

Banking & Financial Services

# Miriam Dushane joins Pioneer to launch new consulting business

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Miriam Dushane has joined Pioneer to lead the bank’s new HR consulting division.  
DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS | ALBANY BUSINESS REVIEW



By [Luke Nathan](#) – Reporter, Albany Business Review  
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Story Highlights

- Pioneer hires Miriam Dushane to lead new HR consulting division.
- New division targets small and mid-sized companies with HR services.
- Pioneer aims to diversify revenue sources beyond traditional banking.

Pioneer has hired a well-known human resources professional to lead a new consulting division for the Colonie-based financial institution.

Miriam Dushane, previously managing partner of recruiting firm Alaant Workforce Solutions, joined Pioneer (Nasdaq: PBFS) in June as vice president of HR consulting.

"The key to launching the HR consulting business was finding the right person to lead it," said Susan Hollister, Pioneer's chief human resources officer. "Miriam is uniquely qualified."

Targeting small and mid-sized companies, the new division will offer an array of HR services, ranging from one-off assignments like creating employee handbooks to on-site HR management and leave-program administration.

It's another example of how Pioneer, like other banks, is keen to develop revenue sources beyond bread-and-butter interest income from loans and securities. Over the past decade Pioneer has acquired [insurance](#), [employee benefits](#) and [wealth-management](#) businesses, bolstering its fee-based income, which last quarter [made up about 15% of the bank's revenue](#).

The amount of revenue generated by the new HR consulting unit will hinge on how quickly the business scales, said Kelli Arnold, chief strategy and innovations officer at Pioneer.

"The opportunities are huge," she said. "Right now, we don't have a specific number in mind."



Pioneer's Kelli Arnold, chief strategy and innovations officer, left, Miriam Dushane, vice president of HR consulting, and Susan Hollister, chief human resources officer.  
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Dushane has nearly 30 years of experience in HR, most of which was spent with Alaant, previously known as Linium Recruiting. Over her career she's helped place thousands of permanent and temporary staff with employers in the Capital Region.

Though her past work with clients focused on recruiting and staffing – services Pioneer's new division won't offer – Dushane's conversations with business owners often encompassed a variety of HR-related matters, she said.

"This is a natural transition for me," she said.

The move also hearkens back to the start of Dushane's career. As she told the Business Review in a 2019 interview, [she credits Hollister for launching her career in HR](#). The two worked together at Hudson River Bank and Trust, which was later acquired by First Niagara Bank (KeyCorp [then acquired First Niagara](#)).

"When I had the opportunity to potentially work with [Hollister] again at this point my career, it was very hard to say no to that," Dushane said.