

Employer support for LGBT+ talent is falling short

- Most LGBT+ employees surveyed say being out has had a positive impact on their career
- Only 29% of employers have programs focused on the retention of LGBT+ talent
- Even fewer (12%) LGBT+ employees are aware such programs exist within their organization

New York, 30 April 2018 – While the majority (85%) of high performing LGBT+ employees feel comfortable being out at work – indicating that tremendous progress has been made in just a short time – most employers are still not doing all they can to support them and are missing out on the business growth opportunities true LGBT+ inclusion can drive.

New research by PwC and Out Leadership highlights a gap between what high potential LGBT+ employees want from their career and what employers offer. The report – *Out to Succeed: Realizing the full potential of your LGBT+ talent* – is based on an international survey of 231 high-potential LGBT+ employees and 28 corporate leaders from Out Leadership member organizations.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the LGBT+ employees surveyed believe that being out has had a positive impact on their career opportunities and advancement, and 61% on their ability to do business and engage with customers.

Yet despite this, a significant proportion (39%) believe their organization isn't doing enough to encourage LGBT+ diversity in the workplace. And only 35% believe that their company leverages LGBT+ inclusion for business advantage.

Bob Moritz, Global Chairman, PwC, says:

“For too many LGBT+ employees, many organizations still feel closeted. This hinders not only the organizations in recruiting and retention, but, more importantly, this hinders the careers of LGBT+ professionals. All of us need to create inclusive environments where LGBT+ talent can feel safe, free to be their true selves, and fully participate in the workplace. A good leader must represent the greater good and inspire others to do the same. Being an active advocate and ally for LGBT+ equality and inclusion is a clear case in point. Leaders can't hide or ignore these issues – this is where we must act, where we must be loud in our support for LGBT+ colleagues.”

Career progression and reputation matter

All the LGBT+ employees surveyed said career progression is important to them. Yet, only 29% of the employers surveyed have programs specifically focused on the

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retention of LGBT+ talent. And only 12% of LGBT+ employees are aware that such programs exist within their organization. In addition, while nearly 60% of employers say they take steps to create a pathway to senior management for LGBT+ people, only 43% of employees believe this is the case. To help LGBT+ talent reach their full potential, organizations need to put the right programs in place and communicate them widely.

The shortfall in support for LGBT+ talent is further highlighted by how few of the employees have LGBT+ mentors (28%) or LGBT+ sponsors (10%). For people who've traditionally been underrepresented in management or who may lack the confidence to push themselves forward, this kind of active support is especially valuable for their career progression.

But a focus on career progression alone isn't enough to be a magnet for LGBT+ talent. Nearly all (99%) of the LGBT+ employees surveyed cited an organization's reputation as a fair and equal employer as important when deciding where to work. Surprisingly, 43% of employers don't see this as a prominent factor in their ability to attract LGBT+ talent.

Why LGBT+ inclusion makes business sense

The business case for LGBT+ inclusion comes through loud and clear from the survey. A key benefit includes a stronger brand. 83% of the LGBT+ employees surveyed believe that having an openly supportive focus on LGBT+ has improved their organization's place in the market by being recognized as an inclusive employer. Almost all (96%) the 28 employers surveyed agree.

Around two-thirds (67%) of employees believe that having a supportive focus on LGBT+ has given their organization a better understanding of customers' wants and needs by better matching their diversity and life experiences. Employers agree even more strongly, with 89% believing that a supportive LGBT+ focus has enabled them to gain a better understanding of customer demands.

Todd Sears, Founder and Principal, Out Leadership, says:

“*Out to Succeed*’ demonstrates that the investment global business has made in the development of the next generation of LGBT+ talent is already paying off, and that further investment is warranted. Just over 60% of LGBT+ employees surveyed say that being openly LGBT+ has been an asset in their field, representing an enormous sea change from *‘The Power of Out 2.0,’* the study we released with the Center for Talent Innovation just 5 years ago. At that time, we reported that just 9% of LGBT+ women and 17%+ of LGBT+ men thought their orientation was an asset. The game has changed, but many companies are still missing out on significant opportunities to drive business through inclusion.”

By actively focusing on LGBT+ inclusion, organizations can reap the following benefits:

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Access to a huge market: The global spending power of LGBT+ consumers estimated to be more than \$5 trillion a year¹. Even bigger is what Out Leadership calls the ‘Ally Marketplace’, those consumers who identify as allies to the LGBT+ community, which could reach 8-10 times the size of the LGBT+ market.

Brand influencer: 78% of LGBT+ people and their friends, family and relatives would switch to brands that are known to be LGBT+ friendly². Here again, allies are an important and influential component.

Equality attracts talent: More than 80% of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ millennials (people born between 1980 and 1995) say that an employer’s policy on diversity, LGBT+ equality and workforce inclusion is an important factor when deciding whether to work for them.³

Boost to share performance: A number of companies have created portfolios to invest in LGBT+ friendly companies, showing that overall such companies outperform the market. The Workplace Equality Index⁴, which measures the share performance of corporations that support fairness and equality for LGBT+ employees, outperformed the S&P 500 Index return from in the ten years up to 2016.

Five ways forward

The report sets out five areas organizations should focus on to support LGBT+ equality:

1. Set the right tone from the top and engage CEOs
2. Create clear pathways for career progression
3. Stand up and advocate for equality
4. Build and empower ally networks
5. Create inclusive communications

To find out more and download the report, visit www.pwc.com/talent

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Notes to editors

About the research

PwC and Out Leadership conducted a global survey of 231 high-potential LGBT+ employees and 28 corporate leaders from Out Leadership member organizations over the time period of December 2017 to March 2018. The employees are mostly those

¹ [LGBT Capital](#)

² [Community Marketing & Insights](#)

³ [The female millennial: A new era of talent](#), PwC

⁴ [Workplace Equality Index](#)

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participating in OutNEXT. Participants also include OutNEXT alumni and high-potential employees who have moved from Out Leadership member firms to non-member organizations. All of the surveys were conducted online. All quantitative surveys were conducted on a confidential basis.

About Out Leadership

Out Leadership is the global LGBT+ business network trusted by CEOs and multinational companies to generate Return on Equality®. It creates global executive events and insights that help leaders realize the economic growth and talent dividend derived from inclusive business, and convenes ground-breaking talent accelerators: OutNEXT, the first global leadership development program for the next generation of LGBT+ talent; Quorum, which seeks to advance LGBT+ diversity in corporate governance; and OutWOMEN, which convenes and celebrates LGBT+ women in business.

About OutNEXT

A key initiative of Out Leadership, OutNEXT is the first global talent development program for the next generation of LGBT+ business leaders. The developing leaders in the OutNEXT program are openly LGBT+ employees (typically with between five and eight years of work experience), who are selected by Out Leadership member companies as high potential and high performing, with a strong focus on intersectional diversity within the cohort.

About PwC

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 158 countries with more than 236,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at www.pwc.com.

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In the spirit of [PwC's Global Human Rights policy](#) and our support and involvement with the [UN Global Compact](#), the PwC network has given its support to the UN Human Rights Office's Standards of Conduct for Business. These standards support the business community in tackling discrimination against LGBT+ people. The Standards,

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produced in collaboration with the Institute for Human Rights and Business, build on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and reflect the input of hundreds of companies across diverse sectors.

PwC is also proud to have LGBT+ employee networks established in 15 PwC member firms: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, The Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, UK, US, Vietnam. With Austria, Brazil and France launching their networks this year, most of these networks operate under the mantle of GLEE (Gay, Lesbian and Everyone Else) with a focus on being inclusive of all talent, including allies. You can learn more about the PwC network's approach to LGBT+ in our [2017 Global Annual Review](#).