

People Who Make Hawaii Work: Cayenne Pea

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rental development firm affiliated with [Forest City Hawaii](#), as a principal overseeing finance and operations. Her current projects include an affordable housing plan to develop approximately 390 rental apartments and a public elementary school on state land at 690 Pohukaina St. in Kakaako.

Pea, who was born and raised on Oahu and graduated from Kamehameha Schools, was previously director of finance for Forest City Hawaii. Prior to joining Forest City in 2008, she was a senior auditor with Deloitte and Touche. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Loyola Marymount University and is a Certified Public Accountant. Pea is a member of the finance committee on the YWCA of Oahu board and recently joined the young leaders board of directors at Make-a-Wish Hawaii.

Tell me a little about your job: Alakai Development is a small shop, so I wear many different hats that range from underwriting and evaluating potential deals to managing operating assets.

Why I took this job: Most of my experience has been in managerial roles at large publicly traded corporations. This is the complete opposite in every sense of the word since we are a small and local company, so I was lured by the opportunity to exercise my entrepreneurial muscles and work more independently.

Like most about the job: Ultimately the most rewarding aspect of my job is being part of the village it takes to create meaningful places for local people to live.

Immediate priority: Progressing two projects in our pipeline to place equity by the end of the year.

Biggest challenges in my industry: They say not to fall in love with

the deal. There are so many ways a project can die, so the biggest challenge is getting to the closing table. It involves underwriting a structure that survives stress tests, negotiating an agreement with the landowner and any equity partners, securing financing, and obtaining permits- all at the same time.

Essential business philosophy: People are your greatest asset. When everything else gets challenging, the people I work with are what keep me coming to work every day. Take care of them in ways that make sense for them, everyone's needs are different. Transparency goes a long way and integrity looks good on everybody.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Follow your passion. If you do what you love, success will come naturally and can be defined without a dollar sign.

Biggest risk taken in my career: I moved home less than a year after graduating from college in California and have always wondered if that was too soon. I would have loved more experience working on the Mainland but have been fortunate to work for Mainland-based publicly traded companies while living in paradise. Not a bad gig!

Most important mentor: To say that I have a most important mentor would be unfair to all of the influential people I've worked with. If I were to describe my mentors using their most admirable traits I would say: empowered, honorable, and grounded.

I'm inspired by: Growth. To be truly content both personally and professionally I have to be in a position where I am being challenged and growing while also being able to grow others at the same time.

Favorite island: Kauai for everything there is to do outdoors. I recently hiked to Waipoo Falls in Waimea Canyon for the first time. The change in terrain is pretty neat — it starts off in a forest of maile ginger and then turns into dry desert before arriving at a waterfall.