

A thousand points of light: Diversity and inclusion at the corporate level

Interview with First Horizon CEO Bryan Jordan

Tell us about your background and your primary responsibilities at First Horizon.

I started my career in public accounting, which was a great learning experience. I worked with clients in different types of workplaces and discovered there are many different strategies you can use to get certain results. The key is figuring out the best approach to use and helping your client understand why that option is the most effective one to use. I certainly use that skill today.

After my career in public accounting, I entered the banking industry in three finance organizations and managed several of the accounting functions. I saw the whole of the organization and learned about its various functions, departments, roles and responsibilities. I was able to take leadership-training courses and that sparked a fascination in me about the leadership side of business.

As CEO of First Horizon, I focus on four areas:

- Maintaining a sense of what's going on around us
- Examining how customers do business and how we can adapt our business model to serve them better
- Balancing what we invest in tomorrow versus what we earn today
- Defining the culture of our organization

Your company is recognized as an outstanding provider of financial services, but recently announced a rebranding and an enhancement of the customer experience. Why do you see a need to change?

I agree that we do really well at building relationships and I'm proud of our company's history of being a friendly, customer-focused bank. We're known for excellent customer service and our people are dedicated to providing outstanding customer experiences. However, changes in our industry require us to rethink the way we do business and how we're meeting customer wants and needs. Personal connections and relationships are important, but they're more effective if technological tools are also available for customers. I like to say that what got us here today won't get us where we need to go tomorrow. We always have to work on getting better.

A big way we want to be better is by understanding the unique needs of our customers and being their advocates. Our research shows that customers are facing more complex financial decisions than ever before and they're afraid of falling short of their goals. Our mission is to help guide them. We want to transform the customer experience to make it unique for each customer and provide the services they need at each stage of their life. As those stages change, we'll be there to help them manage their options.

We're also transforming by unifying our family of companies under one brand name and one brand promise. I'm excited to broadcast who we are and what we stand for because I believe that what we do impacts peoples' lives.

What is your company's commitment to community investment?

One of our company's core values is investing in the communities we serve. We can't be a successful organization if our customers, employees and communities don't succeed. It's important to add value for all stakeholders so we can thrive and grow together.

What is your vision for First Horizon in terms of diversity and inclusion?

I believe it is imperative for all voices to be heard. Our company is committed to a diverse representation in our leadership and on our board of directors. It's important to remember that we don't all see the world or experience life in the same way. For perspective, you have to look at things holistically.

At First Horizon, we don't see people as **what** they are, but as **who** they are. We are dedicated to creating opportunities to recognize all our people for their unique contributions. That being said, we constantly work on developing better awareness to make sure we overcome latent problems from the past. We don't shy away from open conversations and better dialogue about what it takes for our organization and our employees to improve.

Part of the challenge is overcoming the programming we've been given societally about what we can and can't accomplish, or the thought that not all people are equal. Inclusion is about everyone, and we want to make sure anyone who strives to succeed is given a chance. If someone is committed to acquiring the tools and skills needed to advance, they should be recognized for their hard work.

How do you see that unfolding?

Diversity and inclusion efforts are a journey, not a destination, and we have to stay dedicated to that journey to make progress. There is no ideal world, but we're working to make sure people who express an interest are allowed to build a career.

To support our employees, we have a department dedicated to advancing our diversity and inclusion efforts. That group, led by Lynne Walker, EVP, director of affinity strategy, is working hard to make a difference, and I'm impressed with what they're doing.

We also have Employee Resource Groups that represent and promote the needs of our diverse employee population. These groups help drive conversations around topics that we need to address and they're dedicated to helping others. I like to think of our Employee Resource Groups as 1,000 points of light, not just a few big, bright shining stars. Diversity and inclusion is a challenging topic, but the fact that we talk about it is one of those points of light.