

The People Business

An Interview with Darcy Mackay,
Chief Human Resources Officer, CBRE

EDITORS' NOTE *Darcy Mackay leads CBRE's effort to recruit, retain and develop the industry's top market-facing, functional and leadership talent. Prior to her current role, she was President of Global Workplace Solutions West Division and had global responsibility for CBRE's occupier clients headquartered in the 13 Western U.S. states. In her tenure with CBRE, she has held many roles including the Chief Operating Officer of the Americas Occupier Advisory and*



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Transaction Services business and, prior to that role, Mackay served as CBRE's Global Head of Transaction Management and Portfolio Services. In 2015, 2016 and 2017, she was named by the San Francisco Business Times as one of "The Most Influential Women in the Bay Area Business." In 2009 and again in 2013, she was named one of Northern California Real Estate's Women of Influence. Mackay earned her B.A., cum laude, from Harvard University and her M.P.P. from the University of California, Berkeley.

FIRM BRIEF *CBRE Group, Inc. (cbre.com) is the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm, with 2018 revenues of \$21.3 billion and more than 90,000 employees (excluding affiliate offices). CBRE offers a broad range of integrated services, including facilities, transaction and project management; investment management; appraisal and valuation; property leasing; strategic consulting; property sales; mortgage services and development services.*

How has your vast experience at CBRE prepared you for assuming the HR leadership role?

In my role as a business leader, I have always felt that I owned my talent and my talent outcomes. CBRE is a services business, which means that we are in the people business. That is all we do. We don't manufacture cars or software. We are services, and those services are delivered by people.

So my ability to compete in the marketplace, my ability to win new business, and my ability to drive exceptional client outcomes is all predicated on having terrific athletes in those roles. HR was my partner in doing that,

but it was something I owned as a leader. That has always been my orientation towards people and exceptional talent.

I think all of my experience is incredibly important since I have not only been in different business lines within the company, but I have also run, and resided in, different geographies and regions.

I have a deep understanding of our clients and what they need to be successful, as well as of our businesses that are serving those clients.

My ability to tailor the HR offering around driving exceptional outcomes comes from that first-hand experience.

How critical is it that CBRE's workforce mirrors the diversity of its clients?

It is absolutely essential. Diversity is essential to the growth and performance of our company. Our goal is to make sure that we mirror the diversity within our client base, no matter what business line or geography we are in, so it is absolutely core to our mission.

We have a very focused strategy as it relates to diversity and inclusion, or as we increasingly talk about it, inclusion and diversity. Inclusion is about our culture, and we monitor that closely. The vote that matters on that performance is our employees, and our employees tell us how we are doing. We rate very high on our culture, on the inclusivity in our culture.

Diversity measures the outcome of that; it is what we see in the result. Traditionally, commercial real estate has not been a diverse field, especially in the U.S. We work really hard to make sure that, from a recruiting perspective, we have the right partnerships in the communities to improve the diversity of our potential talent pool. Then we need to do an exceptional job of mentoring, developing and growing our new recruits, and making new employees feel like they are part of this bigger community.

When you mention having the best athletes on the field, CBRE hires the best and brightest. Does this ensure a certain level of diversity or do you need to find different talent pools and build diverse partnerships in the hiring process?

It's the latter. We need to be very intentional about what we're doing. For example, we have a series of partnerships with about 10 different groups just in the U.S. that are

highly connected to diverse pools of candidates that have expertise in some of the core skillsets that we're looking for. We partner with CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women), the Posse Foundation, Out and Equal, the National Association of Women MBAs and Black MBAs, to name a few.

We also have incredibly robust business resource groups within CBRE. We currently have seven of them that are very active in the U.S. that, together, have more than 8,000 members. We also have similar networks in other countries, like the UK Women's Network which I was on the board of when I was in the UK. These folks are all engaged in building really strong culture and community within CBRE. Our board of directors is very active in this effort as well.

Those business resource groups are part of our partnership strategy. For example, our African American Network Group (AANG) is deeply connected with the historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) connect program. When we are out there recruiting on these campuses, we have folks from AANG who are part of that effort. Conversely, when we have AANG meetings, we have folks, including students, from HBCU come in and participate in our programs. This is helping create connectivity in those talent pools even while they are still in school. Those partnerships and our business resource groups are very important components of our strategy.

We also have a number of diversity initiatives that are specifically designed to enhance the diversity of our leadership pipeline. We have instituted various scholarship and training programs. One, called IMPACT, is an 18-month global program that is specifically designed to improve gender balance at the most senior levels of the company.

How critical is it to have deep engagement and commitment from the C-Suite for CBRE's diversity and inclusion efforts?

It's absolutely critical to have not just commitment, but the action from the top. Employees can see through hollow promises. We are long past the days when executives could put out big proclamations, and then not show results. We are fortunate to have not just a diverse board, but a board that is deeply committed to moving the needle on diversity and inclusion. ●