Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers

By Great Place to Work® and Pride at Work Canada
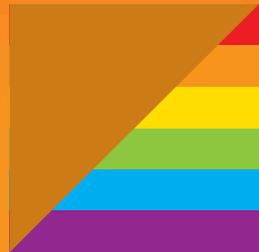
TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHORS:

Alison Grenier
Head of Culture and Research
Great Place to Work®

Jacq Hixson-Vulpe
Coordinator, LGBT Inclusion Index
Pride at Work Canada

Great Place to Work® is the global authority on building, sustaining and recognizing high-trust workplaces. Their mission is to build a better society by creating great workplaces–for all.

Pride at Work Canada is the leading national not-for-profit confronting LGBT inclusion in Canadian workplaces. Through dialogue, education and leadership, they empower organizations to foster a workplace culture that recognizes LGBT employees as an important part of a diverse workforce.

"All people everywhere deserve to work in an organization where they trust their leaders, take pride in what they do, and enjoy their colleagues. More and more organizations realize that high-trust workplaces–where every employee's potential is realized–are good for business and good for society."

Kim Peters, Executive Vice President,
Great Place to Work®

"The progress we have seen in the last few decades is astonishing, but we need to continue to work together to build a bright future for LGBT people. For each of us who breaks a barrier or cracks a ceiling, there's someone else who needs a helping hand."

Colin Druhan, Executive Director
Pride at Work Canada

Introduction
written by Great Place to Work®

Workplace diversity is the new normal. Business leaders everywhere recognize diversity in all its forms as a competitive advantage. Diverse perspectives drive creativity, innovation and foster a feeling among employees that their opinion matters, which encourages them to give their best effort and stick around. According to Michael Bush, CEO of Great Place to Work®, "when employees look up, look to the left and to the right, they internalize what they see, it gives them hope that they will be seriously listened to when approaching leaders with new product ideas, growth opportunities, or simply to connect. This hope fuels increased commitment which is needed for innovation and the attraction and retention of A-team players of all types."

And it seems that business leaders are putting this belief into practice. The vast majority of Canadian workplaces are representative of the communities in which they operate, have a formal diversity committee–with access to a budget–as well as an executive champion to drive this agenda forward.

Despite this overwhelming strategic focus on diversity, many Canadian organizations are still reporting that, while overt racism, sexism and homophobia is not as prevalent as it was a decade ago, diversity in workplaces has not yet translated into true inclusiveness.

Diversity is about ensuring you have people of different backgrounds and experiences represented in the workplace. Inclusiveness takes it a step further by creating an environment where people's differences of thought and experience are actually appreciated and viewed as a business advantage. Many well-meaning organizations have jumped on the bandwagon to hire for diversity without having the programs and structures in place to truly bring diverse perspectives into the fold.

Diversity in itself does not create inclusion–an inclusive environment must be intentionally designed, nurtured and supported.

At our research and consulting firm, Great Place to Work®, we have been studying great workplaces and exploring issues around high-trust, high-performing cultures for over 25 years. Says Ed Frauenheim, Director of Research and Content at Great Place to Work, "One thing we've noticed: no culture is perfect. Even at the best workplaces recognized for exceptional levels of trust, pride and camaraderie experienced by employees, there are gaps. Women report having a less-great experience at work than men. Or, frequently, front-line employees rate their workplace poorer than executives".

These gaps make a difference. Our research indicates that the more consistently all people in an organization consider their workplace great, the more that company gets a leg up on rivals in areas including growth, retention and extra effort. The more employees of diverse backgrounds feel they can speak up and make honest mistakes—elements of a high-trust culture—the more likely innovation efforts are to succeed.

"Having consistently great workplaces boils down to not wasting human potential. As a global society, we all need to recognize that every person counts. That all people deserve and can have a great experience at work. And that when they do, there's a ripple effect—as those employees leave good days on the job to be better parents, community members, citizens."

Ed Frauenheim, Director of Research and Content,
Great Place to Work®

This disconnect between diversity and inclusion is experienced by women, aboriginal people and ethnic minorities, but it is especially marked for the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans) community.

Despite great progress in the last decade, homophobia and transphobia still exist in the workplace and remain under represented in diversity and Inclusion conversations.

As illustrated in the 2014 In & Out study of Canadian workplaces, almost 30% of LGBT-identified respondents felt that they experienced discrimination in the workplace as opposed 2.9% of the general population.[1] Specifically, 4.1% of LGBT respondents reported some type of daily discrimination in their workplace, as opposed to 0.8% of the general population. For trans-identified people, even accessing gainful employment is challenging. As described by TRANS Pulse researcher Dr. Greta Baur in the 2009 study of trans Ontarians, 20% of respondents were unemployed and 15% were employed part time.[2] These experiences highlight that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity remain issues to be addressed by employers. Creating welcoming environments is a great start, but full engagement and addressing systemic barriers must also be included in this process to make meaningful change.

[1] Sasso, Thomas and Amy Ellard-Gray "In & Out: Diverging Perspectives on LGBT inclusion in the Workplace" Available at: http://www.ccdi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/20150515-Report-LGBT-In-and-Out-Diverging-Perspectives-on-LGBT-Inclusion-in-the-Workplace.pdf

[2] Bauer G and Ayden Schiem. "Transgender People in Ontario, Canada Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy." 17 October 2014. Available at: http://transpulseproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trans-PULSE-Statistics-Relevant-for-Human-Rights-Policy-June-2015.pdf

85%
of organizations have a diversity team or person whose mandate explicitly includes LGBT diversity...

81%
of these have access to a budget.

63%
of organizations have an LGBT champion at CEO/Executive level ...

but only
59%
communicate a strong leadership message on the importance of LGBT inclusion in the workplace to all employees.

Most organizations want to do the right thing when it comes to supporting LGBT employees in the workplace, but might not fully understand the challenges faced by these populations or their ethical and legal obligations to support them in the workplace. Our research findings highlight that many organizations have made strides in relation to diversity based on sexual orientation, but more support is needed for employees with diverse gender identities and expressions.

Great Place to Work® has partnered with Pride at Work Canada to help employers better understand LGBT communities and build workplaces that harness their employees' full potential. Canadian workplaces have come a long way in the last few decades but there are additional steps that need to be taken to expand the inclusion circle to other marginalized groups.

The LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers is a practical tool to help organizations develop more LGBT inclusive workplaces, focusing on and sharing the best practices great Canadian organizations, of all structures and sizes, have found to be instrumental in building an inclusive workforce. This guide will help drive the conversation around inclusive policies & programs that are changing the way Canadian workplaces operate.
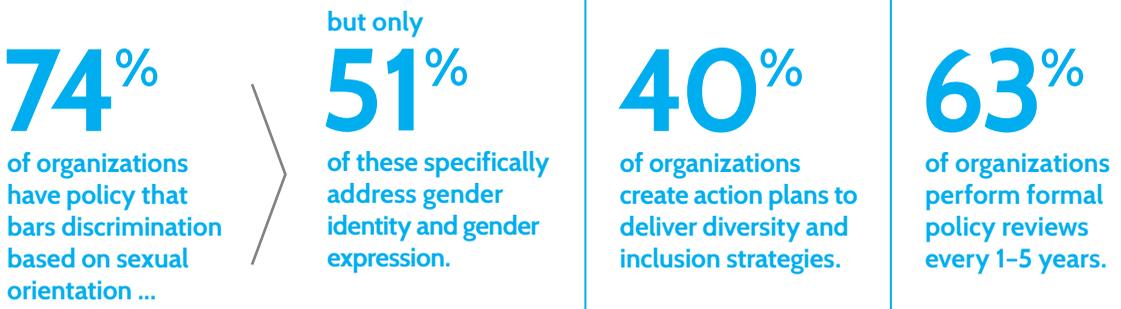
Top 12 Strategies to Promote Inclusion of LGBT People in the Workplace

1. Put it in Writing!

If you want to show you are serious about tackling all forms of discrimination in your organization, it is essential that you have a formal policy outlining your position and the expected behaviors of all people in your employ.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies make it clear that harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated ... and set standards and expectations for behavior".[3] It is important that your anti-discrimination and harassment policies specifically reflect sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination, and provide examples of what homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic discrimination looks like.

Policies should be made easily accessible through intranet sites or all staff communications, and should set out roles and responsibilities for compliance. These policies support employees' understanding of what type of behavior is inappropriate, while communicating that these issues are taken seriously. Not only is this important in terms of communicating your organization's support of LGBT employees, it is also required by human rights legislation across Canada.

74% of organizations have policy that bars discrimination based on sexual orientation ...

but only 51% of these specifically address gender identity and gender expression.

40% of organizations create action plans to deliver diversity and inclusion strategies.

63% of organizations perform formal policy reviews every 1–5 years.

[3] Ontario Human Rights Comission "Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies" Available at http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures/5-anti-harassment-and-anti-discrimination-policies

Anti-harassment and discrimination policies are living documents that should be reviewed on a regular basis (at least every 3-5 years) to ensure that policy language remains current, reflective of corporate values, and meets human rights legislative requirements.

2. Use Gender Neutral Language

When reviewing policy, be mindful of gendered language. Rather than using "he" or "he/she", it is acceptable and preferred to use "they" as a singular gender natural pronoun (as is the practice of many major news outlets such as The Washington Post). Not only does replacing this outdated language simplify policies, it also ensures that people who don't identify as either a man or a woman still feel that they are represented in these policies.

48% **of organizations use gender neutral language in their benefits policies.**

In addition, organizations are encouraged to review their dress codes. Rather than stating what is appropriate and professional dress for men and women, why not state that all employees must dress to meet professional standards, without dictating whether people should wear skirts or pants? Examining policies while keeping in mind all the ways gendered language enforce stereotypes erases the existence of gender queer and gender non-binary people within organizations.

3. Ensure Your Benfits Package is Relevant to All Employees

In order to ensure your benefits package meets the needs of LGBT employees, it is important to understand their specific needs related to medical coverage, parental leave, bereavement, etc. At the most inclusive workplaces, benefits packages include coverage for drugs related to HIV/AIDs (including PrEP) and coverage for transition related costs (including gender affirmation surgery). As above, ensure you are using inclusive language and perform regular reviews to ensure your benefits package remains relevant to employees.

33% of organizations brief their benefits administrators on application of benefits for LGBT employees.

11% of organizations cover transition related surgeries.

> ✓ **INCLUSION ACTION:**
>
> Where not already covered by employees' provincial or territorial government health plan, TD Bank provides coverage for physician fees and hospitalization costs, plus psychiatric therapy for gender affirmation surgery. This coverage is consistent with their view that a diverse and inclusive workplace is fundamental to TD's culture.

4. Implement Organization-Wide Diversity Training

To ensure your organization's diversity and inclusion work is implemented in a holistic fashion, it is important to provide related training to all employees. Organization-wide training should include a review of discrimination and harassment policies, education on the use of respectful (vs. harmful) language, and detail how your organization will support an employee who has experienced and/or witnessed discrimination and/or harassment.

55%
of organizations target training to new employees.

63%
of organizations target training to senior managers.

56%
of organizations target training to people managers.

51%
of organizations target training to all other employees not included above.

OF THESE ORGANIZAITONS:

29%
have a training rate of 75–100% of employees.

14%
have a training rate of 50-74% of employees.

33%
have a training rate of 49% or less of employees.

An organization's training strategy should be broad enough to reflect not only the range of roles and responsibilities within the organization but the individual dynamics of each business area. While all employees should receive similar content, the training language and style may vary from department to department.

Above all, training should be reinforced with appropriate behaviors modelled at all levels of the organization (especially the leadership level) to ensure your initiatives are embedded in the day-to-day functioning of the organization.

✓ INCLUSION ACTION:

Google offers Unconscious Bias at Work training to all Googlers. By examining and challenging our own biases, we can make better decisions and foster a more inclusive workplace, and world. Google thinks it's never too early to start busting bias, so last year, they incorporated Busting Bias @ Work training to every Googler's first day at Google.

5. Provide Specific Training For People Managers

People managers should be invested in the care and well-being of those who work for them and are responsible for ensuring their teams interact in a professional and respectful manner. Specific diversity and inclusion training for people managers helps ensure they fully understand this responsibility and know how to act on it.

People managers must be aware of the organization's discrimination and harassment policies and their specific role in ensuring compliance. People managers are often the first point of contact for questions around health benefits, dress code, use of washrooms, etc. so it is important that they can answer questions confidently and respectfully, and know where to direct an employee if further support is needed. Many people managers will defer any uncomfortable questions to HR - for fear of "saying the wrong thing" – but a manager who understands the organization's stance on these issues and is comfortable discussing it sets the tone for inclusion in their department. Training leads to confidence. And being an inclusive leader does not come naturally to all people managers. As pointed out by Pat Wadors' in her article on diversity and inclusion in The Harvard Business Review, people managers often require training that increases "their on-the-job-contract with [marginalized communities] and promote social accountability."[4]

> **✓ INCLUSION ACTION:**
>
> The world around us, and how we interact with one another, is rapidly changing and BMO is changing with it. The Learn from Difference program is an innovative, multi-year learning experience that has engaged BMO's people managers and employees in a deeper conversation on what inclusion means. From understanding that we all have bias to speaking up and taking action to counter bias, Learn from Difference has been a resounding success that has galvanized 6,000 people managers and leaders to take steps to act more inclusively in everything they do and helped to increase inclusion across the bank.

[4] Dobbin, Frank and Alexandra Kalev, "Why Diversity Programs Fail". Harvard Business Review. July-August 2016.

14% of organizations consider LGBT-inclusive diversity and inclusion as required knowledge for manager roles.

48% of organizations make people managers accountable for diversity and inclusion outcomes.

25% of organizations have a process by which regional or departmental managers are nominated as LGBT diversity champions for their area.

11% of organizations have their people managers undergo advanced training on LGBT issues relevant to their role.

33% of organizations expect managers to raise awareness of LGBT issues, relevant to their role as a people manager.

48% of organizations ensure that guidance and resources are available for managers on supporting LGBT employees.

7% of organizations expect managers to make resources and guidance available to LGBT employees.
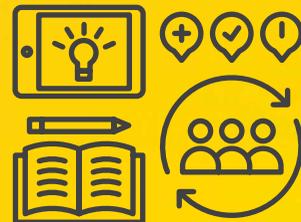
6. Support Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are "voluntary, employee-led groups made up of individuals who join together based on common interests, backgrounds or demographic factors such as gender, race or ethnicity."[5] ERGs provide safe places for people to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and work to end homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Others see them as an opportunity for people with like-minded interests or identities to be social together. While this can be a meaningful and important part of what an ERG does, it should not end there.

As discussed in Glenn Llopis' article in Forbes magazine, "ERGs in organizations must transition from social networks to think-tank groups that directly impact business."[6] Engaging members of LGBT ERGs can foster development of new recruits and retain long-term volunteers by supporting them to advance their careers, develop leadership skills, and gain visibility with senior leadership. Having an LGBT ERG is integral to any organization's ability to create an inclusive environment. As noted by Shelton Goode, in his review of ERGs in the US, he says that, "ERG members help new employees to get comfortable during the onboarding process," which is important as studies demonstrate "the first 60 to 90 days of employment are a critical time for any new hire, and they can be particularly challenging for members of traditionally underrepresented groups."[7]

74% of organizations have active LGBT employee resource groups ...

79% of these have access to a budget and other resources.

⊘ INCLUSION ACTION:

Sapient Canada has a deep-rooted belief that diversity of thought drives innovation, and last year, introduced PRIDE (Potential Realized in Diverse Experiences) to all of their offices. PRIDE is the Sapient network for LGBT and straight-ally Sapient people. Each location has a local champion and executive sponsors who hold regular meetings and specific events connected to the focus of the group this also includes hosting external guest speakers. The focus of the local PRIDE group this year was anti-bullying.

---

[5] Goode, Shelton and Isaac Dixon "Are Employee Resource Groups Good for Business" Society for Human Resource Management, August 2015. Available at https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0916/pages/are-employee-resource-groups-good-for-business.aspx

[6] Llopis, Glenn "7 Ways to Enable Your Employee Resource Groups into a Powerful Advancement Platform" Forbes. Jun 18, 2012 Available at http://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2012/06/18/7-ways-to-enable-your-employee-resource-groups-into-a-powerful-advancement-platform/#192afa1e69e0

[7] Goode, Shelton and Isaac Dixon "Are Employee Resource Groups Good for Business" Society for Human Resource Management, August 2015. Available at https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0916/pages/are-employee-resource-groups-good-for-business.aspx

7. ... And Listen To Them!

Providing space and resources for ERGs is a starting point, but encouraging engagement with them will help you understand the specific needs of the communities you wish to support. Active involvement in ERGs should be encouraged among leaders–and potential leaders–as extra curricular activities that support promotion and advancement. Your LGBT ERG can advise you on policy review and development (i.e., how to change employee benefits packages so they are more LGBT inclusive) and suggest potential partnerships with organizations that can support your LGBT inclusion efforts (i.e., for education, policy review or philanthropy).
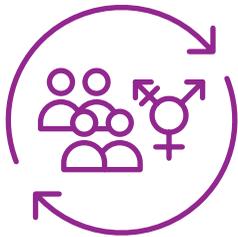
48% of organizations support ERGs in advising on issues related to LGBT inclusion with regard to internal policies and procedures.

44% of organizations support ERGs in advising on business development/service delivery.

✓ INCLUSION ACTION:

On National Coming Out Day and in collaboration with all global RBC PRIDE initiatives, RBC ran a feature story in their intranet, profiling 13 international participants from the LGBT & Allies community sharing their stories, and a timeline of RBC's LGBT milestones. The feature led visitors to LGBT@RBC on the RBC Connect social media site where they found extended stories from the participants, rich resources on coming out or supporting someone coming out, and Fostering LGBT Inclusion video clips from an international employee panel.

GREAT PLACE TO WORK® | PRIDE AT WORK CANADA — FIERTÉ AU TRAVAIL CANADA

8. Support Gender Transition In The Workplace

Most people in and out of the workplace are accepting of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, but the same cannot be said for people undergoing gender transition in the workplace. This population continues to face discrimination, isolation and fear in the workplace, an issue which requires specific support from employers. As an organization committed to creating an inclusive environment for all, providing specific gender transition guidelines will be helpful to both the person who is transitioning and their co-workers.

11% of organizations have benefits packages which cover medical transition related costs.

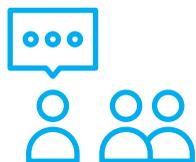**11%** of organizations are in conversation with their insurance providers around this issue.

44% of organizations have documented processes and supporting guidelines in place to assist someone transitioning ...

though only **18%** of organizations ensure that all employees and staff are made aware of these documents.

40% of organizations have current employees with experience in assisting someone transitioning.

As outlined by both the Human Rights Campaign and The 519's Creating Authentic Spaces, gender transition guidelines ensure that there is institutional protocol on how to support an employee who transitions. Gender transition refers to the process that some trans people undergo to affirm their gender identity. For some people their transition may include changing their name and how they dress. For others, this may include accessing hormones and surgeries. There is no singular way for a person to transition; this is a personal process that is to be defined by the individual and it is integral that these guidelines and any formal documents communicate that.

Transition guidelines should clearly delineate responsibilities and expectations of supervisors, colleagues, and other staff, as well as clearly stating that any employee who wishes to transition will be supported. As outlined in Creating Authentic Spaces, these guidelines should outline the following:

- expectations as to what kinds of support transitioning employees will receive from management;
- expectations of management and other staff in facilitating a successful workplace transition;
- related policies and practices for assisting with the transition process, such as washroom accommodations, health care, dress code, anti-harassment policies, confidentiality and privacy, individual accommodation needs, recognizing the person's new name, and training for management, staff, and clients.

Having these guidelines in place prior to an employee transitioning, signals to prospective and current employees that this is an issue that your organization takes seriously and outwardly supports people's diverse gender identities and expressions.

✓ INCLUSION ACTION:

Intuit wants employees to be themselves always and to feel supported doing so. Employees who wish to have gender affirmation surgery may do so with almost complete coverage. This includes pre-surgery counseling, the surgery itself and any medications.

9. You Can't Change What You Don't Measure

Implementing policies and programs that support workplace inclusion is part of a larger process, which requires understanding and evaluation. Collecting workplace demographics related to sexual orientation and gender identity can help an organization understand the personal characteristic of employees and whether these have any impact on measures such as retention rates, promotions, rewards and recognition.

51% of organizations link diversity to goals and values and define measurable objectives and milestones.

7% of organizations measure the effectiveness and understanding of the policies and actions on employees and their environment.

29% of organizations evaluate the impact of training.

When collecting data, it is important to fully understand the data being collected. Asking if employees identify as LGBT is asking about both sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual) and gender identity (trans or cisgender). Instead, consider asking employees to define, in their own words, how they define their gender identity and sexual orientation, leaving a blank field for the employee to complete, and providing examples of possible responses. This method of collecting data sends a message that your organization values diversity and gives a more accurate picture of your employee demographics.

Before asking employees to share this personal data, it is essential to communicate that the process is voluntary, confidential and the information they share will not be used against them in any way. Many organization believe it is illegal to collect data around employee's sexual orientation; this is a myth. As long as the employer collects data in a voluntary way, ensures confidentiality and states how the data will be used, there is no risk posed to the employer.

✓ INCLUSION ACTION:

At Grant Thornton, leading inclusively is not an initiative, it is a commitment. Their National Management Committee appointed Inclusiveness Partners (IPs) in each of their business units to ensure that their Leading inclusively goals were being role modeled and embedded in their people practices and processes at the local office level. Annually, employees are surveyed to understand their perceptions, to measure progress and inform the Leading inclusively priorities each year. The IPs review and share the results as well as develop action plans that are locally relevant and nationally aligned.

10. It Starts at the Top

There is no such thing as an inclusive workplace without an inclusive leadership team. Regardless of the policies and programs an organization has in place, inclusion efforts will fall flat if this behavior is not modelled at the most senior level.

Many organizations evaluate inclusivity on an organizational level by reviewing new hires, promotions, pay and recognition by aggregate employee demographics. This helps to identify where the organization's inclusivity efforts are successful and where they need some extra work. An increasing number of organizations now look at the inclusivity of individual leaders as part of their balanced scorecard review. This might include looking at each leader's efforts to promote inclusion within their team (i.e., by furthering their inclusion education or getting involved with ERGs) and creating equal opportunities for all team members (i.e., by reviewing the demographics of pay and promotions within their teams).

Having "out" LGBT leadership can also demonstrate an organizational commitment to LGBT inclusion and help attract and retain other key players. Encouraging leadership development of LGBT employees though mentorship programs and targeted outreach for leadership opportunities helps LGBT people visualize themselves in positions of leadership and help shape their goals for the future.
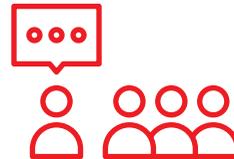
63%
of organizations have an Employee Resource Group sponsor at the CEO/Executive level ...

63%
attend events.

70%
meet periodically with the group.

✔ INCLUSION ACTION:

TD Bank has a longstanding commitment to diversity. Now in its 10th year, their formal Diversity Leadership Council (DLC) meets bi-monthly to set priorities and monitor progress in all areas of Diversity and Inclusion. The DLC, which consists of senior representatives for all locations and business lines, reports quarterly to the Group President and CEO and the Senior Executive team. DLC members also regularly communicate diversity updates throughout the organization, emphasizing the importance of diversity to TD and its long-term sustainability.

11. Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

The best way to show support for diversity and inclusion is to make it part of your organizational structure, and this includes providing a budget. This shows that your organization recognizes the business and social value of fostering an inclusive workplace.

Financial support for training ensures everyone in your organization is aware of your organizational commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. Financial support for ERGs encourages inclusive social events and initiatives. Financial support for inclusive benefits helps LGBT people feel valued and cared for in the workplace.

74% of organizaitons provide ERGs with access to a budget and other resources.

48% of organizations' ERGs have an agreed terms of reference or business plan.

11% of organizations are in conversation with insurance providers to ensure that gender transition related costs are covered.

✔ INCLUSION ACTION:

Capco does pro bono work for organizations that advocate for LGBTQ rights. They offer domestic-partner and same-gender partner benefits (and have done for many years), and overall enjoy a strong and diverse culture with people from a broad range of backgrounds, nationalities and ethnicities

12. Develop a Culture of Inclusion

Developing a culture of inclusion requires a multi-pronged approach that incorporates workplace policy, leadership, behavior and assessment.

Diversity is about ensuring people see themselves represented in the environment around them. But as discussed in Wadors' article on diversity in the workplace, diversity efforts "fail" without inclusivity. Inclusion is about ensuring all employees see themselves represented not just in their workplace environment but in organizational policy, leadership, behaviors and attitudes.

Ultimately, inclusion is about creating a welcoming and supportive environment where all employees are accepted for who they are and the value their unique perspectives and experiences bring to the workplace.

59%
of organizations have used safer spaces campaigns.

48%
of organizations have gender neutral washrooms.

48%
of organizations have organizational goal setting which includes topics of discussion or actions that specifically address LGBT issues of inclusion.

✓ INCLUSION ACTION:
Last June, Morningstar organized its first-ever Diversity and Inclusion month. They planned special weekly activities focused on diversity and inclusion, including diversity workshops, games, and a cultural potluck. The goal was to help employees expand and acquire new knowledge of diversity, with the goal of maintaining a working environment that reflects inclusiveness.

The Road Ahead

As illustrated in this LGBT Employer Guide, great strides have been made over the past decade by Canadian employers who have been thoughtful about issues around LGBT inclusion and have led the way in taking action. However, diversity and inclusion work is ever-evolving and there are a few areas which still require more focus and support:

Supplier Diversity

While many organizations have a formal code of conduct for employees, fewer extend this code to their suppliers. Ensuring suppliers align with your organizational values around LGBT inclusion goes a long way toward supporting LGBT entrepreneurship. Consider where your organization orders office supplies, goes to for catering, hires for cleaning, etc. These are all examples of opportunities to support organizations that are committed to LGBT inclusion and diversity.

Unconscious Bias in Recruiting and Hiring Practices

The fact that many LGBT people are underemployed suggests that typical recruiting and hiring practices may be flawed. Consider where your job postings are advertised and how they are written. Do they use gendered language? Are they reaching a diverse range of communities and people? Consider posting to job boards and relevant publications that are geared towards LGBT communities. The further your job posting goes, the more talent your organization will be able to engage!

The selection process can also be full of challenges for an LGBT person. Are applicants dressed in clothing that is not considered "gender appropriate" removed from the candidate pool? On telephone interviews, are people excluded because the tone of their voice is either too high or too low or doesn't match assumptions of what someone should sound like? Do your recruiters know how to interact with references who might not be aware of a previous employee's gender transition (i.e., a candidate's previous employer knew them by a different name and as a different gender). Recruiters and hiring managers should be trained on the many forms of unconscious bias that play out in the hiring process to ensure they are selecting the best person for the job, regardless of differences.

Discrimination and Harassment is Intersectional

The Ontario Human Rights Code recognizes people's experiences of discrimination and harassment as intersectional, viewed through a lens that recognizes social and historical contexts. Furthermore, experiences can be informed by multiple parts of someone's identity (for example, a person being denied a job based on race and gender identify or a person getting a job because of their race and gender identity). We are all denied or granted opportunities because of these intersectional identities (think race, gender identity, class, ability). Having conversations about this may trigger feelings of defensiveness, resulting in an "us vs. them" mentality. Only when inclusion efforts recognize the intersectional nature of discrimination can people move beyond past experiences and look toward the future.

Getting There Together

The practices highlighted in this Employer Guide reflect the collective efforts of many individuals and organizations committed to advancing fairness for LGBT people in the workplace. There is no "one size fits all" solution to creating an inclusive workplace–each organization must find its own way. But whether you have been working on diversity and inclusiveness for some time, or are just starting the journey, we hope this collection of best practices will inspire you to do more to ensure a great place to work "for all" in your organization.

Diversity and inclusion is a holistic endeavour that requires us to recognize people as whole and complicated beings and recognize the systems that impact people's ability to thrive and live authentically in this world. Continuing this work–through connection with others-helps ensure that this work is meaningful, impactful, and creates a sense of belonging for all employees. Not only is this good for business, it's good for people.

Great Place to Work® Canada

2 Bloor Street West
Suite 700
Toronto, ON M4W 3E2

Tel: (866) 712 0630
Email: ca_contact@greatplacetowork.com

greatplacetowork.ca

Pride at Work Canada

66 Wellington St W
PO Box 1091 TDC
Toronto, ON M5K 1P2

Tel: (416) 309 8410
Email: info@prideatwork.ca

prideatwork.ca