



## Rob Meyers of Republic Business Credit Discusses the Company's DEI Initiatives

BY MICHELE OCEJO

*Republic Business Credit is a nationally recognized commercial finance company supporting the working capital requirements of companies nationwide, including private equity and entrepreneurial businesses. Republic provides asset-based lending, ledgered lines of credit, traditional factoring, direct-to-consumer loans, and Fast AR Funding. Republic partners with its clients to provide up to \$15 million in senior credit facilities to rapidly growing businesses, start-ups and companies experiencing recoverable distress.*

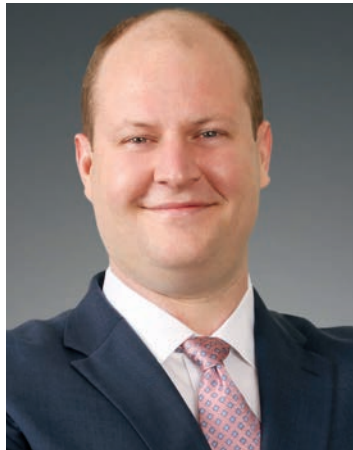
*Nationally recognized as a winner of the 2015 Emerging Growth Company Award from the Association for Corporate Growth, Republic's expert and knowledgeable team also boasts four SFNet 40 Under 40 Award winners, two "Top Women in Secured Finance" from The Secured Lender, and a "Top Women in Asset Based Lending" by ABF Journal. Republic is recognized by the Secured Finance Network as one of the largest independently owned finance companies in the United States of America. Republic is proud to be headquartered in New Orleans with additional offices in Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston.*

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**epublic was one of two companies that were highly aligned with their employees in the replies to SFNet's DEI Survey. Could you tell us a bit about your approach to DE&I and any specific programs you have implemented?**

RBC has always believed in the benefit of consistent learning, growth and development of our team, and that starts with hiring whenever we can from the communities we serve. While headquartered in New Orleans, we have offices in Los Angeles, Houston, and Chicago, along with remote staff in Oklahoma and Jacksonville. We simply hire people who are passionate, knowledgeable and willing to grow with us.

With all of our hires, we do not prioritize a certain degree or academic benchmark. That allows us to look beyond a resume to candidates who, by that metric alone, might bring to the firm a different perspective. Our president, for example, was a biology major. Our portfolio manager was a psychology major. Many of our business development staff come from communications, history and business backgrounds. We also recruit from colleges in our communities, not necessarily institutions



■ **ROB MEYERS**  
Republic Business Credit



■ **CANDICE HUBERT**  
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■ **DANIKA LOUIS**  
Republic Business Credit

focused on finance or a certain pedigree.

As a people-based business, we have often hired based on referrals, local partnerships and our relationships in the communities we serve. That allows us to reach beyond the resume to add team members who come from different backgrounds. We seek it out.

We also recognize we can always do more. I would argue our best DEI programs come through our team. Danika Louis, portfolio manager, and Candice Hubert, senior vice president, business development, banded together during the summer of 2020 to create and implement Project Themis. Themis was meant as an ongoing learning discussion, townhall and opportunity for everyone to share their own unique experiences.

I cherished these conversations I have had with many of our staff. Our team chose books, movies, articles and thought pieces to help construct and enable different types of conversations. While many of the sessions provided personal experience sharing, the themes or ideas helped each discussion to be deeper and more meaningful. There were no limits on subjects or conversations.

One of our team members, Candice Hubert, is now helping SFNet establish its mentorship program through the DEI Committee. So, we're not only working on building true diversification efforts at Republic, our team members are making a difference in the industry as a whole. I'm very proud of that.

## **What have the results been of these programs?**

We wanted to create a listening, comfortable, honest and open environment for learning. We kicked off the program with an outside consulting firm to help set our aims, discussion rules and provide several frameworks for discussion shortly following the murder of George Floyd.

Ongoing results of our DEI journey is increased diversity and a greater understanding and appreciation of how we can build on that. I remember early on that a member of our staff felt comfortable enough to tell me that while I had focused a lot of my diversity efforts on gender and age, that wasn't good enough — that being a black female is far harder than being a female, and that championing gender or age diversity wasn't enough. Those kinds of conversations were so important, and I'm grateful for them.

My colleague, Stewart Chesters, was greatly affected by these conversations too. When staff explained how they felt they had been treated by tenants in the large office building where we were located — that they felt it necessary to modify their behavior to de-emphasize their cultural background and identity — it led us to relocate our headquarters to a more diverse co-working space and make a clear statement to all staff that in our company "you can be who you are."

**Could you tell us a bit about your culture and what sets Republic apart?**

People, people and more people. Republic is an entrepreneurially owned and growth-orientated company that is deeply rooted in our values of respect, integrity, communication and cooperation. Those values underpin our constant learning culture and provide us with a true north star. Republic takes our jobs seriously to provide working capital; however, we try to bring our whole selves to work and to our roles as much as possible.

People will often tell stories of the laughter, smiles and energy they see throughout their interactions with Republic. That starts with the great laugh of our CEO, down through our entire business. We really enjoy working with each other.

Culture is a reflection of the people you employ and the confidence in where the business is going. Employees trust that five, 10 and 20 years from now, Republic will continue to grow, develop and be a place where they are proud to work.

While there are many firms that provide ABL or factoring, I hear time and time again that people enjoy their interactions and have fun engaging with our teams.

**Has the new world of remote working enabled Republic to hire from a more diverse pool of candidates? If yes, please provide details.**

Not really. We offer a flexible, remote and in-person work schedule that appeals to everyone across our regional offices.

**Does Republic also have programs focused on sustainability and the environment?**

We consider DEI part of our overall ESG policy, meaning we will continue to build a sustainable and long-term business now and in the future. I would say we are stronger on the social and governance sides

at present. Environmental impact is more often provided by the clients we support across the food, beverage, staffing and manufacturing industries. We won't work with clients in certain industries, or who don't have a shared sense of values. 🌱

*Michele Ocejo is SFNet director of communications and editor-in-chief of The Secured Lender.*



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