

Best Practices: Building and Retaining a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce



Kara Helander

Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, The Carlyle Group

Kara Helander is managing director, chief inclusion & diversity officer at The Carlyle Group. In this role, she leads the firm's diversity and inclusion efforts and focuses on increasing Board diversity within Carlyle's portfolio companies.

Prior to joining Carlyle, Kara co-founded the Science of Diversity & Inclusion Initiative which brings together select companies and top behavioral researchers to design, test and scale new approaches to accelerate diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

Previously, she was a managing director at BlackRock/Barclays Global Investors where she led Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and Philanthropy. She built the global strategy for BlackRock's \$125M charitable fund. That work supported over 20,000 low income students globally, and BlackRock's programs were recognized by The Center for Financial Services Innovation. The D&I efforts she led significantly moved the dial on diversity, and this work was profiled in a Harvard Business School case study and in The New York Times.

Prior to Barclays Global Investors, she launched and led the Western Region for Catalyst in Silicon Valley. In this role, she partnered with Fortune 500 CEOs to jumpstart real change in diversity. Over five years, the percentage of women corporate officers in Fortune 500 companies in the West grew by 25%, and the percentage of women board directors grew by 52% — far outpacing the national Fortune 500 rates of change.

Earlier in her career, she launched The Partnership for Organ Donation with colleagues from CDI (a strategy consulting spin-off from Bain). This social venture increased donation rates by 30%, directly addressing the core mission of the health care industry — saving and improving the quality of lives — while generating significant additional revenue.

Kara received her BS from Vanderbilt University and her MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

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Erika Irish Brown

Chief Diversity Officer, Goldman Sachs

Erika Irish Brown is chief diversity officer, responsible for global diversity and inclusion strategy and driving inclusive culture initiatives and efforts related to the recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse professionals. She joined the firm as a managing director in 2018.

Prior to joining Goldman Sachs, Erika was global head of diversity and inclusion at Bloomberg from 2015 to 2018. Prior to this, she led the diversity hiring efforts at Bank of America between 2009 and 2015 and Lehman Brothers between 2005 and 2008.

Erika's background includes a range of banking and finance roles, including head of business development for Black Entertainment Television, senior associate in the high yield capital markets group at Morgan Stanley and senior policy analyst for domestic finance for the United States Department of the Treasury. She began her career as an analyst in the public finance department at Lehman Brothers.

Erika is a member of the Executive Leadership Council, vice chair of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and serves on the Board of Advisors for Catalyst.

Erika earned a BS in Economics from the State University of New York at Albany and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

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Sekou Kaalund

Managing Director and Head of Advancing Black Pathways, JPMorgan Chase

Sekou Kaalund is the leader of Advancing Black Pathways, a JPMorgan Chase initiative designed to have a sustainable impact on the economic success and empowerment of black communities. Prior to this role, Sekou served for 11 years in JPMorgan's Corporate and Investment Bank in numerous leadership positions—including the leader of U.S. Pension Fund Coverage and as a senior relationship manager for some of the firm's largest clients. Sekou began his J.P. Morgan career in 2007 as managing director and global head of sales for Private Equity and Real Estate Fund Services.

Sekou also held leadership roles at Citi, including head of strategy for the Securities and Funds Services Group and head of strategic initiatives for the Consumer Lending Group. Sekou began his career at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and was a commissioned bank examiner.

Sekou earned a Master's of Public Policy from Duke University and a Bachelor's from Hampden-Sydney College. He has served on several boards including the Duke University School of Public Policy, the Public Policy and International Affairs Program, New York City Parks Foundation, and the Council of Urban Professionals.

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Rakhi Kumar

Senior Managing Director, Head of ESG Investments and Asset Stewardship, State Street Global Advisors

Rakhi Kumar is a senior managing director and head of ESG investments and asset stewardship at State Street Global Advisors. She leads SSGA's efforts to strengthen integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into the investment process and is responsible for developing the firm's ESG investment philosophy and global business strategy.

In 2017, Rakhi was honored with the Abigail Adams Award by the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus and was named on the Ten to Watch list of innovators and influencers in 2018 by wealthmanagement.com and on the Power50: Newsmakers list by the Boston Business Journal for her efforts to enhance gender diversity on company boards. Also, in 2018, Rakhi was named to the Boston's Most 100 Influential People of Color by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, The Boston Foundation and Get Connected!

Rakhi earned her MBA ('02) from Yale University and her Bachelors of Commerce ('95) from Bombay University. She has been a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India since 1997. She serves on the advisory board of the Ira M. Millstein Center for Global Markets and Corporate Ownership at the Columbia Law School.