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# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

DEI efforts must be genuine, thorough and ongoing

*In IBJ's Thought Leadership roundtable, leaders at Duke Realty, Pacers Sports & Entertainment and Old National Bank discuss what their organizations have done to become more inclusive and what it takes to build a DEI program that works.*

**Q: How does your company define Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and what initiatives have you created to support DEI?**

**JENNY BEAN:** Duke Realty's DEI program, which started over 20 years ago, involves several initiatives, starting with our DEI Council, whose mission is to educate, increase awareness and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the company and the communities we serve. The

Executive Mentoring program strives to increase and enhance female and minority representation at top- and mid-level positions. We have a Women's Network that supports the investment in, development of, and growth of women at Duke Realty. And our supplier diversity program is focused on increasing utilization of minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses. Each of our markets are tasked with researching, interviewing, and hiring diverse businesses.



**JENNY BEAN**  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
Duke Realty  
jenny.bean@dukerealty.com



**RICK FUSON**  
President & Chief Operating Officer  
Pacers Sports & Entertainment  
ctipton@pacers.com



**RAFAEL SANCHEZ**  
President of Private Banking & Community Executive  
Old National Bank  
Rafael.Sanchez@oldnational.com

Externally, we partner with several organizations to introduce students and professionals to the real estate industry. Project REAP is a 10-week program that bridges the gap between talented minority professionals and commercial real estate companies looking for talent. Duke Realty also partners with Indiana University's Real Estate program to hire new graduates or interns. Another program we are passionate about is our partnership with DirectEmployers Institute, which allows us to showcase our construction division and educate diverse students on careers in construction.

**RICK FUSON:** Having people of different backgrounds, different lived experiences, and different perspectives is extremely important to us. We believe it not only makes us a stronger company but a better and more effective community partner.

While racial diversity is critical, it's not our sole focus. It is important to us that we are supporting all PS&E staff, including the talented women who are running some of our company's most critical initiatives.

*"The ... commitment to DEI has to be embedded in the organization's DNA."*

RAFAEL SANCHEZ

Last year, we created an internal committee of people from all levels of our organization to identify how we can become a stronger, more diverse, and more inclusive company. One of the four priority areas for this group has been to change the way we grow, with a particular emphasis on continually revisiting our outreach and recruitment, hiring, and training practices from the DEI lens. Our new diversity training program, required for all PS&E employees, has already proven invaluable to our leadership in helping us assess and implement strategies for inclusion.

Our DEI strategy also involves an evolution of how we engage with vendors, approach procurement, and direct our annual philanthropic spend, more than half of which is spent to address issues of social injustice.

**Q: How can companies do a better job of recruiting, hiring, and promoting a diverse workforce?**

**RAFAEL SANCHEZ:** I think it starts with demonstrating a genuine commitment to diversity and becoming an "employer of choice" in the diverse communities that we serve. Companies need to recognize the value diversity brings and devote the appropriate resources and investments to support those communities and generate goodwill over time. It's not just about circulating a job posting and hoping a diverse candidate applies. Diverse

candidates need to be able to see and imagine themselves being successful in your organization. The old adage "diversity attracts diversity" is so true, which is why

companies that lack diversity struggle to make any progress. When they finally do land a diverse candidate, if they don't focus on the inclusion aspect, they will be back to where they started in no time. This is why many companies today are having the same conversation about diversity that they had 15 years ago.

**RICK FUSON:** It demands a very intentional approach, including revisiting everything from how job descriptions are written to the ways in which they are disseminated to potential applicants. We have to continually work to create talent pipelines that help us recruit from diverse talent pools, and we have had to keep the goal of diverse and inclusive hiring and promotion front and center to all we do.

It is far easier to simply do recruitment and hiring the way you always have, and for many companies that haven't changed, the result is a lack of diversity. Instead, companies

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Natalie Tyler-Martin — VP, Regional Asset Manager

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must work to develop partnerships at the community level and then leverage those relationships to attract talented applicants who might not have otherwise seen traditional job postings. Those talent pipelines are critical, as they not only make it easier to attract diverse talent at all levels of the company, but they make companies more appealing destinations for a more diverse pool of younger and executive-level leaders.

**JENNY BEAN:** Companies should recruit diverse candidates at all levels. Implementing programs that require a diverse candidate slate for all openings, along with diverse interview panels, will assist in hiring diverse associates. The diverse interview panel helps show diversity within your organization and allows internal associates from various disciplines and backgrounds to participate in the hiring process. To promote diverse talent, look for ways to cultivate rising stars within the organization through mentoring and sponsorship programs. Companies should strive to create a culture where diverse talent feels supported, acknowledged, and seen.

**Q: How would you advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion with colleagues who don't understand its importance?**

**RICK FUSON:** Fortunately, I think most people's view of this issue has evolved greatly over the years. But for us, it's very clear. For starters, it's the right thing to do. We see ourselves as representative of our city and our state, so it's important to us that we are reflective of the growing diversity here. Further, it's about strengthening our culture and demonstrating the value of having people inside our company with diverse viewpoints. At PS&E, so much of the work we do is cross-functional and involves so many team members. We believe that having people who have different perspectives and experiences only serves to strengthen our outcomes, and we have seen that play out repeatedly in our company as we have become more diverse over time.

**JENNY BEAN:** Ask them how they feel and what information they need to better understand the DEI strategy. The importance of having diversity of thought within our teams continues to create an equitable environment. Also, showcasing various events or activities to bring awareness to our associates has allowed us to continue to educate our team at Duke Realty.

**RAFAEL SANCHEZ:** When the humanistic argument for diversity—"it's the right thing to do"—proves to be ineffective, I shift to providing the business case. Specifically, I focus on how diversity fosters innovation, enhances customer experience, and improves the bottom line. The reality is that having people from different backgrounds and experiences in the room will generate new ideas and perspectives that would otherwise not be discussed or considered. It's

diversity of ideas that sparks innovation and creates solutions for problems or needs. That, in turn, makes us a better company—not only in the eyes of our employees but also our customers. By being more responsive to, and reflective of, the communities that we serve, we improve our financial performance and results. Everybody wins.

**Q: Talk about some of the company-wide conversations you had following George Floyd's murder. How did those conversations contribute to your goal of maintaining an open, communicative work environment?**

**JENNY BEAN:** When racial disparity in our nation was brought to light, we knew it had to be addressed. Our CEO, Jim Connor, issued a public statement on our website to make it very clear that intolerance, discrimination, and inequality have no place at Duke Realty. We also had two panel discussions to encourage conversations about racial inequality, social justice today, and what we can do within our company to affect change. The first discussion last summer included five of our Black associates sharing their experiences of growing up in communities across the country, along with reflections on what it means to be Black in America today. Our second discussion in the fall was moderated by our CEO and included leaders in the commercial real estate industry, including former and current Duke Realty board members. Panelists provided their perspectives on creating a more diverse workforce.

**RICK FUSON:** We had some very frank, very honest conversations following the murder of George Floyd. We heard from players, leadership, and employees from across the organization and even brought in some voices from the community. And while not always easy conversations, they were incredibly positive opportunities for our staff to share their experiences and learn from each other. We used much of the feedback we gathered to create our Inclusive Excellence Action Committee, an internal working group of employees from every level of the company that is working on strategies to improve how we learn, how we invest, how we grow, and how we lead. We have developed required training, created new supplier diversity policies, and changed the way we make decisions with our charitable resources. And so much of this was borne of those early conversations, which we have preserved through more than 33 company-wide town halls where we answer questions and talk through the key issues we know are top of mind for our employees.

**Q: What stories can you share about DEI—either how it has affected you personally or how you've witnessed it affecting someone else?**

**JENNY BEAN:** Last summer, Duke Realty hosted a panel with Black

associates internally. I was personally affected by a story one of our associates told about how her son continues to experience racial comments at baseball tournaments. As a mother, I was heartbroken, and it reminded me that we need to continue our work to end racial disparity.

**Q: If you could give one piece of advice to an up-and-coming professional from a diverse background, what would it be?**

**RAFAEL SANCHEZ:** Network. Network. Network. As members of a minority community, we often tend to naturally socialize and engage more with people who share our culture and beliefs. Ironically, this runs counter to the concept of diversity and is also self-limiting. Stepping outside of your comfort zone and expanding your network will open doors for you professionally as well as personally. I think civic engagement is a great way to not only give back to your community, but also make connections that will be mutually beneficial as you are starting your career. In my view, Indy's success is largely predicated on servant leadership, but you need to learn to become a servant leader.

*"A diverse interview panel helps show diversity within your organization."*

JENNY BEAN

**JENNY BEAN:** Build and establish key relationships to help you network, learn and better position yourself for success.

**Q: What is the biggest mistake you believe organizations make when focusing on DEI?**

**JENNY BEAN:** Companies have to understand that DEI is a long-term focus that will take time to cultivate within your organization. It is not a strategy that you can start and stop. Continued focus and attention on understanding the barriers and implementing strategies for growth and improvement are key. Also, don't be afraid to discontinue or refresh a

program or activity. DEI is not a check-the-box initiative.

**RAFAEL SANCHEZ:** The biggest mistake organizations can make when focusing on DEI

is, frankly, adopting that check-the-box attitude. This isn't merely about creating a new position and hiring a chief DEI officer or creating an internal diversity committee and "calling it a day." It takes much more than that. The effort has to be sincere and the commitment to DEI has to be embedded in the organization's DNA. Over the course of my career, I have seen companies create

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**At Pacers Sports & Entertainment,  
our commitment to Diversity,  
Equity, and Inclusion is a  
commitment to our culture,  
our company, and our community.**

**Thank you to all who are working  
to make Indianapolis and Indiana  
more equitable for more Hoosiers.**

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“diversity committees” consisting of all the diverse employees the company has. I have never really understood what that is supposed to accomplish. You cannot compartmentalize diversity that way and expect it to flourish. Managers and executives from all levels of the organization need to be engaged and actively participate and listen. Companies need to focus on a sustainable, long-term DEI strategy and commitment and avoid the pitfalls of what is commonly known as short-term “window dressing.”

**Q: How has the allocation of community-based resources shifted at your company over the last year? Is DEI now a bigger consideration?**

**RICK FUSON:** PS&E and the Simon family, broadly, have always been incredibly generous. We are proud of the investments we have made in our community and our state. But over the last year, we came to understand that for us to really make a lasting impact, we have to shift from just being generous to a strategy of intentional generosity in intentional geography. Following a recommendation that came from our Inclusive Excellence Action Committee, we determined that more than half of all our philanthropic resources should be invested to support organizations and individuals who are working on greater equity and social justice in our

community. We have pinpointed five of the zip codes we know need the most support, and we are lining up as much of our resources as possible behind efforts to focus there.

**JENNY BEAN:** Volunteering and community involvement have always been part of our culture at Duke Realty. We support our associates by offering two company-paid community service days each year that can be used to serve local non-profit organizations. We also partner with the American Red Cross and have been designated as an American Red Cross Disaster Responder member. DEI has been an important part of our company for 20 years and is an integral part of our corporate responsibility program.

**Q: What are some recent city-wide efforts you think have potential to make lasting progress on the DEI front?**

**JENNY BEAN:** The Indy Racial Equity Pledge is a great start. This pledge is a way to bring organizations and their resources together to commit to advancing racial equity in Indianapolis and surrounding cities.

**RICK FUSON:** You can't have a conversation about this without noting the Lilly Endowment's \$100 million grant to the national Urban League for place-based quality of life. That massive investment can truly be transformative.

Three specific efforts in which we participated—the Community Center Match Challenge with the Indianapolis Colts, the Indy Racial Equity Pledge and corresponding Business Equity for Indy initiative, and the Racial Equity Fund through the Central Indiana Community Foundation—are ones I believe also have enormous potential for change in central Indiana. Through the Community Center Match Challenge, PS&E and the Colts came together to fund much-needed capacity at 13 of the city's most prominent community centers, which so often serve on the front lines helping our most vulnerable families navigate basic needs. The Pledge, of course, is significant because of the sheer number and prestige of the organizations who have opted to join, as well as because of the incredible commitments they have already identified to support the cause. What seems to be different is the notion that we as participating organizations can now hold each other accountable for following through with our pledges, and the BEI group is bringing all these private-sector partners together for policy development and advocacy, research, and more. Finally, the Racial Equity Fund is helping organizations

build capacity with boots on the ground. Many of these organizations are stretched so thin that their ability to serve families has been strained.

**RAFAEL SANCHEZ:** I think there are several good things happening in our community on the DEI front from multiple sectors: corporate, community-based organizations; non-profits; and individuals. Many partnerships have been formed or are forming across these organizations and individuals to advance the cause and address latent and/or overt systemic issues. There is definitely momentum.

Many organizations and corporations have publicly committed to doing certain things to advance DEI. I think this is the biggest game changer because it creates accountability. The challenge will be to coordinate all these efforts in a way that avoids overlap or duplication and creates more efficiencies. Resources are not infinite, so we need to make sure we all work together to create long-lasting, positive change.●

*“We see ourselves as representative of our city and our state, so it's important that we are reflective of the growing diversity here.”*

RICK FUSON



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OLD NATIONAL BANK

At Old National, Diversity and Inclusion are values we actively live out every day. By listening. By empowering. By amplifying voices in our company and our communities. We know that Indianapolis is stronger when we unite our differences, and when we all work a little harder to understand each other. That's why, for us, doing the right thing will always go beyond banking.

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Duke REALTY

As Duke Realty's Chief Human Resources Officer, **Jenny Bean** is responsible for developing, communicating, and implementing the company's strategic human resources plan. This includes attracting and retaining qualified candidates, structuring competitive benefit and compensation packages, developing a performance management system, training and development, managing employee relations, overseeing succession management, and diversity, equity, inclusion and wellness initiatives.



PACERS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Pacers Sports & Entertainment President and Chief Operating Officer **Rick Fuson** helped steer the Pacers' move to Bankers Life Fieldhouse in September 1999, was promoted to Executive Senior Vice President of PS&E in 2001, named Chief Operating Officer in 2008, and became President/COO in 2014. Fuson was co-chair of the 2012 Super Bowl Village Committee and has been active in pursuing major events for Bankers Life Fieldhouse and the City of Indianapolis.



OLD NATIONAL BANK

**Rafael Sanchez** is President of Private Banking and Community Executive for Old National Bank. Prior to joining Old National, he was President and CEO of Indianapolis Power & Light Co. A passionate community leader and volunteer, Sanchez serves as Co-Chair for the Indianapolis 2024 NBA All-Star Game, Chairman of the United Way of Central Indiana Board, and Secretary for the Indy Championship Fund. Sanchez is also involved and dedicated to many other outstanding community organizations within Indianapolis.

Content paid for by Duke Realty, Old National Bank, and Pacers Sports & Entertainment.