

# Case Study:

## Inclusive Art Procurement at Daniels



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## SUMMARY

- The Daniels Corporation (Daniels) is a developer with a 37-year history in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), building more than 35,000 award-winning homes and apartments, master-planned mixed-use communities, and commercial and retail spaces.
- As Daniels worked with community partners to support economic development, the firm recognized their contracting approaches excluded small-scale artists and artisans in the local creative economy.
- Beginning in 2010, Daniels launched a local art procurement program that is now a part of the social impact approach on all developments in the company's portfolio across the GTA.
- Through a roster of local artists and artisans, and non-profit partners like Artscape Atelier, Daniels' local art purchasing totalled over \$500,000 in 2020, with 87% from diverse suppliers. Their experience offers valuable lessons for other companies.

## BACKGROUND

As a builder and developer, The Daniels Corporation (Daniels) describes its mission as the design of buildings that reflect the aesthetics of their neighbourhoods and can reinforce social, cultural and economic infrastructures within communities to maximize impact.

Typically, within the residential real estate industry, these aims are advanced through core parts of the development process, such as planning, architecture, community engagement and the curation of public art that often sits adjacent to buildings. While these elements are important parts of the city-building process, the Daniels team has recognized that more could be done to support inclusive local economic development in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with social procurement as an important pillar.

## THE CHALLENGE

In 2005, Daniels partnered with Toronto Community Housing to redevelop the first three phases of the Regent Park neighbourhood into a vibrant, mixed-income, mixed-use community. By 2010, with the revitalization underway, the company was working with community partners to support inclusive local economic development. Through training and employment programs, jobs and pathways to employment were created for community members who had previously been excluded from the labour market. However, with local initiatives focused primarily on providing full-time training and employment opportunities, those looking for alternative ways to participate in the local economy, like artists, artisans and other creative entrepreneurs, continued to be left out.

Daniels' past developments had revealed that embedding arts and culture into the fabric of communities could have many benefits, but the company had not previously developed a framework for supporting small-scale artists and artisans in the local creative economy. For example, Daniels routinely purchased art for display in common areas and amenity spaces within buildings and often procured these from established galleries or art depots. Similarly, move-in gifts, like gift baskets and home goods, which were presented to purchasers as a way to welcome them to their new communities were typically standardized products and often mass-produced.

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While these art pieces and items were sufficient, the company's leaders and team members working on the revitalization of Regent Park recognized that they were missing opportunities to highlight local creative talent, support local economic development through these purchases and enhance the uniqueness and vibrancy of new Daniels communities. This meant that talented local artists and craftspeople could not participate in local economic development initiatives in the same way as other residents in more traditional training and career paths.

## WHAT THE COMPANY DID

Striving to think 'beyond the bricks and mortar' to the creation of pathways and opportunities for local economic development, Daniels looked for ways to leverage existing budgets to maximize impact through social procurement. In particular, the company wanted to take a community-based approach to art purchasing that could simultaneously beautify the community, celebrate local storytelling and heritage, and bring economic benefit and exposure to local artists.

Daniels' social procurement program for local art began in 2010 through a partnership with the Dixon Hall Mill Centre and Service Canada to commission over 170 hand-crafted planter boxes, which were offered as move-in gifts to all purchasers at the One Park West Condominium. The planter boxes were crafted by youth in Regent Park, who received skilled training and employment through the program. Following this success, Daniels worked with its interior design consultant a year later to purchase 17 pieces of original art from local artists that were displayed throughout the common areas and amenity spaces at the Paintbox Condominium.

In the 10 years since the launch of its local art procurement program, Daniels has found ways to further leverage its purchasing power and formalize its activities to support local artists and artisans. Since 2012, local art procurement has been part of Daniels' social impact approach on all developments in the company's residential and commercial portfolios across the GTA. The company now has its own roster of over 300 artists and artisans.

Daniels also works with organizations like Artscape Atelier, a Toronto-based social enterprise that specializes in supporting real estate and other companies to design and execute local art procurement, public art commissions and placemaking projects. Through those partnerships, Daniels taps into additional networks of local artists and artisans to work on everything from small-batch productions of move-in gifts like handmade coasters to large-scale placemaking installations like street furniture and sculptures.

### **Inclusive Procurement and the ILEO Corporate Charter**

One of the action areas for signatories of the **Inclusive Local Economic Opportunity (ILEO) Corporate Charter**, inclusive procurement creates opportunities through a business' ongoing purchase of goods and services, adding social goals or impact to traditional purchasing criterion such as price, quality and timing. It leverages the considerable purchasing power of large organizations to support suppliers that are locally-owned, diverse and/or have a social mission to support people in vulnerable communities.

Among the benefits of inclusive procurement are supporting local economic development and supplier diversity, with compelling evidence that women- and minority-owned small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) add value to large organizations by representing and reflecting their diverse customers or employees and creating more robust supply chains and new markets. Inclusive procurement opportunities can range from suppliers of professional services (e.g. staffing, consulting), to goods and services (cleaning, delivery and catering) and arts and culture.

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## HOW DOES IT WORK?

### ***Example: Daniels' Move-In Gift Art Purchasing Program at Lighthouse Towers***

In 2020, as Daniels' Social Impact and Marketing teams were preparing to source the company's single largest purchase of move-in gifts to welcome residents to their new homes, social procurement was a top priority. Working in partnership with Artscape Atelier, Daniels commissioned a total of 965 welcome gifts for its Lighthouse Towers purchasers at Daniels Waterfront - City of the Arts community.



*The art pieces above are part of Daniels' Move-In Gift Art Purchasing Program were created by local artist Darren Rigo, and commissioned through a partnership with Artscape Atelier as part of Daniels' Move-In Gift Art Purchasing Program for Lighthouse Towers at Daniels Waterfront – City of the Arts. Each silk scarf depicts a map of Toronto with local resources or points of interest identified – including art galleries, public art, museums or water fountains. The photos above were provided by Artscape Atelier.*

Here is how the process unfolded:

1. The Daniels team and Artscape Atelier **determined the concept and theme** for the move-in gifts, reflecting neighbourhood and purchaser characteristics, culture, and values.
2. Artscape Atelier **issued an Art Call to their roster of local artists** and broader network, focusing on artists with a connection to the Waterfront community.
3. **Artists were selected through a jury process** that included team members from Atelier, Daniels, and local artists.
4. **Atelier signed contracts with the selected artists and managed the production process** through to delivery of the move-in gifts to new residents during occupancy.
5. **The Daniels team tracked and analyzed data** about the program to assess the level of community impact and whether the move-in gift program could be improved.

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## RESULTS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Understanding that data collection is crucial to impact measurement, Daniels has implemented systems that track social procurement spending and outcomes. Key measures for 2020 include:

- **Spending of over \$500,000**, including \$341,400 on local art procurement and \$172,100 on move-in gifts; and
- **Over 87% diverse suppliers** (i.e. over 50% women- or minority-owned) engaged through the social procurement program.

“Social procurement is a powerful tool to demonstrate how much a company cares. It’s also incredibly easy to put into practice, and starts with a simple premise and promise. The premise is that companies spend money in every community in which they have a footprint. The promise is to hire and train as many team members as possible locally, and spend money with intentionality, with a lens sharply focused on making a positive impact for local residents and the local economy.”

– Mitchell Cohen, President and CEO, The Daniels Corporation

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Investing in social procurement does not necessarily require new budgets or additional funding.** Organizations should look at existing purchasing habits and identify areas where they can engage with local businesses and entrepreneurs to develop a social procurement program. For more information about how to implement a successful local art procurement program, please consult the Local Art Procurement “How-To” Guide for ILEO Companies.
- **Local talent and service providers exist.** Local suppliers are available for everything from catering to artwork to landscaping. Investing in local businesses and entrepreneurs builds capacity in the local economy and diversifies supply chains.
- **Partnerships are key.** Associations, agencies and not-for-profit organizations like Artscape Atelier can provide access to local networks of entrepreneurs and businesses that facilitate social procurement processes for organizations that may not have the in-house expertise.

## THE COMPANY AND CONTACT

The Daniels Corporation is a builder and developer that builds with a passion for creating vibrant communities in every sense of the word. Understanding that quality of life is created by much more than physical buildings, Daniels goes above and beyond to integrate building excellence with opportunities for social, cultural and economic well-being. In so doing, value is created for everyone. Over the course of its 37-year history, Daniels has built more than 35,000 award-winning homes and apartments, master-planned mixed-use communities, and commercial and retail spaces.

To learn more, contact Fatima Saya, Manager of Social Impact at [fsaya@danielscorp.com](mailto:fsaya@danielscorp.com)

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## ABOUT ILEO

The Inclusive Local Economic Opportunity (ILEO) Initiative brings together the private, public, and community sectors to find innovative ways to reduce gaps in economic prosperity at the neighbourhood level. ILEO is convened by [United Way Greater Toronto](#) and [BMO](#).

To read other case studies from ILEO Corporate Charter signatories, please visit the [ILEO Resource Hub](#)

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