

Powered by People

An Interview with Juan Bueno, Principal and U.S. President, Avison Young

EDITORS' NOTE As Principal and U.S. President, Juan Bueno leads all business within the U.S., working directly with the firm's CEO, Principals and executive team to realize the firm's strategy across more than 50 offices in 20 states and the District of Columbia, with a regional workforce comprised of approximately 2,000 professionals. He is a member of the Board of Directors and serves on Avison Young's Executive Committee. Prior to joining Avison Young, he served



Juan Bueno

as Vice President of Sales at The Home Depot, where he was responsible for approximately \$6 billion in wholesale business and more than 2,100 associates across multiple business service lines. He has an extensive background in operational and project management and has held executive positions with top-tier global management consulting firms, including McKinsey & Company where, as a Partner, he led strategic growth and performance improvement projects across an array of industries around the world. Bueno is active in his community and currently serves on the boards of both the Latin American Association and Big Brothers Big Sisters in Atlanta where he is based. Bueno earned a BS degree in business administration with a major in finance from the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.

COMPANY BRIEF Avison Young (avisonyoung.com) creates real economic, social and environmental value as a global real estate advisor, powered by people. As a private company, its clients collaborate with an empowered partner

that is invested in their success. The firm's integrated talent realizes the full potential of real estate by using global intelligence platforms that provide clients with insight and advantage.

What excited you about the opportunity to join Avison Young and made you feel it was the right fit?

The people-first culture of the company and its consultative approach to delivering customized client solutions immediately appealed to me. I

find commercial real estate to be a dynamic industry with an interactive people component that is exciting. Avison Young just takes that to the next level with its diversity of experience, viewpoints and collaborative atmosphere. During the extensive interview process, I spoke to a lot of people throughout the company and the experience was like meeting with family. It's a large global company with a small town feel and that's refreshing. Additionally, the fact that we are privately held and principal-led allows us to play the long-term game and make investments in people, processes and tools that many of our more "short-term minded" peers wouldn't undertake.

Will you highlight your role and management style?

I work closely with Avison Young's CEO, Mark Rose, the executive team, and principals on planning and execution strategies across the firm's 50-plus U.S. offices. My primary role is to get a deep understanding of our customers ever-changing needs and collaborate with functional partners to provide customized client solutions. I've spent the last five months on an educational

listening tour getting to know clients, geographies and our leaders in our markets.

As a highly collaborative leader, I welcome open, honest dialogue. I want to hear all feedback to ensure that we have an inclusive culture with clear expectations, clear communications and clear accountability.

How do you define Avison Young's purpose?

Avison Young's purpose is to be a global real estate advisor that leverages data and insights to help clients achieve their goals. People are at the heart of everything we do and it is important for us that we work closely with our clients to create healthy, productive workplaces, and that those workplaces are beneficial to the economy, the environment and the community.

What do you see as the keys to Avison Young's strength in the industry and what is the Avison Young difference?

Our greatest strengths are our people and our culture. We have top talent with diverse experiences where different perspectives and ideas are welcomed. This is a huge asset for us because building and strengthening relationships is so important in the commercial real estate industry.

Our consultative, full-service approach is a major differentiator for us. Avison Young's service offerings go beyond the transaction and brokerage services. We take our clients through the entire real estate life cycle and provide end-to-end solutions that are more human-centric, innovative and sustainable.

I think that it's important to reiterate that as a privately held partnership, Avison Young is able to provide incentives to play the long-term game and make long-term decisions.

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Will you discuss Avison Young’s investment in technology and data analytics to support its clients’ needs?

Technology and data are great investments, but our greatest investment is in our people. We believe that to best serve our clients, we must complement top talent with top tools – tools that arm our people with the data and analytics that are grounded in innovation, enablement, consolidation and security to provide efficiency and real economic value for our clients.

Last year we launched The Vitality Index to help clients navigate their return-to-work needs. It’s a database that measures near-real-time foot traffic by city and by industry using anonymous cell phone data gathered by our geospatial intelligence partner, Orbital Insights. This is powered by the interactive dashboard, AVANT by Avison Young. With The Vitality Index, we have been able to bring clarity to our clients during the times of uncertainty that began in the spring of 2020.

We are always looking for innovative tools to provide efficient, data-driven decisions for our clients. We recently made an addition to Avison Young’s tech stack to increase efficiency and productivity by establishing a partnership with UiPath which is aimed at deploying automation software to increase the power of predictive analytics and real estate data. The UiPath partnership arms our brokers and client-facing professionals with faster, more valuable insights on properties to better inform our clients.

I also want to point out a very important component of our strategy to Avison Young’s tech and data investments – security. We know that our clients are entrusting us with sensitive information and we need to consistently build our technologies to be as secure as possible on our client’s behalf.

How do you make sure that technology does not take away from the human touch and personal relationship that Avison Young is known for?

I am a people person and this is a people-first company. It is deeply embedded in our culture. Relationships with our colleagues, our partners and our clients are critical to our success and people are at the heart of what we do. Technology is a tool that can enhance our data capabilities and streamline our operations and our offerings, but it will never replace the human factor. In short, we will always need smart and impact-oriented professionals to leverage data and generate insights for our clients. We understand that and it is why we place such a big premium on hiring the best professionals in each market.

How critical is it for Avison Young to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when addressing client needs?

It’s absolutely critical and a top priority for Avison Young, and for me personally, to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. As we listen to our clients, we understand that our teams need to be reflective of the communities we serve. You have a broader perspective to offer clients when you are fueled by people with a wide range of backgrounds, thoughts, genders and experiences.

Avison Young is deeply committed to workforce diversity and we are actively evolving our D&I strategy to continue to improve our policies and accountability, and to making sustainable change both within our organization and throughout our industry. A concrete example that I’m proud of is that Avison Young was one

of the first commercial real estate firms to sign CREW Network’s Pledge for Action, an effort to increase workforce diversity in commercial real estate.

What do you see as Avison Young’s responsibility to the communities it serves and to being a force for good in society?

We believe in the positive impact that commercial real estate can have in people’s lives. Avison Young takes that responsibility very seriously because people are at the heart of what we do. We are accountable to our clients and to our communities to be mindful of the value we can bring in social, environmental and economic ways across the real estate landscape.

As a company that is powered by people, we take pride in helping our local community organizations by using our time and resources to make a difference. Avison Young’s Annual Day of Giving is a company-wide annual event when thousands of employees go out into their respective communities and volunteer where we live and work. I had an amazing experience with my colleagues in Atlanta, working on a park beautification and revitalization project.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this unprecedented time?

I would say to find an organization that has a strong culture, where people are valued and collaboration is encouraged. Do not get too engulfed with social media and lose human connectivity because establishing and fostering relationships with individuals is the key to success in just about every form of business. I would also add, take time for yourself and make it a priority from early on to maintain a healthy work/life balance. ●

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