providing a complete suite of banking products to clients and prospects with revenues up to \$500 million.

I began working in the asset-based lending industry in 2000, when I started as an underwriter and portfolio manager for middle market, large corporate and investment banking clients across the South, Southeast and West. During these roles, I focused on a concentration in retail and oil field services clients, where we financed working capital, acquisitions, organic growth, management buyouts and private equity transactions. We also completed pre-and-post-bankruptcy workouts, restructurings, and corporate liquidations.

In 2010, I transitioned into originations, where I provided sales coverage for 13 markets across the Southwest and Southeast over a period of eight years. In 2018, I was appointed as head of ABL in the Southwest region, which is the role that preceded my current position as head of Regions Business Capital.

You took the lead at Regions Business Capital last year. What have the last two years been like for you? Any surprises?

The last two years have been some of the most rewarding and exciting times in my career! We have so much opportunity in front of us, so we are focusing our efforts on the initiatives that will best help us build a stronger foundation for additional growth. This can be difficult when you are operating in an economic environment characterized by inflation, rising interest rates, and post-COVID recoveries. But, our experience positions us to serve clients through economic cycles. And an uncertain operating environment typically helps ABL lenders because our structures are more patient in comparison to traditional financing alternatives. In this ABL environment, it can be tempting to pursue short-term wins, but we are prudent risk managers, and we keep our eyes not just on short-term opportunities but, importantly, on what's best for the client over the long term. That's where real value is created. At Regions, we are part of a very supportive company that sees the value of our franchise, is willing to invest in our future and provides the stability for long-term success. That environment is important for continued career growth and development.

What are your goals for Regions Business Capital in 2024?

In 2024, we want to capitalize on positive momentum and acceptance of our strategic vision within Regions and drive market share growth through a coordinated approach with our business partners. Regions is relationship oriented, and it's a key differentiator in how we go to market. We also want to continue to solidify our team, invest in the development of our associates, opportunistically add talent in growth markets and take advantage of best practices to further support our clients. We will also pursue technological advances designed to help us become more efficient

and deliver stronger value to our clients. Over the past 18 months, we have introduced a detailed sales strategy that will help us accomplish our growth objectives. In 2024, we will continue to focus on executing that plan!



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Regions Business Capital

One of your first decisions was to realign the team from a geography-based model to a functional model. Why and what have the results been?

The primary objective of moving to a functional model was to centralize our leadership team and promote consistent delivery of our products and services across the entire Regions footprint. This new structure allows us to leverage best practices, foster deeper relationships with our internal and external partners, promote efficient and more effective operating procedures, streamline communications, invest in the development of our associates and pursue thoughtful succession planning.

This issue of TSL will take a deep dive into specific industries. Are there certain industries that Regions Business Capital focuses on and why?

Our strategic plan supports the pursuit of relationships in a wide variety of industries, and asset-based loans can be useful in a broad array of situations. Fortunately, our footprint includes high-growth markets across the Southeast, Texas and the Midwest that have many commodity-based businesses in industries like metals, chemicals, oil and gas, textiles, building products and food and beverage. We also support clients in the consumer goods, distribution, manufacturing, retail, equipment leasing, transportation, automotive and service sectors. Clients in these industries are often focused on growth or expansion in markets that are important to Regions' overall strategy of supporting key contributors to community prosperity and well-being.

Could you share a pivotal experience or challenge you've faced in your career that significantly influenced your leadership style and decision-making process?

My leadership style and decision-making process originate from mentors and leaders who have influenced my life and career since my days in college. I consider myself a servant leader, leading by example. This means soliciting feedback to encourage "buy in", creating an environment where associates feel valued and can provide input on important strategic matters, driving results, and supporting personal and professional development. I feel strongly that Regions' culture helps facilitate this approach in that we believe in doing what's right, putting people first and making a difference in our communities and the lives of our associates. It's an exciting time to be at Regions and I am happy to have a leadership role in helping us shape the future of our organization! 🏡

Michele Ocejo is editor-in-chief of The Secured Lender and director of communications for SFNet.