

Top 10 Tips For Creating an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Workplace

1. Make sure your workplace policies are LGBTQ+ inclusive.

Consult with LGBTQ+ employees and seek external advice on this if necessary. Make your policies comprehensive and transparent. Review and update them regularly. Make them public where possible – this will not only help increase inclusion, but also make you more attractive to LGBTQ+ talent and others who value diversity.

2. Provide LGBTQ+ awareness and inclusiveness training.

Many find it unprofessional or uncomfortable to talk about sexual orientation or gender identity. It is up to organisations to educate employees about how to communicate, use welcoming terminology, and respect boundaries.

3. Set up an Employee Resource Group for LGBTQ+ individuals and allies (where possible, and where you have enough employees).

This offers them a safe place to talk, raise issues, and suggest positive changes. These groups tend to have small memberships, and so joining them up externally through a body such as Link, the LGBTQ+ Insurance Network is incredibly helpful, as this will enable the group to tap into more knowledge, experience, and support. Senior sponsorship and support are essential for this group to feel empowered, respected, and impactful.

4. Conduct LGBTQ+ employee surveys regularly.

Don't just survey your LGBTQ+ employees – survey everyone at your organisation. Ask them where your diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are succeeding and where you have room to improve. Ask for suggestions for improvement and make sure your survey is 100% anonymous.

5. Develop a plan for supporting transgender employees – even if you don't currently have any.

If you have a policy – and make it public – you are more likely to attract transgender talent, as well as others who prioritise diversity (including customers). Formalise a process for how to handle an employee's transition, name change and pronouns, and how you will communicate that to your organization while also respecting the privacy of a transitioning employee. This is difficult to get right. Seek experienced, professional advice if you lack the knowledge in-house, and remember to review this plan regularly.

6. Support LGBTQ+ charities and causes.

It's imperative to avoid "Pink washing". Don't just display the rainbow flag during Pride Month. Supporting LGBTQ+ charities or initiatives throughout the year proves you care and are prepared to put your money where your mouth is.

7. Make your LGBTQ+ commitment public.

When trying to recruit LGBTQ+ talent, ensure you make this clear. Highlight LGBTQ+ employees and their achievements at your organisation (with their permission). Highlight the benefits you've seen from greater diversity. LGBTQ+ candidates – and those who value diversity – will pick up on genuine commitment and be more likely to want to work for you. Increasingly, this will also help you attract those clients or customers who value diversity.

8. If you have a mission statement, make sure it includes your commitment to diversity.

Publicise all your efforts to increase inclusion and support the LGBTQ+ community as part of that. Make this information easily accessible on your website.

9. Use neutral, non-excluding language in job postings and job specs.

This isn't just about pronouns; it's about how you describe a role. Wording in job postings has a huge impact on the kind of candidates you attract or put off so it's important to get this right. Are you accidentally writing job postings that LGBTQ+ people don't want to apply for? Get experienced, professional advice on how to do this if you don't have the knowledge in-house.

10. Be proactive in your search for LGBTQ+ talent.

Work with agencies and consultancies who genuinely understand the significance of diversity, but remember to ask them what their internal policies, training and diversity looks like. You can also consider leveraging any Employee Resource Groups to help build a network of more diverse talent based on employees you already have.

Link is the LGBTQ+ Insurance Network. Find out more about their work at: <https://www.lgbtinsurancenetwork.co.uk/about-link/>

If you'd like to discuss how to improve the diverse hiring practices, please contact Ben Johnson at b.johnson@sheffieldhaworth.com, or visit the Sheffield Haworth website at:

<https://www.sheffieldhaworth.com/industry-practices/financial-services/insurance/>