I joined Principal 34 years ago because I was given an opportunity to ‘make a difference’ in the lives of our customers. Today, I have the ability to positively influence employees, employers and individuals around the world. Diversity and inclusion is a central part of what makes my role so rewarding.

Recognizing and satisfying the unmet financial needs of friends and neighbors is how our company came to be more than 138 years ago. The more we met those needs, the more we grew. And, as we hired more people, they, in turn, exposed us to the new and unmet needs of their friends and neighbors. We’ve seen how success depends on diversity. Diversity of thought, culture, perspective, experience, background and talent. All are essential to meeting customer needs, which is essential for business growth and prosperity.

To us, diversity is the mix of people who help us bring thoughtful and varied solutions to market — ones that match the diverse nature of the people we serve. Inclusion is making it easy for every employee to bring his or her best self to work every day.

By fostering this kind of supportive environment, our employees become more confident, bring their own unique style and approach to serve our customers, enriching the customer’s experience. It’s how we came to create such innovative solutions as our accelerated underwriting process or our retirement modeling planner. It’s why our client retention rates are among the highest in the industry. And it’s why average employee tenure is 13 years.

How do we do it? By helping employees make connections. Our Connected Community includes more than 4,300 employees in seven Employee Resource Groups and six women’s networks. Our Connected Conversations platform brings people literally face to face with diversity and inclusion through the sharing of personal stories and experiences. All with an eye toward driving solutions around business issues and current events. We encourage directly confronting bias through civil discourse … even having uncomfortable conversations. One of our more popular programs — “It’s Okay to Ask” — draws hundreds of employees to participate in panel discussions on religion, race, accidental discrimination or other current trends that impact how we deal with each other. In all conversations, we seek to build a foundation of trust and empathy by taking a common-sense approach:

- Assume good intent. Look for teachable moments.
We are human. Mistakes happen.

This is a judgment-free zone — but tone matters.

Education is our goal. Listen and learn.

Get comfortable with the uncomfortable.

How We Drive Our Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

In addition to our Connected Community, we have myriad programs, practices and policies woven into the fabric of our business to nurture our culture of diversity and inclusion:

Talent Acquisition: Our fair and compliant hiring practices and sourcing strategies produce a diverse, qualified pool of talent. Because of this, our employee population reflects the diversity of the available workforce.

Employee Development: All employees and leaders complete courses that help them understand diversity at Principal and how it impacts them personally. Educational programming is effective in assisting our leadership to empower today’s talent and grow tomorrow’s leaders.

Social Responsibility and Business Results: We’re known as a diversity advocate in the communities in which we operate and actively participate in key diversity and inclusion events. We also utilize our Connected Community to provide diverse thought leadership toward business initiatives.

Board and Supplier Diversity: We recruit new Board members based on Board needs and a review of diversity in terms of race, gender, national origin, backgrounds, experiences and area of expertise. As a result, our current Board comprises 50 percent women and people of color. Similarly, we strive to include diverse suppliers in all bidding opportunities — seeking the widest possible selection of qualified suppliers, innovative solutions and creative thinking.

Change doesn't happen by conducting business as usual. That's why we’ll continue to challenge and adjust thoughts and processes to ensure all voices are heard and valued.

www.principal.com/about-us/corporate-citizenship/workplace/diversity-inclusion