

LGBTQIA+ Workplace Inclusion

There are many companies leading the way in creating LGBTQIA+ supportive workplaces. They're not just supportive and inclusive, they're also innovative and authentic. So let's look at what they do and why it works.

UNDERSTAND WORKPLACE DIVERSITY IS AN ADVANTAGE

If you're going to create a supportive LGBTQIA+ workplace, chances are you're a company that recognises the value of diversity across the board. This includes but is not limited to:

- race and ethnicity
- age and generation
- gender and gender identity
- sexual orientation
- religious and spiritual beliefs
- disability.

Look at the different LGBTQIA+ inclusivity statements made by some of Australia's most progressive companies and you'll find a common theme that can be summed up as, 'Here you can choose to be yourself.'

It sounds simple, but the companies who are doing it put a lot of time and effort into trying to get it right, and they keep trying.

HAVE PROACTIVE EMPLOYEE CLUBS AND NETWORKS

A salient theme amongst LGBTQIA+ aware employers, such as Westpac, EY, Macquarie, Telstra, Lend Lease, IBM and PWC, is the existence of networks and clubs that support employees. The networks also function to educate leadership about what's required in the workplace and engage with the external LGBTQIA+ community. PWC's GLEE Club is part of a network of employee clubs who share their experiences with each other as well as connecting with other clubs who support a diverse range of employees, e.g. indigenous and disabled.

ENCOURAGE OTHER EMPLOYEES TO BE ALLIES

An ally may be someone who does not identify as LGBTQIA+ but actively supports and challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Encouraging allies in the workplace widens consciousness, creates advocates and can be done in several ways. In 2014, IBM introduced an online training module that leads to a certificate and a pledge to be an ally. At Curtin University, 'Ally' stickers and rainbow keychains are small but effective tools in letting the LGBTQIA+ community feel safer and accepted. Many charities, including the Red Cross, also have ally training.

EVOLVE AND FINE-TUNE TRAINING

Even companies with a good track record recognise the need to continuously address LGBTQIA+ training for employees. With over 12 years' experience in the space, PWC has drilled down to more specific issues, right down to running a course that explored the meaning of 'I' in LGBTQIA+.

Westpac's "Please Explain" training focused on correct terminology and how to address non-inclusive language or behaviours in the workplace.

Understanding the importance of making inclusion visible is something NAB has done with posters. The company also scored a first when the Group Executive Team created a video addressing bullying and harassment that referenced sexual orientation.

MAKE SURE YOUR CAMPAIGNS FIT YOUR BUSINESS

For Global cosmetics brand Mac, supporting LGBTQIA+ Rights was a no brainer. Mac recognised that makeup has



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always been worn by people of all gender identities since time began. Their Viva Glam lipstick is the symbol of a campaign that began over 25 years ago. The full RRP of every Viva Glam lipstick is donated to organisations who support LGBTQIA+ issues. To date MAC has given away more than \$500 million (USD), much of it to transgender causes.

Closer to home ANZ bank's 2014 campaign during Sydney's Mardi Gras, GAYTMs, turned ATMs into art and garnered worldwide attention for its creativity and slogan, 'GAYTMs don't wear the same thing twice honey'.

In 2015, ANZ went national and launched, 'The only GAYTM in the village' campaign, in which the public were encouraged to vote for a location where they'd most like to see a GAYTM. The winner was Daylesford in Victoria, which also happens to have a very strong LGBTQIA+ community, showing ANZ understood its audience.

ESTABLISH LGBTQIA+ FRIENDLY COMPANY POLICIES

Top performing companies develop company policies that protect and support their LGBTQIA+ employees and clients. For example, Comcare has recently redeveloped a Transgender Policy, which outlines the process for when an employee transitions gender in the workplace and clarifies appropriate pronouns, forms of address and the use of amenities. Good policies clarify what behaviour is expected of all employees and what behaviour might constitute harassment or discrimination.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you'd like assistance with supporting your LGBTQIA+ employees and your workforce in general, contact Converge at 1300 687 327.



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