

Workplace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

An Interview with Richard A. Rosenbaum, Executive Chairman, Greenberg Traurig

EDITORS' NOTE *Richard Rosenbaum is the Executive Chairman of Greenberg Traurig, a unified international law firm of more than 2200 attorneys spanning 40 offices around the globe. For a number of years, the firm has been executing a one-of-a-kind strategy, now with 30 offices across America, and is the only firm that has its largest office in New York City while still being among the largest in its original market of Miami; has five offices in California while being one of the top firms in Austin, Dallas, and Houston, Texas for over 10 years; has over 150 lawyers in each of New York, Chicago, Atlanta, California, Miami, and Europe; has over 350 lawyers in each of the New York Tri-State Region, South Florida, and Europe; and is located in 14 out of 17 of the broadly acknowledged innovation centers of the future, including such diverse locations as Tel Aviv, Berlin, Seoul, Miami, Warsaw, Tokyo, Silicon Valley, Austin, Atlanta, New York, London, Chicago, Los Angeles, Shanghai, and Amsterdam. Rosenbaum joined the firm in 1985 as its 90th lawyer and has been a key leader of the firm's strong growth across the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. He is widely known for his experience in a diverse range of industries, including real estate, entertainment, media, technology, investment, and finance, representing companies of all sizes, and many wealthy individuals and successful entrepreneurs while building the firm over the years. Today, Rosenbaum's primary responsibilities involve the firm's overall strategies, closely working with day-to-day leaders of several key U.S. markets including the New York region and all its non-U.S. operations.*



Richard A. Rosenbaum

What are your views on the business case for workplace diversity and inclusion?

The research is clear that companies with diverse teams outperform financially. Framing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) as a critical asset is key, as is providing the right incentives. At Greenberg Traurig, we have seen the value of having diverse perspectives at the table. What we achieve on behalf of clients is often the result of having as many perspectives as possible from which to address a problem.

We also collaborate with our clients on advancing initiatives that help develop a pipeline of diverse attorneys. Recent collaborations include:

- Creating a diverse mentoring program with a multinational investment bank with a focus on professional leadership and development;
- Partnering with a client in the telecommunications sector to virtually mock interview their diverse legal interns;

- Sponsoring a first-year law student with a multinational fast-food chain through the Move the Needle Diversity Pipeline Collective with The Diversity Lab.

What are the keys to building a diverse culture that is sustained in the long term?

At Greenberg Traurig, our leadership is diverse by intention – nationally, and internationally – with more than 45 percent of the firm's executive committee comprising diverse leaders, including women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. This creates a pipeline of diverse talent in our recruiting programs which starts at the community level and continues through to education and ultimately to internships, clerkships, and employment.

How do you measure the progress of your diversity efforts?

We look for outside organizations that provide certifications or rankings. Greenberg Traurig's track record of putting diversity into action led us to achieve Mansfield Rule 3.0 Certification from The Diversity Lab. This national program is designed to help law firms become more inclusive

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Nikki Lewis Simon



Ernest L. Greer



Lori G. Coben



Jaret L. Davis



Demetrius G. McDaniel

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and diverse by requiring them to consider at least 30 percent women, ethnically diverse, LGBTQ+, and differently abled attorneys for leadership and governance roles, equity partner promotions, formal client pitch opportunities and senior lateral positions.

Is there more to do beyond internal programs?

Supporting social justice initiatives helps to take your impact into the community. In 2020, Greenberg Traurig’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team launched several new initiatives within our Social, Racial, and Economic Justice Action Plan. We have committed to funding \$5 million over five years to support external programs/organizations that address causes and effects of systemic racism.

How do you build diversity into workplace culture?

Building diversity into workplace culture will be different for different organizations based on industry, location, size, corporate age and more. I would offer the following six ways leaders can help create an environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are top of mind.

1. Start at the Top – Creating achievable short-term goals can drive long-term change. Building a diverse team can be fundamental to creating the solutions and strategies that clients and customers need to accomplish their goals. For example, the diversity, equity and inclusion initiative at Greenberg Traurig is driven by the firm’s Executive Committee, and Litigation Shareholder/Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer **Nikki Lewis Simon**, a Miami shareholder, who reports to both the firm’s chief executive officer and co-president.

2. Create Transparency – Transparency is particularly important because you need to create buy-in at all levels. Include everyone in the planning, strategy, and implementation.

3. Be Intentionally Diverse – Intentional Diverse Leadership is not just about having one minority or female partner or high-level executive so they can check a box. Our leadership is diverse by design, including the following:

- **Ernest L. Greer**, Co-President.
- **Lori G. Cohen**, a firm Vice Chair, Co-Chair of the global Litigation Practice and of the Trial Practice.
- **Jaret L. Davis**, Miami office Co-Managing Shareholder.
- **Demetrius G. McDaniel**, Co-Regional Operating Shareholder for Texas, Chair of the Texas Government Law & Policy Practice and Co-Chair of the Washington, D.C. Federal Government Law & Policy Practice.
- **Richard C. Kim**, Co-Chair of the Global Finance Practice and Co-Chair of the New York office Corporate Practice.

Additionally, firm leaders have had the unique experience of emigrating to the U.S. as diverse individuals, including:

- **Cesar L. Alvarez**, a former CEO and current Senior Chair; **Yosbel A. Ibarra**, who is LGBTQ+, Miami office Co-Managing Shareholder; and **Orlando L. Evora**, Orlando office Co-Managing Shareholder, were born in Cuba.
- **Jéan E. Wilson**, Orlando office Co-Managing Shareholder, was born in Haiti.
- **Ejim Achi**, New York office Co-Managing Shareholder and office Corporate Practice Co-Chair, emigrated from Nigeria.

4. Collaborate to Connect – Leadership involves service and most professionals feel that they have a responsibility to give back. Collaborating with community organizations perfectly blends service and diversity.

5. Allow DE&I Spread Throughout the Organization – Create a chain reaction of

DE&I successes that will flow through the organization. This is part of who you are, not just something you do.

6. Involve everyone – Like everyone, diverse employees, particularly junior employees or those new to the organization, can usually be best served by having a sponsor or mentor. Have leaders make it part of their job to mentor these individuals. Involve allies in meaningful ways and support a culture of personal commitment. If you are on the right track, underrepresented employees will feel included and will be comfortable voicing their concerns.

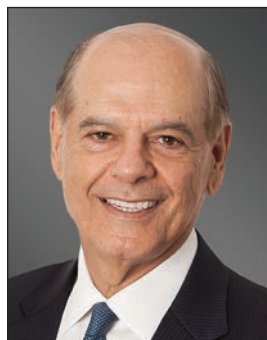
As just one example of what we are doing, as part of Greenberg Traurig’s Social, Racial and Economic Justice Plan, the firm utilizes its Social Justice Action Academy to reach employees. The program educates and trains them on matters of race, justice, and equity; facilitates and encourages “Courageous Conversations” on these topics; and helps drive forward meaningful change.

Greenberg Traurig’s Diversity Initiative

From its inception, Greenberg Traurig has been committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Greenberg Traurig is a uniquely empowering and diverse firm built on a foundation of fairness, equality, and authenticity. Through its Social, Racial, and Economic Justice Action Plan, the firm has committed \$5 million over five years to help combat systemic racism and support impoverished communities. In addition, the firm’s efforts have been recognized through its Mansfield Rule 3.0 certification, administered by The Diversity Lab, and by local, national, and global publications and organizations including Chambers and Partners. ●



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