MAKING CHANGE

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LGBT Inclusion—Implementing Policies, Programs, and Practices

About Catalyst

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit corporate membership research and advisory organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive environments and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in New York, San Jose, Toronto, and Zug, and the support and confidence of more than 340 leading corporations, firms, business schools, and associations, Catalyst is connected to business and its changing needs and is the premier resource for information and data about women in the workplace. In addition, Catalyst honors exemplary business initiatives that promote women's leadership with the annual Catalyst Award.

Catalyst's *Making Change* series is designed to give business leaders new perspectives on common workplace issues.

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LGBT Inclusion—Implementing Policies,
Programs, and Practices

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LGBT Inclusion—Implementing Policies, Programs, and Practices.

More and more Catalyst member companies are addressing the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees in their diversity and inclusion initiatives. In fact, 74 percent of U.S.-headquartered companies who participated in the *2006 Catalyst Member Benchmarking Report* listed sexual orientation as a core dimension of their diversity and inclusion efforts.[1] Traditionally, these initiatives have focused on more visibly diverse groups, such as women and people of color; the unique challenges that LGBT employees face at work have not been consistently recognized and addressed. Because LGBT employees—whether or not they are out—are part of every large organization, Catalyst believes that an LGBT initiative is a critical component of any comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy.

The LGBT community is extremely diverse; it includes women, men, people of color, and people of different generations and cultures. As such, many LGBT employees hold double (or even triple) minority status. LGBT women, for example, face various barriers that are attributable to both their LGBT identity and their gender.

Moreover, empirical evidence indicates that perceptions, experiences, and overall satisfaction in the workplace differ between LGBT women and men. Specifically, LGBT women are more likely than LGBT men to report less satisfaction with their work environment and feel less accepted at work.[2] They also report having fewer social networking and socializing opportunities and are less aware of company diversity efforts than LGBT men.

Catalyst's expertise on gender and underrepresented groups in the workplace positions us well to explore the specific barriers to LGBT inclusion and what employers can do to minimize those barriers. Furthermore, by highlighting the needs of LGBT women, we continue to support organizations in making change for the advancement of *all* women.

Our first report, *LGBT Inclusion—Understanding the Challenges*, provided insights into the barriers that LGBT employees face at work. It explored the unique challenges that LGBT employees face, defined basic terminology relevant for discussing LGBT inclusion, described the LGBT legislative landscape, and outlined major barriers to the career advancement of LGBT employees. It also explored the difficult decision that many LGBT employees face: to stand out from the crowd and identify as LGBT at work, or to blend in with the crowd and not identify as LGBT.

To complement *LGBT Inclusion—Understanding the Challenges,* this second report on LGBT inclusion offers practical insights on how organizations can address the challenges highlighted in the first report. It provides strategies for laying a solid foundation for an LGBT-inclusive culture, discusses ways to get women and men involved in LGBT initiatives, integrates measurement and accountability systems into the strategy, and suggests ways to involve the wider community. This report is an action-oriented piece designed for human resources and diversity practitioners at organizations that are either starting an initiative from scratch or expanding an existing initiative.

Rolling out an LGBT initiative is a tough task. Leaders are met with resistance based on confusion over why LGBT inclusion is relevant at work; lack of adequate information on the barriers that LGBT employees face; and inadequate understanding of the physical and verbal violence that LGBT employees may encounter.

Several misconceptions lie at the heart of employee resistance to LGBT-inclusion initiatives. When people hear about LGBT-inclusion initiatives, some may think it is a discussion about sexual behavior in the workplace. As a result, people may see an individual's LGBT identity as a sensitive and private matter that falls outside of the concern of an employer and should be left at home.

Therefore, it is important for diversity practitioners and managers to accurately communicate that the term "LGBT" refers to a person's sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and mode of gender expression, *not an individual's sexual behavior or activity*. It is also critical to underscore that sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are defining characteristics that apply to all LGBT and non-LGBT individuals. We all bring these important components of our identity to work.[3]

More and more organizations are standing behind their commitment to LGBT inclusion. To build an LGBT-inclusive culture, organizations need to create a solid foundation by developing an accurate perspective of LGBT employees, implementing LGBT-inclusive policies, and building a strong LGBT initiative leadership team. Once that is underway, organizations should engage their employee base strategically and communicate beyond the organization.

Change Agents Can Expect to Learn the Following:

1) How to set the stage and lay the foundation for an LGBT-inclusive culture
   a) Develop the business case for LGBT inclusion
   b) Set LGBT-inclusive policies and benefits
   c) Create a taskforce that engages experts and develops senior leadership support
2) How to engage employees with programs that address their needs
   a) Build an LGBT network
   b) Engage LGBT allies
   c) Build awareness and educate employees
3) How to create an integrated strategy and add practices that sustain an initiative
   a) Engage the wider community
   b) Communicate the initiative
   c) Measure progress and set accountability mechanisms

What Is an LGBT-Inclusive Workplace?

In an LGBT-inclusive workplace, all employees are treated fairly and have equal access to career opportunities, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Diverse employee representation has a positive effect on business results because it allows an organization to effectively leverage all talent. Therefore, an LGBT-inclusive workplace recognizes, understands, and tackles the unique challenges that both LGBT women and men face during recruitment, in daily workplace interactions, and in advancing to senior leadership positions. It also recognizes cultural differences within an organization, both by function and by office, and challenges workplace norms in each of these cultures.

LGBT-inclusion initiatives must engage both LGBT and non-LGBT employees—family, friends, supervisors, clients, and coworkers need to understand the challenges that LGBT employees face at work and be included in developing the

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initiative. In a LGBT-inclusive culture, LGBT and non-LGBT employees alike feel comfortable in demonstrating their support for LGBT inclusion openly.

How to Set the Stage and Lay the Foundation for an LGBT-Inclusive Culture

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to LGBT inclusion. In this section we offer guidance on: 1) how to create a strong rationale for LGBT inclusion; 2) what key policies and benefits to set; and 3) whom to engage in the effort.

Develop the Business Case for LGBT Inclusion

LGBT employees face both subtle and overt forms of discrimination, even in places that are perceived as LGBT-inclusive.[4] Therefore, LGBT inclusion is relevant to all employers, no matter where they are located. Building organizational support for LGBT inclusion requires a strong rationale that frames LGBT inclusion as a workplace imperative.

There is strong evidence that an LGBT-inclusive workplace can be good for business.[5] There are three commonly cited mechanisms by which LGBT inclusion can enhance profitability:

1) LGBT inclusion motivates employees to do their personal best and be authentic at work. If they are not able to make a genuine connection with coworkers because of fear of rejection or actual harassment, LGBT employees are simply not given the chance to be effective team players and their ability to excel can be compromised. When fully engaged, they are able to build valuable networking and mentoring opportunities and become better leaders. They can devote time and effort to work-related tasks rather than to

monitoring all responses for LGBT signifiers or protecting themselves from hostile comments and actions.

2) By creating an LGBT-inclusive workplace culture, organizations can eliminate differential turnover among LGBT employees and their allies and potentially decrease costs. As select organizations become leaders in creating LGBT-inclusive cultures, they are more apt to attract and retain LGBT employees by providing them with career advancement opportunities not available elsewhere. Competing organizations may then lose valuable talent to industry leaders.

3) Developing an LGBT-inclusive workplace can have a direct impact on financial performance by tapping into LGBT markets and attracting new customers, building customer loyalty, and keeping growth strategies robust and up-to-date. In addition, companies that promote LGBT inclusion can increase their ability to retain an LGBT consumer base. Research consistently finds that LGBT consumers have a deeper loyalty to products offered by companies that have progressive policies towards LGBT employees. [6]

Many organizations have a strong focus on corporate social responsibility and feel that helping to create a more LGBT-inclusive social culture is part of their responsibility as premier employers. In addition, creating a level playing field for all employees can be a strong way to frame an LGBT initiative.

The rationale for LGBT inclusion needs to be repeated clearly and consistently throughout an LGBT initiative by human resources, diversity practitioners, and organizational senior leadership. This keeps the organization's stance on LGBT inclusion very clear. This will help reduce confusion employees might have about the need and relevance for the initiative and can, in turn, help minimize employee backlash.

Diversity and Inclusion Practice

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Inclusion at Wachovia Corporation

Wachovia Corporation is a diversified financial services company that provides a broad range of retail banking, brokerage asset and wealth management, and corporate and investment banking products and services. Wachovia began its diversity program in 1994, focusing on three issues, race, gender, and sexual orientation, from early on. Importantly, the CEO at the time, Ed Crutchfield, ensured that sexual orientation was a central aspect of the inclusion strategy. Wachovia introduced anti-discrimination policies protecting gay and lesbian employees in 1998 and domestic partner benefits in 2001. In order to provide protection for transgender employees, protection on the basis of gender identity was added in 2005.

The LGBT-inclusion initiative at Wachovia works primarily to develop a culture where both LGBT and non-LGBT employees understand and are engaged in the initiative as part of a long-term culture change strategy to support engagement and inclusion for all employees across all identity groups. Wachovia has addressed this goal with a multi-pronged strategy. First, it explicitly frames LGBT inclusion as a discussion about identity, perspective, and the fair and inclusive treatment of employees and clients. This framework emphasizes that LGBT inclusion is not about behavior, but about individual identity. In addition, the company articulates a strong business case for LGBT inclusion: it is vital to the business because LGBT individuals are part of the customer base. In order to create company-wide impact, Wachovia works to educate employees on LGBT inclusion as one component of its overall diversity strategy. This creates a workplace where dialogue about diversity and inclusion is

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not only safe, but is expected. The business has developed a comprehensive and robust training program for key managers that create a safe forum in which to explore issues related to race, gender, and sexual orientation. Wachovia has also developed an LGBT Employee Network Group—the Gay and Lesbian Employee Association (GALEA)—that includes both LGBT-identified employees and straight allies.

Many senior leaders at Wachovia are personally committed to LGBT inclusion and reinforce the business case. For example, current CEO Ken Thompson attended the 2007 Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Carolinas Dinner, making him the first F200 CEO ever to attend an HRC-sponsored fundraising event. This leadership support and involvement helps to formalize both funding and accountability for the network.

Set LGBT-Inclusive Policies and Benefits

Although some organizations extend anti-discrimination policies and health benefits to LGBT employees, these types of policies are not uniform within and across countries, which makes it difficult for organizations to implement them consistently. In many countries, including the United States, neither anti-discrimination policies nor marriage benefits protections exist at the federal level. [7]

Providing equitable policies and benefits creates a level playing field for all employees and sets common standards across locations. Research shows that people are more engaged with and committed to an organization that has policies protecting LGBT employees. In fact, enacting LGBT-inclusive policies has been shown to decrease the instances of LGBT discrimination at work.[8]

Organizations in the United States frequently use the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index to benchmark their LGBT-inclusion policies and programs.[9] In this index, organizations are evaluated on the basis of having:

◆ A non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.
◆ Company-provided domestic partner health insurance.
◆ Company-supported LGBT employee resource groups or a firm-wide diversity council that includes LGBT issues (or would support an LGBT resource group with company resources).

LGBT Inclusion in Canada

Canada has been a world leader in gay and lesbian inclusion for more than 20 years. Since 1992, federal anti-discrimination laws have protected employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 2005, Canada became one of only a handful of countries in the world to legalize same-sex marriage (others are the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and South Africa).[10]

Ask the Expert (In this section, we answer commonly asked questions from Catalyst member companies on LGBT inclusion)

QUESTION: Our organization is revamping our LGBT employee benefits, and we want to be inclusive of transgender employees. What should we do to support the transgender community?

ANSWER: There are two main barriers to transgender inclusion: 1) policies that do not cover transgender health needs and 2) a lack of awareness and education on what it means to be transgender and to transition at work. By tackling these two issues, organizations can

All Canadian citizens—regardless of employment status—have health insurance that covers basic needs. Employees in Canada may also be provided with additional health insurance coverage for other services. All employers that provide health insurance benefits to the partners (married or unmarried) of employees must do so regardless of sexual orientation.

What Does This Mean for Gay and Lesbian Employees in Canada? In addition to legislative support from the government, corporations also have a role to play in creating inclusive workplaces because LGBT employees may still face overt and subtle forms of discrimination, such as homophobic comments and limited access to advancement opportunities. Although same-sex marriage is legal in Canada, it does not mean that all Canadians endorse same-sex marriage or LGBT inclusion at work. Finally, federal legislation regarding transgender employees and gender identity in general is still evolving.[11]

minimize misunderstandings and tension that often arise between transgender employees and coworkers. In fact, as of 2007, 25 percent of *Fortune* 500 companies protect their transgender employees by including gender identity in their non-discrimination policies, up from only 1 percent in 2000.[12]

Employers can also support transgender employees by covering health costs related to gender transition. Inclusive health policies traditionally cover leave benefits for medical appointments and procedures, hormone replacement therapy, mental health counseling, sex-reassignment surgery, and other medical expenses.[13]

Some organizations choose to establish these policies on a country-by-country basis; many also roll them out globally.

Benefits beyond these baseline policies include:
◆ LGBT-inclusive employee handbooks.
◆ Relocation support for LGBT employees and their partners.
◆ Adoption assistance for same-sex couples.
◆ Access to parental support that is equal and free of stigma and discrimination (e.g., childcare).

◆ Bereavement leave for partner death.
◆ Transgender benefits, including sexual reassignment surgery.

It is important to note that the laws regarding LGBT individuals in some countries can be different for women and men. For instance, it is illegal to identify as an LGBT man in some parts of the world, but not as an LGBT woman.[14] It is important for companies to research and consider how local laws apply to LGBT women and men.

Ask the Expert

QUESTION: Some regions of the world have federal anti-discrimination policies and partnership laws that protect gays and lesbians. Does this mean that LGBT employees in these regions do not face barriers at work and organizations do not need an LGBT initiative in that region?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, LGBT employees in every region of the world still face challenges to inclusion and advancement. LGBT-inclusion policies and anti-discrimination laws do not automatically make the work environment accepting of LGBT coworkers. In addition to setting inclusive policies, organizations need to educate employees on LGBT terms,

Create a Taskforce

Setting policies in an organization is a strong way to actively support LGBT employees. Yet changing organizational culture takes an informed action plan. A taskforce is a team of internal and external experts that builds core knowledge and creates a customized solution for change. Experts can take the pulse of LGBT inclusion at the organization and explore where the major barriers lie, whether they are overt forms of discrimination, like harassment, or more subtle forms of discrimination, such as exclusion from recruitment and career advancement opportunities.[15] Some taskforces conduct organizational assessments that target multiple demographic groups. Experts can be employees from a variety of areas including:

◆ Human resources managers: They have core knowledge of organizational policies and often implement diversity programs.

◆ Diversity and inclusion practitioners: They can help build and LGBT perspectives and experiences in order to change attitudes toward LGBT inclusion.

LGBT employees face both overt and subtle forms of discrimination at work, and this is why a dynamic LGBT initiative is extremely important. Overt discrimination can include verbal harassment, violence, or the unwillingness to provide health insurance to same-sex partners. Workplace anti-discrimination policies tackle these issues. Subtle discrimination is different and includes such actions as not being invited to social events with coworkers or being passed over for development opportunities. Creating programs that educate employees and reduce daily exclusionary behaviors can decrease these forms of discrimination.

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the initiative into a broader diversity and inclusion framework.

◆ Senior leadership: Leadership involvement helps strengthen and tie the initiative into overall organization strategy.

◆ Line managers: These employees help align the initiative with overall business strategy.

◆ LGBT employees: They provide perspectives on day-to-day culture and climate for LGBT inclusion at the organization.

Recognizing diversity within the LGBT community and addressing the unique needs of different groups within the community is vital to the success of an initiative. By engaging a diverse set of LGBT-identified and non-LGBT-identified experts, a more comprehensive initiative can be developed. There are some additional points to consider when building an LGBT-inclusion taskforce:

◆ Engage both LGBT women and LGBT men on the taskforce to address the specific challenges employees experience by gender.[16]

◆ Engage external LGBT research and advocacy organizations by leveraging their expertise in building organizational initiatives. LGBT organizations can be found in most regions of the world. Although many community-based organizations do not focus on workplace issues, they can provide information about the unique overt and subtle forms of discrimination that LGBT people face in that region.[17]

◆ Engage an expert on transgender inclusion. The barriers transgender employees face are unique. Questions around terminology, transitioning at work, and how to include sexual reassignment surgery in health benefits require new learnings. If possible, engage transgender employees throughout the course of the initiative.[18]

◆ Engage a diverse set of LGBT employees, including LGBT people of color and bisexual employees. Research shows that among LGBT employees, people of color and white people are equally likely to disclose their sexual orientation at work. Decisions to disclose, however, are influenced by the racial/ethnic diversity of a person's workgroup.[19]

Assessments from an LGBT taskforce can be extremely valuable for the organization. They should be used to inform both diversity and inclusion initiatives as well as sales and marketing teams that target LGBT consumers.

How to Engage Employees With Programs That Address Their Needs

By engaging all employees across the business, leaders can coordinate efforts and build a strong LGBT initiative.

Include an LGBT initiative in a broader diversity and inclusion framework as well as in the organization's overall business strategy. This way, the initiative can benefit from senior leadership support, formalized accountability mechanisms, and access to larger diversity and inclusion funding streams. In addition, this facilitates the sharing of ideas and learnings gained from other diversity initiatives, such as those for women or people of color.

Then, set both short- and long-term goals for the initiative. These can include increasing the representation of LGBT-identified employees at all levels in the organization, educating all employees on terminology to use when discussing LGBT inclusion and on the challenges that LGBT employees face at work, and increasing the number of employees who attend LGBT-initiative activities. Make sure that these goals are aligned with the organization's broader diversity initiatives.

Always recognize that the LGBT community is extremely diverse. Hence, inflexible LGBT initiatives may not address the needs of *all* members of the LGBT community. For example, some employees might decide to disclose their LGBT identity to some or all people at work, while others may never identify as LGBT in the workplace. Catalyst research shows that the experiences of employees at work and the challenges to advancement to leadership positions can change by such factors as gender, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and career stage.[20] The same holds true for LGBT employees. A strong, flexible LGBT-inclusion initiative engages employees across each of these groups.

The following actions will help organizations ensure their initiative has a broad, inclusive focus:

- ◆ **Engage employees at all levels.**
  - ◆ Create a work environment that recruits, retains, develops, and advances LGBT employees at all levels of the business.
  - ◆ Use research and focus groups to explore the unique barriers that LGBT employees face. This can help attract and retain otherwise overlooked, highly skilled LGBT employees.
  - ◆ Talk about the organization's LGBT initiative during the recruitment process.
  - ◆ Make LGBT initiative information available in multiple ways—on the public website, in presentations, and in recruitment materials.
- ◆ **Recognize diversity within the LGBT community.**
  - ◆ Examine the unique barriers of LGBT women and LGBT men at work.
  - ◆ Explore the challenges that LGBT people of color face at work.
  - ◆ Engage employees who are LGBT-identified as well as LGBT employees who are not out at work.
  - ◆ Investigate local legislation, attitudes, and social and work customs regarding LGBT inclusion in all regions of operation.

◆ **Support everyone affected by LGBT inclusion.**

  ◆ Set clear limits against inappropriate and discriminatory behavior.

  ◆ Engage the entire employee base—anyone can be a supervisor, coworker, or direct report of an LGBT employee.

  ◆ Create a workplace where LGBT allies feel comfortable supporting LGBT inclusion at work.

Build an LGBT Network

Business-aligned networks can be a strong resource for both the employer and the employee. Many workplaces have formal affinity group programs: 57 percent of organizations who participated in the *2006 Catalyst Member Benchmarking Report* have a formal LGBT network group.[21] Catalyst sees a clear trend toward developing networks that are workplace-sponsored and have business-focused mission statements. Network business alignment includes advising on how to improve work environments; helping with employee recruitment, development, and retention; focusing on external business development; and strengthening client relationships and communications.

Catalyst believes it is important that a comprehensive diversity and inclusion framework includes an LGBT network. Whether an organization has had an LGBT network for years or it is starting to think about launching one, it is important to drive the network in the same way that other diversity networks have been developed.

Networks can be structured in different ways, depending on the needs of the organization. LGBT networks often begin as grass-roots support networks. In these cases, as an organization establishes an initiative, LGBT employees can request formal recognition of their network. These networks are often developed within regional offices, but ultimately link back to

organizational headquarters. They can also be headquarters-driven, fanning out to regions and offices. Consider the following points when developing an LGBT network:

◆ Create an overarching business rationale for all the organization's LGBT networks.

◆ Align individual network goals with broader LGBT initiative goals as well as with the organization's overall network strategy.

◆ Consistently communicate the rationale for having an LGBT initiative in network information that is distributed across the organization.

◆ Offer network activities that are inclusive of both LGBT women and men.

◆ Develop ties with other networks and recognize that LGBT employees may belong to other networks.

◆ Address the barriers to LGBT recruitment, development, retention, and advancement in network activities and discussions.

◆ Develop network activities that engage allies of the LGBT community.

◆ Provide a network structure that can protect the anonymity of LGBT employees not out at work. Organizations

Ask the Expert

QUESTION: Women are not coming to our LGBT network events. What can we do to increase women's involvement in these networks?

ANSWER: Network events might not represent the best way for *all* LGBT employees to connect. You might want to hold different types of events in order to include both LGBT women and men. For instance, host events at different times of the day

can have anonymous email distribution lists, provide tiered membership structure so that employees can choose how public they are about network participation, and hold meetings off-site to help LGBT employees feel more comfortable attending.

◆ Create networks that understand and address local cultural needs, whether across one country or across the world.

◆ Make sure that senior leaders are actively involved in the initiative and that a feedback loop informs these senior leaders on current initiative activities.

Diversity and Inclusion Practice
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans-Identified (LGBT) Inclusion at KPMG LLP Canada: pride@kpmg

KPMG LLP is the Canadian member firm of KPMG International, a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax, and Advisory services. KPMG's LGBT-inclusion initiative works to create a fully inclusive workplace for all employees, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. The initiative began with a business case for LGBT inclusion and a strong firm-wide focus on corporate

so that people with different schedules can attend. Also, try to change the structure of events so that, for example, some are held as cocktail receptions, and others as breakfast or lunch discussions. Encourage both women and men to join the LGBT

initiative leadership team. This way, organizations gain further insights into the unique needs of LGBT women.

social responsibility (CSR) in each of the regions in which it operates. In 2006, the Canadian National Diversity Council at KPMG added LGBT identity to its list of core aspects of diversity, which already included women and visible minorities. To provide a network group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified (LGBT) employees, KMPG launched pride@kpmg at the same time.

The pride@kpmg network builds internal and external communities by acting as an informational resource to support the needs of LGBT-identified employees, functioning as a formal network, and providing informal mentoring opportunities. There are three tiers of membership in pride@kpmg:

◆ Tier 1 members are public with their membership in the network and are LGBT self-identified at work or allies of the network.
◆ Tier 2 members are not public with their membership in the network. Although these members are actively involved in pride@kpmg activities, they are likely only selectively LGBT-identified at work.

Ask the Expert

QUESTION: We are a U.S.-headquartered organization with operations across the globe. Some of our LGBT employees have been really excited about our LGBT efforts, but do not feel that it is safe to join the LGBT network. What can we do to support their needs?

ANSWER: First and foremost, it is important to recognize that LGBT efforts must encompass those who are not out in the workplace, as well as those who are. To make sure all staff feel supported, it is essential to have accessible and consistent messaging. Senior leaders need to let all employees know

◆ Tier 3 members are not public about their membership in the network and are active in pride@kpmg on a limited scale. Only the chair of pride@kpmg knows their names.

The innovative three-tiered construction of pride@kpmg enables LGBT-identified employees to participate in network activities at a level that they are comfortable with.

Engaging allies is also extremely important to pride@kpmg. Therefore, the network holds two types of events: 1) LGBT-exclusive events, where pride@kpmg invites only LGBT-identified network members; this way, employees who have not publicly disclosed their LGBT identity at work have the opportunity to more comfortably participate in network activities; and 2) LGBT-inclusive events, where all employees, including both LGBT employees and allies, are invited. This provides an opportunity for interested non-LGBT employees as well as closeted LGBT employees to participate in network activities.

that the organization fully supports LGBT inclusion. LGBT initiative leaders can make initiative information available across the organization via company-wide intranet pages and email distribution lists, without the need for employees to self-identify, so as to protect staff from any possible local repercussions. When taking an initiative global, always craft message points in a way that is culturally relevant to each audience. Use appropriate local terminology and be sensitive to unique needs.

Engage LGBT Allies

Often unrecognized, the family and friends of LGBT individuals need just as much support as do LGBT employees. For example, some people do not talk about an LGBT family member or friend and must go through a difficult coming out process when disclosing this information to others. It is important to create a space where employees can openly express their support for LGBT inclusion without being immediately labeled as LGBT or harassed. High-impact initiatives consistently engage LGBT allies, strengthening inclusion throughout the workplace.

Diversity and Inclusion Practice
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Inclusion at Ernst & Young: bEYond

The overall goal of the Ernst & Young (E&Y) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allies (LGBTA) initiative is to lead the marketplace in attracting, motivating, and retaining the very best employees. The initiative does this by creating a workplace where LGBT employees and their allies can openly express their support for LGBT inclusion. In 2003, E&Y officially created the "bEYond network" to provide structured support and network opportunities for LGBT employees and their allies. The LGBTA initiative is based on the following core bEYond activities:

◆ Actively Engaging Allies: Engaging allies is a vital piece of the E&Y LGBTA initiative. LGBT allies can be: 1) non-LGBT advocates for LGBT inclusion or 2) LGBT employees who

have not yet self-identified as LGBT at work. All network members can participate to support family, friends, and coworkers who identify as LGBT. E&Y finds that often family members need just as much support as LGBT employees. For example, some parents do not talk about an LGBT child or parent and must also go through a "coming out" if they haven't come to terms with their loved one's LGBT status previously. A few parents have come forward and thanked E&Y for helping them to see that it really doesn't change the person, but it is just part of who we are.

◆ Creating an LGBTA-Supportive Structure: The bEYond network strives to create a "safe space" where LGBTA employees feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work, including their LGBT identities. If LGBTA employees face awkward or discriminatory interactions, they can turn to local office managing partners, the bEYond leadership team, direct supervisors, and the human resources department, who will support them by intervening, if necessary, and educating both E&Y employees and clients. There is also an anonymous call-in center, EY Assist, where all employees can ask direct questions and gain advice. EY Assist has been the most utilized resource for transgender employees who have questions about transitioning at work. The firm makes sure that all LGBTA employees have access to this formalized support system in all client and employee interactions; LGBT employees know that someone will always listen to their questions, address their needs, and help them navigate through difficult situations.

Build Awareness and Educate Employees

In order for senior leadership, supervisors, and the general employee base to fully support an LGBT-inclusion initiative, they must understand the unique challenges that LGBT employees face at work. Networks are an optimal resource for gathering and disseminating this information. Leveraging the expertise of LGBT employees and their allies, along with inclusive policies, will help to build a more LGBT-inclusive organization. Then, more LGBT employees might feel safe disclosing their LGBT identity at work, overt and subtle forms of discrimination can be decreased, and LGBT employees can simply be more engaged and productive at work. Organizations can educate their employees in a variety of ways, such as:

◆ Listing LGBT inclusion as a core component of a broader diversity and inclusion initiative.
◆ Communicating the business case for LGBT inclusion to employees so they can understand and articulate the rationale and effectively tackle resistance.
◆ Integrating LGBT inclusion into diversity training.

Ask the Expert

QUESTION: The LGBT initiative at our organization is strong and generally well received, but we have also encountered backlash from some employees. How can we effectively manage this problem?

ANSWER: Generally, backlash shows up for every type of diversity and inclusion initiative; LGBT initiatives are not unique in this regard. Backlash does not always have to be seen as a problem; addressing backlash is an opportunity to raise awareness and educate employees. Counter the backlash directly and consistently by explaining that any diversity and inclusion initiative addresses the needs of all employees, not of a selected group of employees. For example, organizations rarely remove someone from a work

◆ Hosting learning events for LGBT employees, such a brown bag/lunch-and-learn session.

◆ Sponsoring LGBT events in the community increases visibility as an LGBT-inclusive workplace.

How to Create an Integrated Strategy and Add Practices That Sustain an Initiative

LGBT inclusion should be driven in the same fashion as other diversity and inclusion initiatives. The same level of rationale development, senior leadership support, clear communication, and measurement and accountability is imperative.

Engage the Wider Community

Organizations are strongly tied to the communities in which they operate. Through recruiting and employing local talent, interacting with other businesses, and supporting community-based groups, organizations are in a position to act as leaders and to set the standard for LGBT inclusion beyond their walls.

team or client engagement because of their gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, or religion. This same standard should hold for LGBT employees.

Some organizations couch LGBT inclusion as a value-add for the business; particular LGBT individuals may hold skill sets or experiences that make their contribution necessary for a high quality deliverable. Companies can also be straight-forward about having LGBT inclusion as an priority for their organization. Talking about LGBT inclusion in public forums, town halls, and team meetings helps decrease any stigma associated with the topic while making employees more comfortable articulating their support for LGBT inclusion.

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Furthermore, many organizations have adopted supplier diversity initiatives with revenue goals; these help to provide a percentage of business-to-business revenue to minority-owned organizations. Working with LGBT-owned and operated businesses is one way to accomplish this goal. The National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) is an organization in the United States that certifies LGBT-owned businesses and helps connect them to corporate America.[22]

In order to meet LGBT-supplier diversity goals, organizations can count revenue in different ways. For example, some companies keep track of LGBT business interactions through businesses that are majority-owned by LGBT individuals; others count secured business deals with non-LGBT-owned businesses if the point person conducting the business deal is an out, LGBT-identified employee. This strategy recognizes LGBT-inclusive organizations for their efforts and their ability to put LGBT employees in highly visible business positions.

Ask the Expert

QUESTION: My company recently started a LGBT network. We have received emails from some employees who believe that our support for the LGBT community goes against their religious beliefs. What do we do?

ANSWER: Most organizations have dealt with religious backlash for their LGBT initiative. Emphasize that diversity and

inclusion initiatives are based on a core value of respect for all employees, not a select group of people.

Religion is protected in many parts of the world. In contrast, LGBT identity is not often protected. LGBT initiatives are present in organizations because LGBT employees face consistent discrimination in the workplace. By starting an open

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Partnering with community organizations and charitable foundations that support the LGBT community is also a common way to engage the wider community. Providing donations and sponsoring events are other typical ways that organizations publicly display support. Also, many organizations are visible in local LGBT pride events. They provide sponsorship and set up information booths to attract consumers, recruit potential employees, and even develop potential business deals.

In addition, engaging in respectful and appropriate marketing to the LGBT community is an important way to both increase revenue through LGBT efforts and to show support.[23]

Communicate the Initiative
Effectively spreading the word that LGBT inclusion represents a core element of the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts is key to initiative success. Frequent communication also increases awareness of the initiative among employees and can lead to increased participation of both LGBT and non-

dialogue based on education and respecting differences at work, initiative leaders can spotlight the similar perspectives and goals for mutual respect and inclusion. Also recognize that people of faith hold a wide range of perspectives on LGBT inclusion at work.

In reality, you are not likely to change personal *beliefs*, but you can change *behavior*. It is the responsibility of human resources and senior leaders to hold employees accountable for a basic level of respect shown to their fellow coworkers by maintaining standards of behavior and firmly supporting the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

LGBT employees in the initiative. External communication helps attract and recruit LGBT candidates and further engages senior leaders. Effective communication about LGBT initiatives can occur in a number of ways:

◆ Publicize LGBT network/initiative activities on the company intranet.

◆ Extend LGBT-inclusive language to the public website.

◆ Get into external publications—talk about LGBT inclusion and changing internal culture.

◆ Run advertisements in major LGBT publications to show support for the LGBT community.

◆ Spotlight openly identified LGBT women and LGBT men senior leaders. LGBT employees who see out and successful people at more senior levels receive the very powerful message that advancement is possible.

Measure Progress and Set Accountability Mechanisms

Measuring progress helps translate the initiative's goals and vision into tangible practices. Implementing accountability systems helps to evaluate the effectiveness of an initiative and track progress towards goals. Yet organizations often struggle with creating measurement and accountability plans for LGBT inclusion. Companies are reluctant to ask employees to self-identify as LGBT at work, and they are unsure about what metrics to use. Also, some employees may not provide accurate responses to questions about their sexual orientation for fear of hindering career development and opportunities.

More and more organizations are indeed asking employees to optionally self-identify as LGBT or non-LGBT on culture/climate surveys. While new ways to measure attitudes and perspectives are always being explored, here are some ways to get started:

◆ Include LGBT as a core aspect of the organization's diversity. When senior leaders are visible and vocal about LGBT inclusion, senior staff are driven to discuss LGBT representation.

◆ Have an executive sponsor to whom others are held accountable for LGBT activities.

◆ Include metrics that can be part of annual performance reviews. Some organizations have added LGBT inclusion as a core metric in managerial review processes.

◆ Maintain website statistics for the organization's intranet to discover the number of unique visitors; count the number of people on the LGBT initiative mailing list on a regular basis to determine the breadth and depth of communication.

◆ Include optional demographic questions (if legal in the region) in internal organizational culture/climate surveys to measure the attitudes of self-identified LGBT employees. In addition, organizations should impose safeguards for anonymity for employees.

◆ Track the number of LGBT-related events hosted per year, event attendance, and any client engagements traced back to this outreach.

◆ Count the number of awards received for LGBT-inclusion activities. External recognition for LGBT-inclusion efforts can be a powerful way to measure progress.

Expand an LGBT Initiative Globally

Although global issues related to LGBT inclusion are complex and outside the scope of this report, Catalyst recognizes that multinational operations are increasingly the norm for many organizations. This section presents our viewpoint and a promising practice, which is a starting point for dialogue on this topic.

Organizations that work globally and in different cultural contexts need to address the unique needs of their LGBT employees in each of the regions in which they operate. LGBT culture changes across the world; organizations should not

try to impose the headquarters-specific culture onto different regions. For example, in some parts of the world it might still be unacceptable to discuss LGBT inclusion at work. How does an organization strike a balance between supporting LGBT employees no matter where they are, while at the same time respecting local cultures? Here are some key points and critical questions to consider:

◆ Understand the different constructions of personal and professional life across cultures. What are the local customs surrounding the disclosure of LGBT identity in different contexts, including the workplace?

◆ Understand the policies that affect LGBT individuals in a region, such as sanctions against same-sex sexual interaction and local interpretations of decency and socially acceptable behavior.

◆ What is the cultural climate for LGBT inclusion in the region? Is it inclusive, overtly hostile, or possibly underground? Is there research that can be accessed to better understand the local LGBT culture?

◆ Are there cultural/religious considerations to take into account? How can organizations respect faith while still supporting all employees?

◆ Changing language: The term LGBT (or GLBT) is frequently used in a U.S. and Canadian context. Different language is used in other parts of the world. For example, in Western Europe, initiatives are often called "gay and lesbian" or "homosexual." These terms have different meanings based on cultural context. In some places, local language terminology might be the most appropriate to use.

◆ When thinking about developing an LGBT-inclusion initiative in different regions, connect with local LGBT offices, community centers, and activity groups. These groups are experts on the local laws, cultural nuances, and social status of LGBT individuals in that region. They have a wealth of knowledge that an organization can tap.

◆ Understand that LGBT identity differs across cultures. Although it is important not to stereotype individuals within a culture, it is generally possible to identify in what way societies are built around heteronormative social interactions, such as posturing, eye contact, and even the way you sit and hold yourself. LGBT individuals can display their LGBT identity through self-presentation, range and depth of topic knowledge, and interaction style.

Diversity and Inclusion Practice
Lehman Brothers Gay and Lesbian Network in Asia

Lehman Brothers Gay and Lesbian Network (LBGLN) is an important component of Lehman Brothers' global diversity and inclusion initiative designed to promote an inclusive culture for all employees. When it was launched in Tokyo in March 2005, LBGLN Asia was the first workplace network for gay and lesbian employees in the financial services industry in Japan.

Lehman Brothers believes that all employees can work in a way that allows them to be themselves and pursue their own work style while also achieving maximum business results. All employees—including senior managers—were invited and encouraged to attend the LBGLN Asia launch. More than 1,000 employees attended the event, and many have signed up to join the LBGLNA Asia distribution list. This list includes not only self-identified LGBT employees in Asia, but also many employees who are interested and supportive straight allies. Commitment from senior leadership is vital to the success of any network, and Lehman Brothers' senior management in Asia, Europe, and the United States has consistently demonstrated support for LBGLN, which now operates in all three regions.

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LBGLN Asia strives to:

◆ Provide a community and career development network to LGBT employees.

◆ Share information in the Lehman Brothers employee community—across business units, levels, and functions—about LGBT issues.

◆ Deliver the entire firm to clients by embracing diversity in all lines of business.

◆ Establish Lehman externally as a leader in LGBT inclusion.

◆ Contribute to an open atmosphere at Lehman Brothers in which LGBT employees are respected and valued.

In Summary

Developing an LGBT initiative within a broader diversity and inclusion framework is essential to making core organizational culture change. It is important to use a three-pronged strategy, in which an organization lays the foundation, engages employees, and integrates the strategy with additional practices.

Also, any LGBT initiative must have a broad, inclusive focus that recognizes and speaks to an extremely diverse LGBT community. Organizations should engage employees at all levels while also recognizing the diversity within the LGBT community (e.g., LGBT women and men, LGBT employees who are identified and not identified at work, LGBT employees across cultures). Finally, organizations should support everyone affected by LGBT inclusion, beginning with LGBT employees, but extending well beyond, to supervisors, coworkers, and direct reports of LGBT employees, as well as all LGBT allies.

Endnotes

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