

Banking on diversity and inclusion








James Fleisher
Senior Vice President
Head of HR Operations,
Data and Systems



Barb Trautman
Senior Vice President
Head of Compensation
and Benefits

Quick facts

-  **Company:** Bank of the West
-  **Industry:** Financial
-  **Headquarters:** San Francisco, California
-  **Employees:** 10,000
-  **Award:** ADP Meeting of the Minds 2021 Client Award for Humanity at Work


Diversity and inclusion start at the top

James: We represent a diverse customer set across 19 states, and we want to ensure our employee base represents our customer base. Across the organization, there's a strong commitment for diversity and equity. We demonstrate our commitment from the top down. Over 30 percent of our executive management committee are women and over a third are people of color. Our CEO is a woman of color. Among our executive management committee, they speak over 10 languages.

Our diversity focus is an ongoing evolution. It starts with our recruiting practices, providing our hiring managers with a diverse candidate slate to choose from to fill all roles, not just key roles. Our executive management team has a scorecard which shows the diversity of their organization, so they can track progress. Next, it's using our resource groups to support our diverse population, both on the job and within their communities. And then providing development through our learning programs.

Bank of the West is a large regional bank focused on retail and commercial banking efforts. Bank of the West employs nearly 10,000 people across 25 states. It has branches in 19 states, and regional offices in other states to support the commercial banking industry. Their culture promotes environmental sustainability, and diversity, equity and inclusion as a vital part of their success. Read on for the importance of the company's diversity and inclusion program and how it's evolved through the years.

Learn more about
Bank of the West at
bankofthewest.com



“Having diversity at the top of the house is what drives the ability to have diversity and inclusion through the rest of the employee base. As an older female, the biggest thing for me is to continue to educate people to not have fear just because somebody looks different from you, or acts different than you do.”

Barb Trautman
Senior Vice President
Head of Compensation and Benefits

Barb: When you look at an organization that is strictly male or doesn't include people of color on those management committees, it makes you wonder what the commitment is to the employee base. Traditionally, banking has been male dominated. When you start to see financial institutions where women and people of color are moving up and they're sitting at the management level, that's very important to me.

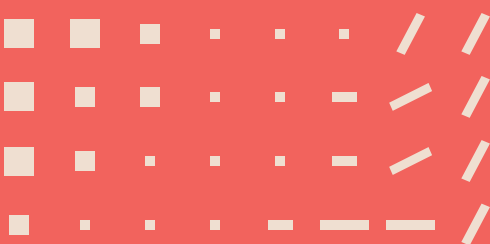
Having diversity at the top of the house is what drives the ability to have diversity and inclusion through the rest of the employee base. I'm grateful to be part of this decade where women are recognized as senior leaders of an organization to drive change and culture. We continue to show the world we can sustain a profitable organization and include all people of different genders, ethnic backgrounds, origins, people of color and the LGBTQ community.

On business resource groups

James: Our women's diversity group is our oldest diversity group. We've also launched our African American resource group, Pride resource group, and Latinex, Veterans, and Asian Pacific resource groups. We've now grown to eight resource groups that represent everything from veterans' interests, young professionals to ability challenges.

I am executive sponsor for our African American resource group. And we have a male national chair for our women's resource group. Having a white, gay man sponsor an African American resource group or a man lead a woman's group demonstrates the ability for all of our team members to look beyond a definition, and look at who the person is, and what they can bring to the organization they support.

Looking at the memberships across our groups, the women's group has many male members; the African American group has members of all races. Our Pride resource group has representation from the LGBTQ community and our straight allies. It gives us the ability as an organization to bring our team members together in a different way.



How diversity can change careers

James: As a gay man, early on in my career I was keenly aware that was not something I brought to work on a regular basis. The way diversity has grown in business has enabled team members to bring their authentic selves to work, knowing they are supported, protected, encouraged and developed. Seeing diversity grow over a decade, it's definitely had a positive effect on my life personally, and positively impacted all of our team members.

I have used the Human Rights Campaign index when I've looked for jobs in the past, because I want to know that the company is aligned to my priorities. Knowing how important their rating is to me personally, I know it's important to others in the community too.

Barb: I moved from the east coast to the west coast for this job. I was influenced by the management team of the bank, women at the top. Our President and CEO has a lot of great ideas about what she wants to do and how she wants to move this bank forward. In the past when I've taken jobs, one of the first things I've done is picked up the annual report, flipped to the back and looked at all the pictures of the people on the management team and the board to see what the makeup of that company actually looked like. It's very important to have that diversity within the management team of an organization. When I looked at the makeup of the management team here, I was very impressed with what that looked like.

As an older female, the biggest thing for me is to continue to educate people to not have fear just because somebody looks different from you, or acts different than you do. We have an obligation to educate individuals to eliminate that fear, and it would make me very happy to see that gone in my lifetime. I get more passionate about it because the only way to eliminate fear is through diversity and inclusion.

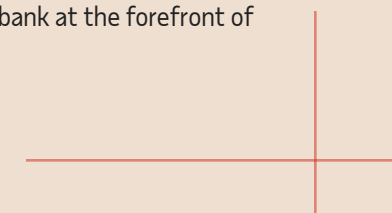
How to lead inclusively through current events

James: Our CEO has taken strong positions on topics around race, LGBTQ issues. With the violence against Asian Pacific Americans, we signed on to a community letter condemning the violence. We were one of the financial institutions that signed on and supported the Equality Act passed by the House.

We had listening sessions after the George Floyd murder, which happened around the Juneteenth celebration. And we also spent the entire week providing educational opportunities for all our team members to join a conference call to learn more about the significance of Juneteenth. It was amazing to hear the feedback from our team members about how relevant this was for them at that particular time. Because June 19th happened to fall on a Friday, we closed our branches early to allow team members to participate in celebrations.

We take a very rounded approach from supporting our team members, our communities, the issues of the day, and even the legal challenges that might come from that.

Barb: It's important because the management team demonstrates their commitment to diverse groups of people. To move them forward, to develop them and to include them in how they manage their organization, whether it's banking or whether it's a different industry. Watching this management team evolve and grow has been exciting. We keep moving forward to keep the bank at the forefront of diversity and inclusion.



The importance of the right partner

James: We've partnered with ADP for a long time, they provide our payroll and benefits administrative services. Developing our relationship as a strategic partner with ADP has always been important to me. A successful vendor relationship is a two-way street. Initially, we were not actively engaged with ADP. We became determined to work with our account client team to build a much stronger relationship, with more interaction at all levels.

When I joined our HR organization, we were on dated systems for benefits. For payroll, we were using ADP's Enterprise platform. We had built it in a highly customized way that required a lot of manual workarounds and inefficiencies. Through our partnership with ADP, we began upgrading our software. As we approached those projects, we wanted to avoid customization. We needed to maintain ADP's core system for us to learn and take advantage of the best practices they provide. With customization, sometimes you rule yourself out of the ability to take advantage of efficiencies.

A system of record

James: It was a year-long project to convert our systems. Our mantra throughout was, "No customization." We took it as ADP delivered it. We wanted to learn from ADP, as a thought leader in the industry, what they've learned from their other customers, and how we could benefit from that. Embracing the best practices gave us the ability to learn outside of our own four walls. Having the diversity of thought ensures we have strong discussions as we look to implement products and services across our footprint.

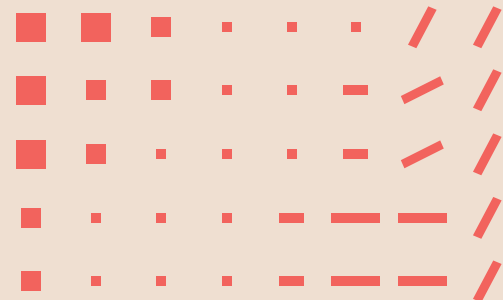
Any issue or challenge that came up, we asked:


- **What is the best practice?**
- **Are we following best practice?**
- **If not, why are we not?**
- **What would it take to get to best practice?**

Now that we upgraded our systems, those questions don't come up as frequently, but it provides us the opportunity to demonstrate best practices ourselves and be able to share that with other ADP clients. When we moved to the ADP Vantage HCM platform, we had a fully integrated benefits, time and payroll system. We significantly reduced the number of errors we had, which had a very positive impact on our team members because they weren't having to call HR about problems.

"We wanted to learn from ADP, as a thought leader in the industry, what they've learned from their other customers, and how we could benefit from that. Embracing the best practices gave us the ability to learn outside of our own four walls."

James Fleisher
Senior Vice President
Head of HR Operations,
Data and Systems





Barb: We have an excellent relationship with ADP. The key for everything we've done is the migration to ADP Vantage HCM. We've deepened our relationship, there's a very good comfort and trust level between all of us. We're open and honest about everything. ADP is a great vendor and we have a great team. Our relationship is a two-way street. We're in constant contact. I feel comfortable reaching out if I have any issue or just want to discuss.

When we have our strategy calls about benefits administration, we ask about best practices and information ADP can share with us to ensure we are managing our benefits programs to include all of our employees, and not be partial to one group versus another.

The mobile application is exciting for all our folks. To be able to pick up your phone, hit that icon, log in and be able to see everything — for Bank of the West, that was a huge step forward for us. It's also very easy for employees to access the ADP site. On the ADP site with the tiles, we can look at pay, taxes, time away, benefits, all that information together in one place.

Winning the ADP Humanity at Work award

James: We've been recognized for our diversity program. We received a 100 percent score from the Human Rights Campaign for the last three years. We've been named by Forbes magazine as a top employer for women and for the LGBTQ community. It's a significant sense of achievement for the organization, and I'm proud to be aligned with Bank of the West. And so, having that recognition is just a validation of the efforts that we've spent over the years.

Winning this award from ADP further strengthens the position that we're doing the right thing and means we're on the right path for diversity, equity and inclusion. Diversity gets our customers and our employees in the door. Inclusion makes sure that they stay. Diversity and inclusion are going to set companies apart, today and into the future. Organizations that don't recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion will fall to the side.

Barb: ADP supports diversity and inclusion by managing people regardless of color, gender and sexual orientation. That's the best compliment I can give to a company that's managing transactions for us at the level that we do.

Benefits of attending ADP Meeting of the Minds

Fleisher: When I became involved with the ADP relationship, I attended the ADP Meeting of the Minds conference. The executive round table was one of the best opportunities I've had to learn beyond a vendor's product set. It's a great forum for senior leaders in the organization to come together and share ideas in a non-competitive, collaborative manner. That single day provided a lot of insight beyond the day-to-day job. ADP brings important speakers to the event to speak on topics around employee engagement, diversity or even how to build efficient and effective processes.

I've gone to a lot of conferences in my career, and Meeting of the Minds has been the most impressive day I've ever experienced from any vendor. Again, because it's not focused on selling products, but about providing educational opportunities. It's kept me going back to Meeting of the Minds each year. One of my favorite speakers is Marcus Buckingham. His books are insightful with real actionable ideas I can put into play immediately.



Always Designing
for People®