



**COMPANY:** RBC Wealth Management

**DATE FOUNDED:** 1909

**HEADQUARTERS:** Minneapolis, Minnesota

**COMPANY WEBSITE:** [www.rbcwm-usa.com](http://www.rbcwm-usa.com)

**PRIMARY BUSINESS:** Full-service investment, advisory and wealth management

**INDUSTRY RANKING:** Sixth-largest full-service investment, advisory and wealth management firm in the United States

**2010 REVENUES:** \$1.3 billion

# Authentic Leadership

RBC U.S. Wealth Management CEO **John Taft** uses his commitment to diversity and inclusion to help drive business outcomes

## Discover how Taft's commitment to social justice and equal rights sets the tone for RBC Wealth Management

### A Personal Journey

**C**EO of RBC U.S. Wealth Management John Taft grew up near the campus of Yale University in the 1960s, in an environment he calls “an atmosphere of change.” The son of tolerant and open-minded parents, he was exposed to diverse surroundings and people at a young age—factors that undoubtedly contributed to his personal beliefs about inclusion of people of all backgrounds.

“I don’t think anybody comes to a set of beliefs on a straight path. You develop your convictions whether going forward, going backwards or in circles, and personally, diversity and inclusion have become important personal values to me,” said Taft.

However, it wasn’t until the defining moment of learning about his daughter’s sexual orientation that Taft’s personal beliefs about diversity and inclusion crystalized and cohered.

“We all have been excluded in some way during the course of our lives. It’s a terrible feeling, being isolated, but it’s something that everyone can connect to,” he explained. “We’re social creatures and we belong in a community setting. To feel like your community rejects you is incredibly difficult.”

After supporting his daughter during that trying period of her life, he was motivated to become an advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues on a broader scale, both professionally and personally. Over the years, Taft has donated his time, talent and financial resources to organizations in both Minnesota and on a national level that support the LGBT community, including the Minnesota AIDS Project, Minnesota AIDS Walk, National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Coming Out Day, Human Rights Campaign, and Greater Seattle Business Association.

### A Leadership Strength

**T**aft’s work was recognized when he was named the 2010 Outstanding Corporate Diversity Leader by the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)—an honor he



**Under Taft's leadership, employees at all levels are actively engaged in making diversity a value that defines RBC Wealth Management's culture and drives the business.**

considers one of the proudest moments in his career.

“John’s leadership on diversity is second to none,” reflected Justin G. Nelson, NGLCC co-founder and president. “His commitment to NGLCC inspires other leaders to further our mission to serve as strong business advocates for the LGBT community.”

Within RBC Wealth Management, Taft has served as the executive sponsor of the firm’s Gay, Lesbian, Allied and Diverse Employees (GLADE) employee resource group for the past seven years, where he has championed inclusion efforts for LGBT employees. Throughout his work with GLADE, he has been a role model who has paved the way to recruit more diverse employees and clients to the firm. In addition, Taft served as a leading voice in an effort that advanced RBC Wealth Management’s stance on a respectful workplace, approving the modification of the firm’s non-discrimination policy to include gender identity and gender expression.



***“The pivotal experience I had was my daughter coming out as a teenager and needing to adapt—and living that experience with her and seeing how people responded to her and the challenges that she faced. That was a watershed moment for me in the evolution of my attitude towards diversity.”*** — John Taft

Taft has also shown that diversity advancement has a true business case. Diversity for growth and innovation is one of RBC Wealth Management's core values and is a part of the firm's overarching business strategy. Under his guidance, the firm's continued focus on diversity and inclusion is an integral part of the business, embedded into the firm's stewardship culture and shared with employees, clients and communities.

While continuing to lead RBC Wealth Management, Taft has also introduced the strategic importance of diversity and inclusion to a broader business audience. Taft is currently serving as chairman of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA), the leading securities industry trade group representing securities firms, banks and asset management companies. In this role, he is working to help ensure the U.S. financial system avoids future crises like those experienced in 2008 and 2009, while allowing financial institutions to effectively do their part in supporting America's economic recovery.

Said Joseph Vaughn, SIFMA's vice president of governmental affairs, “John has steadfastly worked to expand the horizons of opportunity for diverse groups in the financial services sector. SIFMA and the industry are very fortunate to have a visionary leader who is working to shape the financial services sector of tomorrow.”

## A Strategic Value

Taft believes it is no surprise that RBC's culture of diversity and stewardship contributed to its strong performance during the financial crisis, as the company continued to operate its business consistent with its core values and an inclusive atmosphere for employees.

“We've seen first-hand how diversity and inclusion create a working environment where personal development and creativity can help lead us to new heights,” said Taft. “Tapping into and drawing on the diverse experiences and backgrounds of our employees is becoming an increasingly important core competency for successful businesses.”

## A Professional Priority

Taft follows media coverage of LGBT topics and adjusts his focus as needs change and headlines evolve. For example, when the news of Tyler Clementi leaping to his death after being taunted about his orientation on social media gained national attention, Taft and his wife, Laura, not only began supporting anti-bullying efforts personally, but also rallied various corporate leaders to spearhead efforts to heighten awareness around the deeply-concerning issue. Since then, he has made it a personal mission to bring attention to anti-bullying issues by supporting organizations that address tolerance and respect for differences.

While there will always be more work to be done, Taft has been—and will continue to be—a true visionary for diversity and inclusion advancement.

“I believe that we are all created equal. The path toward diversity and inclusion is not just to tolerate and not only to accommodate, but ultimately, to embrace and celebrate differences.”

“At RBC Wealth Management, diversity and inclusion are embedded in our culture. For all of our employees across the firm, diversity is a way of life—it's an aspect of everything we do.” **PDJ**

***“Many leaders believe in corporate diversity, but John is a deeply committed, visibly involved leader. John's direct support has been instrumental in garnering employee participation and organizational leadership, and has helped drive RBC Wealth Management's overall diversity and inclusion strategy.”***

— Wanda Brackins  
Head, Wealth Management Global Diversity





*“I’ve learned a lot from Irv, and I admire that aspect of his leadership and try to celebrate it—I feel responsible for keeping that element of his legacy alive.”* — John Taft

headquarters moved office locations that I began to think more and more about the need for the firm to undergo a cultural change, as well. Dain Bosworth was always a great company; however, my upbringing and personal experiences shaped my perspectives of how inclusion should look and feel, which at that point was not prevalent within the firm.

I was raised in the blue collar district of Buffalo, NY. As a child, my playmates were kids from all walks of life and ethnicities—from Italian and Polish to Hispanic and African American. I thought that this was the way the world was. Over the years, I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to travel extensively and experience different cultures and customs. My upbringing and travel have shaped who I am and have made me sensitive to diversity. Unfortunately, many people don’t have these experiences or exposure, and as a result, may shy away from the unfamiliar. I realized early on that people who have not been exposed to diversity need uniquely positioned learning experiences and teachable moments to successfully broaden their outlook.

Irv Weiser, former CEO of RBC Wealth Management, and John Taft.

## A History of Diversity at RBC Wealth Management

As told by **Irv Weiser**, former CEO

**W**hen I became CEO of RBC Wealth Management (then, known as Dain Bosworth) in 1990, diversity was not about the color of one’s skin—it was more about thought and approach. It wasn’t until the downtown Minneapolis





## THE HUMAN TOUCH

*Selections from the RBC Wealth Management Art Collection*

For nearly 20 years, RBC Wealth Management has collected and presented art that reflects the society in which we live and work. *The Human Touch* art tour visits communities across the country where the company's offices are located.

Left to right: *Man with Dog*, Willie Birch, 1999, acrylic and charcoal on paper. *Untitled (L.A. Portrait)*, Roland Fisher, 1994-2000, C-print and acrylic on fiberboard. Two pieces of art from *The Human Touch* art collection.

When Dain Bosworth moved into its new tower, it was the ideal time to start fresh—the firm needed a change, and I wanted to help make that change happen. The firm's female financial advisors were eager to partner with me to help lead the change, and several female advisors collaborated to create a women's group, now known as the Women's Association of Financial Advisors.

As I looked for practical ways to heighten diversity awareness that employees could connect with, I knew that it was not something that could simply be preached from the CEO's office. Therefore, I connected with an art curator to identify various mediums of art that depicted human figures—diverse subject matter created by diverse artists. Today, select pieces from the company's art collection, known as *The Human Touch*, are exhibited at art galleries across the country. The Human Touch continues to provide an educational way for employees, clients, and our communities to learn about diversity. Without a doubt, diversity and inclusion have truly become part of the fabric of RBC Wealth Management. **PDJ**

*“One of the enduring legacies of Irv Weiser has to be the diversity culture of RBC Wealth Management. Irv was a pioneer. Irv was both an advocate for gay and lesbian inclusion and support, as well as an activist for women at the highest levels of management at a time when it wasn't necessarily common place.”* — John Taft

### The Irv Weiser Effect: A Legacy Continues

In 2004, RBC Wealth Management established the Irv Weiser Diversity Award to recognize and reward individuals who exhibit the company's commitment to diversity.



## Five Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices



**RBC Wealth Management's goal is to make diversity and inclusion a theme that runs throughout all aspects of our business, from the people we hire and the culture we cultivate to the clients and communities we serve.**

RBC Wealth Management has used a variety of strategies to make its corporate values a meaningful part of its business operations. Here is a sampling of the ideas that work, including examples of how they were implemented.

### 1) Make diversity and inclusion a priority of executive leadership

Nearly 95 percent of RBC WM's 40 senior-most leaders are engaged in efforts to drive the firm's diversity strategy and execution on a daily basis. Executive involvement includes active leadership in the firm's employee resource groups, service as executive chairs for our diversity growth strategy teams and advisory councils, and involvement on the firm's Diversity Leadership Council.

### 2) Provide employee development and opportunities for employees to contribute

Demonstrating support of our corporate diversity and inclusion strategy is not a box our employees check off on their annual performance reviews, but rather, is a part of our daily life. Through our three employee resources groups—Women's Association of Financial Advisors (WAFA), Multicultural Employee Alliance (MEA), and Gay, Lesbian, Allied and Diverse Employees (GLADE)—our employees actively demonstrate our shared diversity and inclusion values throughout the year.

### 3) Get clients involved

Throughout the year, we host a variety of unique events for our

current and prospective clients. At our "Women, Wine and Wall Street" events, clients learn from a local female wine expert who talks about wine appreciation, as well as a female RBC executive who talks about current investment opportunities. Our speaker series on Latin America and the global economy held at the University of Texas at Austin invites clients, prospective clients and community members to learn about globalization and the challenges that Latin American countries face in achieving.

### 4) Support worthy causes in the community

RBC Wealth Management partners with many external organizations that share our common goal of inclusion and raising awareness. Through these relationships, we elevate our brand profile in the community and help develop relationships with prospective employees and clients. In 2010, RBC Wealth Management contributed more than \$3.2 million to charitable organizations through foundation grants, employee matching gifts and charitable sponsorships.

### 5) Demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability

We are committed to a path of environmental sustainability. This means reducing our environmental footprint, promoting environmentally responsible business activities, and offering environmentally responsible products and services. The RBC Blue Water Project is an innovative, 10-year, \$50 million (Canadian) global commitment to help foster a culture of water stewardship, so that people in communities and cultures across the world have clean fresh water, today and tomorrow.



## Q&A with John Taft

### *Why diversity focus is important as a business leader:*

I didn't have any business exposure until I was in my late 20s; I was a comparative French and English literature major and worked as a newspaper reporter, and it wasn't until I graduated from business school at the age of 27 that I gained any kind of business experience. So, I guess what I've done is cobbled together this collage of business and community leader influences, and there are many people whose style and approach, pieces, elements of it, I've picked up, and used, and that I use today. I could go through a pretty long list, but there are people that I worked for, people on that list that I had watched operate in the world.

### *Role models who shaped his thinking as a business leader:*

I wouldn't say there is any one person after whom I've tried to model myself or anybody that I thought walked on water per se. Most leaders that I admire are flawed individuals—at their core, they've got some kind of dysfunctionality that drives them. The question is how have they harnessed that, and how have they managed that, so that it translates into constructive leadership behavior instead of dysfunctional leadership behavior.

### *Concept and style of leadership:*

Leaders need to be adaptable, they need to be flexible and they need to have more than one style and approach. You have to be ready to do different things at different times, based on the circumstances your business faces. If you ask what do I try to have as a common aspect at all times, I try to be completely transparent and honest. I think integrity is absolutely critical, and I try to manage from a place of integrity. Communicating honestly and directly, and treating people fairly, being clear about what you're doing, and being honest when it's not working and you're changing direction—all of those things have to do with integrity. I think just being an authentic leader is really important—that is, being yourself.

### *The most important advice he would give another business leader about diversity and inclusion:*

After my experience running RBC Wealth Management, I am a complete and total believer in the power, engagement and energy that an inclusive environment creates in the workplace. I am totally convinced that motivated employees who care create a workplace environment that engages employees—which translates directly and immediately into client satisfaction and business success, particularly in our business, where client satisfaction and the client experience is driven by employees. So, I would say don't hold back. Embrace diversity and inclusion completely, and it will come back to you many times over in terms of employee engagement, which will come back to you in terms of business performance. That would be my advice. **PDJ**



John Taft

#### COMPANY:

RBC Wealth Management

#### TITLE:

CEO of RBC U.S. Wealth Management

#### EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University; MA in Public and Private Management from the Yale School of Organization and Management

**FIRST JOB:** Reporter, *Taos News*

#### FAVORITE SAYING:

"Stewardship is a moral activity."

#### WHAT I'M READING:

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot

**INTERESTS:** Contemporary art; athletics

**CHILDHOOD HERO:** Mickey Mantle

#### BEST PICTURE (FILM/ART):

Anything by Julie Mehretu

#### FAVORITE CHARITIES:

Walker Art Center; Yale University; St. Mark's Cathedral

#### WHAT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES HAS RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT PLANNED FOR 2011?

RBC Wealth Management's top diversity goals in 2011 include leveraging the leadership talent of women through our Women's Growth Strategy; focusing on strengthened internal and external communication about diversity initiatives; and laying the groundwork for a Minority Growth Strategy.



# Commitment

At RBC Wealth Management, one of our core values is service. We express this value by building meaningful relationships with the clients and communities we serve. We are committed to the community because we recognize that the strength of our business is directly related to the well-being of the communities where we live and work.

[www.rbcwm-usa.com](http://www.rbcwm-usa.com)

Create your path forward.



**RBC Wealth Management®**