

TALENT TO CHANGE FOR

LGBT EMPLOYEE RESEARCH LEADING THE WAY IN DIVERSITY

A study on the inclusion of LGBT employees in the Netherlands



We would like to dedicate this study to the employees and employers throughout the Netherlands that have been working so tirelessly to assure the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) employees in the workplace. The authors and publisher of this research have many persons to thank for their contributions which extended over a year of extensive planning, execution of the empirical research, preparation of the final report, and dissemination of the research results.

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As the international platform for the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people at work, Workplace Pride strives to improve the situation for LGBT people in the workplace. In order to help employers and their LGBT employees turn this goal into concrete actions, Workplace Pride introduced the Declaration of Amsterdam in 2011. Many points of the Declaration, a ten point action plan which includes steps to be taken by employers and LGBT employees, are currently being addressed; LGBT networks are being created and the general topic is now on the agenda of employers.

However, in order to create substantive, sustainable and positive change for LGBT people in the workplace, many questions still need to be addressed: What is the 'business case' behind LGBT policies and practices? How can employers respond to the specific needs of LGBT employees and truly bring out the best of their talent?

Workplace Pride commissioned Pro Firmus, in cooperation with the University of Groningen, to conduct this study entitled '**TALENT TO CHANGE FOR: LGBT Employee Research Leading the Way in Diversity**'. This research explores the questions above and makes concrete recommendations that aim to improve LGBT diversity and inclusion in the workplace in the Netherlands and beyond. Research and data collection was carried out between November 2011 and April 2012 and

aimed to find the answers to the key question: what changes are needed to attract and keep LGBT talent in the workplace?

The study findings highlighted that employers in the Netherlands have made progress on achieving LGBT equality in the workplace and on underpinning the business case for their inclusion. However, most private and public sector organisations have committed to addressing LGBT issues at a baseline level. Further action is, therefore, needed for diversity and LGBT inclusion to be fully embedded into the organisation's culture, business strategy and structures. Change agents among senior and middle management have a key role to play in engaging in diversity in words and deeds, in achieving measurable progress and in enhancing their understanding of the benefits of diversity.

This study is unique because it builds on and reflects the true experience of employers and employees, in both public and private sector organisations. It defines critical success factors and offers practical tools to every organisation that takes LGBT inclusion at work seriously. We welcome the publication of the study which we undertook with our strategic partner FNV, and we are thankful to the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (OCW) for funding this project.

Workplace Pride Foundation

Board, Management Team and Exec. Director

Executive Summary

As the international platform for the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people at work, Workplace Pride is committed to improving the situation for LGBT people in the workplace. In 2011, as part of its efforts to help employers and their LGBT employees turn this goal into concrete actions, Workplace Pride introduced the **Declaration of Amsterdam**. Many points of the **Declaration**, a ten point action plan which includes steps to be taken by employers and LGBT employees, are currently being addressed; LGBT networks are being set up and the general topic is now on the agenda of employers.

In the interest of identifying means to improve workplace environments for LGBT people, Workplace Pride, in cooperation with FNV, conducted the study '**TALENT TO CHANGE FOR: LGBT Employee Research Leading the Way in Diversity**' in 2011 and 2012.

The study was carried out through in-depth desk research and the collection of qualitative data, by means of interviews and focus groups. Compared with previous research, this study is unique because it builds on and reflects the experience of employers and employees, in both public and private sector organisations. It defines critical success factors and offers practical recommendations to organisations that seek to create substantive, sustainable and positive change for LGBT employees, as well as benefit the organisation as a whole.

This research is intended to collate and analyse the existing evidence in support of the need to address LGBT inclusion. The main findings of the research can be summarised as follows:

LGBT-related workplace climate and culture are a work in progress

A considerable number of LGBT people continue to experience a negative workplace climate where a heterosexist and "fitting in" culture prevails, and is not systematically addressed. The exclusion of LGBT employees concerns the inability to come out, homophobia and transphobia, lack of visibility, exclusion from international mobility and harassment. Anxiety about coming out and a homophobic climate impact negatively on the performance and well-being of LGBT employees. Hostile attitudes and behaviour also concern clients and suppliers.

Many participants in the research stressed that a two-way process was essential for employees to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace: employers' inclusion of LGBT employees creates favourable conditions for employees to feel safe and confident to be open about their LGBT identity and when LGBT people 'come out' about their identity, they contribute to rendering LGBT employees more visible and better accepted by their colleagues.

Coming out is more prevalent in an office environment than on the shop floor where LGBT employees face greater barriers to self-identifying as LGBT. The situation is more difficult in rural areas or provincial towns. Generally in male-dominated sectors or occupational activities and in the armed forces, LGBT are less likely to come out.

Low awareness of issues affecting LGBT employees at company and employee levels

Most employers do not collect any data related to the sexual orientation or gender identity of their employees. There is no monitoring at any stage of the employment cycle (recruitment, retention and exit) or through employee attitude surveys. The absence of quantitative or qualitative information sometimes leads to the conclusion that there are no problems to be addressed, and therefore, no need for action. Underreporting of hostility or discrimination of LGBT is often misunderstood or ignored by management.



Diversity audits are only carried out on gender equality. The absence of LGBT diversity audits means that employers do not screen all new and existing policies to ensure that they are inclusive of LGBT, nor do they collect qualitative information that would allow them to identify issues. Conducting LGBT diversity audits would enable employers to develop policies and actions that are better informed and targeted, thus more efficient.

Some line-managers and staff who deal with complaints are not always adequately equipped or competent to deal with LGBT exclusion issues or to provide the necessary support and solutions.

In many organisations, employees do not benefit from LGBT-awareness training. Such training is sometimes offered to managers, but more rarely to employees at shop floor level.

LGBT and straight allies as role models

There is evidence that there are role models among LGBT and straight managers, including HR. Among LGBT in middle management, only a minority actively contribute to improving workplace climate for LGBT employees. There are various levels of visibility of LGBT employees at senior level because they do not always choose or feel comfortable to act as role models. Decisions are sometimes based on personal choice, while in some cases, senior managers fear negative reactions and impacts on their career.

LGBT employee networks as key actors in advancing equality for LGBT at work

All participating organisations have an LGBT employee network. There is some evidence of cooperation between LGBT networks and HR teams, whereas, in other instances, they have not even met.

LGBT networks continue to fulfil an important role in supporting employees and in helping employers achieve their diversity targets. However, they cannot be expected to substitute their employers' primary role and they require further development, notably through capacity enhancing measures backed by adequate resources. Networks are increasingly aware of their own need to promote diversity by improving the membership, visibility and participation of lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees, and LGBT employees from the shop floor and rural areas. They too can

become role models and change agents in the near future.

Employers are committed to the business case for LGBT inclusion, but they need to articulate it, implement it and measure it

A large number of representatives from organisations reported that their leaders were committed to and actually promoted the business case for diversity, as well as LGBT inclusion.

Attempts to ascertain these companies' more specific understanding of the business case were not always conclusive. Although in some companies the definition was clearer, we found that many companies could not articulate the essential elements that constitute and support the business case. The business case for diversity and LGBT inclusion had a different understanding and lent itself to wide interpretation, often being confused for having some (stand-alone) diversity initiatives in place, but it was not necessarily linked to what exactly the business case translated to in the different organisations. Companies and organisations tend to rely on how diversity managers have translated the business case for diversity and what it means at a business level. LGBT employees recognised the importance of business benefits and also insisted on the moral dimension of their inclusion in the workplace. The report highlights the quintessential role of CEOs and Board members as change agents who need to commit to diversity in words and deeds, whilst underpinning the business case.

Commitment to LGBT issues is mainly at a baseline level

The study found that many employers from the public and private sectors in the Netherlands have achieved some progress on LGBT inclusion in the workplace and that they are committed to LGBT inclusion at baseline level. There are examples of good practice in the form of policies and actions, and support from middle management and some senior executives.

The study findings demonstrate that LGBT inclusion is seldom fully embedded into the organisation's culture, business strategy and structures. There is little evidence to suggest that diversity and inclusion is mainstreamed into an organisation's core business activity and decision-making. Some companies are indeed building an understanding of the benefits of diversity for the organisation and for their employees. That learning process entails moving towards a more comprehensive understanding



of the business case for diversity and LGBT inclusion, which would help shape the way business is performed and how employees interact at work. It could likewise lead to a more consistent approach and implementation of strategy and policies. Not least, it could result in an inclusive culture that encourages creativity and innovation.

The importance of communicating LGBT-inclusion efforts throughout the organisation and externally

Some companies use different vehicles for educating employees about the benefits of diversity and LGBT inclusion, ranging from employee newsletters, intranet and web site announcements regarding the existence of an LGBT employee network, formal adoption of a diversity value statement to signing the Declaration of Amsterdam. A limited number of companies provide a welcome package to new employees, which includes how to access internal policies, as well as information on the company's LGBT network.

What prevails is an extensive use by companies of their intranet to communicate their diversity policy (and other policies, including the complaints procedure) and LGBT inclusiveness. However useful this tool may be, it is not available to all employees and information is, therefore, not effectively disseminated. For example, this concerns mainly employees who work on shop floor level and employees who work in different parts of the Netherlands in more rural areas.

Until recently, HR managers mainly focused on the use of gender-inclusive language in the organisation. Almost all respondents considered that language was becoming more LGBT-inclusive at company level (language used by management and in organisational documents). LGBT networks and individuals play a major role in developing their colleagues' awareness around the use of appropriate and LGBT-inclusive language.

Some corporate commitment to equality and diversity is explicitly stated on the companies' websites, with a specific mention of LGBT inclusion, of the existence of an LGBT employee network or its membership of Workplace Pride. Most representatives from public sector organisations perceived the private sector to be more advanced and expert at communicating, externally, on their diversity and LGBT inclusion values and achievements. The divergence between the private and public sectors' communication on this policy field can be illustrated by the little evidence on the websites of some public administrations of being inclusive, even though they

have diversity-related actions in place. Diversity and inclusion is often absent in the company's mission statement and core values. In the case of some organisations, not only there is no section in their website where they present their diversity priorities and achievements, but the word is not even mentioned at all.

Employers' engagement with external stakeholders

The study found that individual participating companies have very few contacts with external organisations that work on LGBT equality or are advocates for LGBT human rights. Companies throughout the world that successfully implement diversity initiatives, recognise the value of building alliances with external organisations. For example, external organisations can provide valuable feedback on a company's diversity efforts, thus contribute to their effectiveness, as well as information on what other companies are doing in this field.

Recommendations

The report concludes with a series of recommendations that may be useful as guidelines for debate and strategic planning on LGBT inclusion in the workplace by employers and LGBT employees' networks. Recommendations for employers concern actions around the role of leadership, data collection on LGBT employees, mainstreaming diversity and LGBT inclusion, effective communication and valuing the role of networks. Recommendations for LGBT networks concern actions on their governance, improving their membership and defining their role.

Samenvatting

Als internationaal platform voor de integratie van lesbische, homoseksuele, biseksuele en transseksuele mensen (LHBT) op het werk, zet Workplace Pride zich in voor het tot stand brengen van een betere werkomgeving voor LHBT-werknemers. De inspanningen van Workplace Pride om werkgevers en hun LHBT-werknemers te helpen dit voornemen om te zetten in concrete acties hebben in 2011 geleid tot het opstellen van de Verklaring van Amsterdam. Die Verklaring is een stappenplan voor werkgevers en werknemers in tien actiepunten die in het beleid van organisaties moeten worden ingebed. Veel van die actiepunten worden momenteel aangepakt: binnen bedrijven worden LHBT-netwerken opgericht en in algemene zin staat het onderwerp nu op de agenda van de werkgevers.

Om de middelen te identificeren die werkomgevingen LHBT-vriendelijker kunnen maken, heeft Workplace Pride in 2011 en 2012 in samenwerking met het FNV een studie uitgevoerd onder de titel: 'TALENT TO CHANGE FOR: LGBT Employee Research Leading the Way in Diversity'.

Methodologisch gezien is de studie in gelijke mate gestoeld op een grondige deskresearch en op kwalitatieve gegevens die vergaard zijn door middel van interviews en focusgroepen. Vergeleken met eerdere studies is dit onderzoek uniek, omdat het gebaseerd is op – en de weerspiegeling vormt van – de ervaringen van zowel werknemers als werkgevers, in zowel de publieke als de private sector. Het identificeert doorslaggevende succesfactoren en bevat praktische aanbevelingen voor organisaties die substantiële, duurzame en positieve veranderingen voor LHBT-werknemers tot stand willen brengen – veranderingen die bovendien de organisatie als geheel ten goede kunnen komen.

De opzet van dit onderzoek is het vergaren en analyseren van bestaande data om

zodanig het belang van een homovriendelijke werkplek te onderbouwen. De belangrijkste uitkomsten van het onderzoek kunnen als volgt worden samengevat:

Een LHBT-vriendelijke werkomgeving en -cultuur zijn een kwestie van lange adem

Een aanzienlijk aantal LHBT's wordt nog steeds geconfronteerd met een negatieve houding op werkplekken waar een dwingende 'heteroseksistische' cultuur heerst die niet systematisch wordt geadresseerd. Niet 'uit de kast' kunnen of durven komen, onverdraagzaamheid tegenover homo's en transgenders, onzichtbaarheid, beperkte toegang tot internationale mobiliteit en pesterijen: het zijn allemaal vormen van de uitsluiting van LHBT's. De angst om voor hun geaardheid uit te komen en een homofob werkklimaat hebben een negatieve invloed op de prestaties en het welzijn van LHBT-werknemers.

Veel deelnemers aan het onderzoek benadrukken dat de bereidheid van werknemers om tegenover collega's uit te komen voor hun geaardheid of genderidentiteit in twee richtingen werkt. Enerzijds kan homoacceptatie door de werkgever LHBT-werknemers een veilig gevoel en vertrouwen geven om openlijk voor hun geaardheid uit te komen. Omgekeerd is het zo dat, naarmate meer LHBT-werknemers 'uit de kast' komen, zij zichtbaarder zullen zijn voor hun collega's, hetgeen weer bijdraagt tot een grotere acceptatiegraad.

Mensen met een kantoorbaan komen vaker voor hun geaardheid uit dan mensen op werkvloeren waar LHBT-medewerkers op grotere weerstand stuiten om zich als zodanig te presenteren. Ook is de situatie lastiger op het platteland en in provinciesteden. Ook zijn LHBT's over het algemeen minder geneigd 'uit de kast' te komen in beroepen of sectoren die door mannen worden gedomineerd, zoals



bijvoorbeeld de strijdkrachten.

Onvoldoende besef in het bedrijf en bij andere medewerkers van de problematiek van LHBT-werknemers

De meeste werkgevers verzamelen geen gegevens over de seksuele geaardheid of genderidentiteit van hun werknemers. Die parameters worden niet meegenomen in het monitoren van de werkrelatie (werving, retentie en vertrek), noch worden er enquêtes gehouden over attitudes op de werkplek. Bij gebrek aan kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve gegevens wordt soms geconcludeerd dat er niets aan de hand is en dat er dus ook geen noodzaak is tot maatregelen. De onvolledige melding van discriminatie of vijandigheid ten opzichte van LHBT's wordt vaak verkeerd begrepen of genegeerd door het management.

Doorgaans kijken diversiteitsaudits alleen naar gelijke kansen voor mannen en vrouwen. Het uitblijven van LHBT-diversiteitsaudits heeft tot gevolg dat werkgevers niet nagaan of hun bestaand en nieuw beleid in voldoende mate LHBT-vriendelijk is. Ook wordt geen kwalitatieve informatie vergaard die problemen op dat gebied aan het licht kan brengen. Het houden van LHBT-diversiteitsaudits zou werkgevers in staat stellen om beter geïnformeerd en gericht – en dus efficiënter – beleid te ontwikkelen.

De lijnmanagers of stafmedewerkers die met klachten worden geconfronteerd beschikken niet altijd over de nodige inzichten of vaardigheden om problemen met de uitsluiting van LHBT's te adresseren, of om adequate ondersteuning en oplossingen aan te bieden.

In veel organisaties hebben werknemers geen toegang tot trainingen voor de bewustwording van de LHBT-problematiek. Hoewel soms aangeboden aan managers, bereikt dit soort opleidingen zelden de werknemers op de werkplek.

LHBT- en heterobondgenoten als rolmodellen

Onderzoek wijst uit dat LHBT- en heteromanagers (ook bij HR) als rolmodel kunnen optreden. Slechts een minderheid van de LHBT's in het middenkader levert een positieve bijdrage aan het verbeteren van de werkomgeving voor LHBT's. Onder hogere kaderleden zijn LHBT's in wisselende mate zichtbaar, omdat ze er niet altijd

voor kiezen (of zich voldoende op hun gemak voelen) om als rolmodel op te treden. Individuele attitudes zijn soms gebaseerd op een puur persoonlijke keuze, maar bij een aantal topmanagers bestaat eveneens de vrees dat negatieve reacties hun carrière nadelig zouden kunnen beïnvloeden.

LHBT-netwerken spelen een sleutelrol bij het verbeteren van LHBT-gelijkheid op het werk

Alle organisaties die aan het onderzoek meedoen beschikken over LHBT-bedrijfsnetwerken. Soms is er sprake van samenwerking tussen het LHBT-netwerk en HR; in andere gevallen is er tussen beide nog nooit contact gelegd.

LHBT-netwerken blijven een belangrijke rol spelen: zij bieden steun aan de werknemers en helpen de werkgevers hun diversiteitsdoelstellingen te behalen. Toch mag niet van hen verwacht worden dat zij de primaire verantwoordelijkheid van de werkgever voor hun rekening nemen. Zij moeten zich verder kunnen ontwikkelen, met name door het beschikbaar stellen van meer mensen en voldoende middelen. De netwerken zien bovendien in toenemende mate de noodzaak om hun eigen diversiteit te verbeteren. Er worden dan ook inspanningen geleverd om niet alleen meer lesbische, biseksuele en transgendercollega's in het ledenbestand op te nemen en zichtbaar te laten participeren, maar ook medewerkers van de werkvloeren of die buiten de stedelijke centra werken. Zo kunnen die dan op hun beurt in de nabije toekomst rolmodellen en 'change agents' worden.

Werkgevers zijn overtuigd van het belang van een LHBT-vriendelijk beleid, maar ze moeten het uitwerken, invoeren en meten

Vertegenwoordigers uit een groot aantal organisaties geven te kennen dat hun leiders overtuigd zijn van het belang van diversiteit – inclusief LHBT-acceptatie – en de business case ervoor zelfs actief uitdragen.

Niettemin blijkt dat bedrijven niet altijd even goed doordrongen zijn van specifieke aspecten van de business case. Sommige organisaties hebben er weliswaar een duidelijker beeld van, maar toch moesten we vaststellen dat veel bedrijven moeite hebben om een aantal cruciale bouwstenen van de business case handen en voeten te geven. De business case voor diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie werd uiteenlopend begrepen en zeer breed geïnterpreteerd. Vaak zag men niet het verschil met bestaande (en losstaande) diversiteitsinitiatieven en werd er geen verband gelegd



met de specifieke vertaling van de business case voor de verschillende organisaties. Bedrijven en organisaties gaan veelal uit van de interpretatie die hun eigen diversiteitsmanagers aan de business case hebben gegeven, en beperken zich tot de puur zakelijke aspecten ervan. LHBT-werknemers wijzen op de belangrijke voordelen voor het bedrijf en hameren op de morele dimensie van hun acceptatie op de werkplek. Het rapport benadrukt eveneens de cruciale rol die CEO's en bestuursleden kunnen spelen als 'change agents': zij moeten zich in woord en daad committeren aan diversiteit, en de business case ervoor blijven uitdragen.

Commitment voor LHBT-onderwerpen insteken vanaf de basis

Het onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat veel Nederlandse werkgevers uit de publieke en private sector enige vooruitgang geboekt hebben op het vlak van LHBT-acceptatie op de werkplek en dat ze zich inzetten voor LHBT-acceptatie vanaf de basis. Er bestaan een aantal voorbeelden van goede beleids- en actieplannen, die ondersteund worden door het middenkader en soms ook door de bedrijfstop.

De onderzoeksresultaten tonen aan dat LHBT-acceptatie zelden volledig is ingebed in de cultuur, strategie en structuren van de organisatie. Er zijn weinig voorbeelden van bedrijven die diversiteit en acceptatie hebben geïntegreerd in hun kernactiviteiten en besluitvormingsproces. Een aantal ondernemingen zijn inderdaad aan het leren de voordelen van integriteit voor de organisatie en haar medewerkers naar waarde te schatten. Dat leerproces leidt tot een breder begrip van de business case voor diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie. Dat begrip kan op zijn beurt de manier waarop zaken worden gedaan en waarop medewerkers met elkaar omgaan op de werkplek positief beïnvloeden. Een andere mogelijke uitwerking is een grotere samenhang in de benadering en implementatie van strategieën en beleidslijnen. Tenslotte, en niet minder belangrijk, zou het kunnen uitmonden in een 'inclusieve' cultuur, die creativiteit en innovatie stimuleert.

Inspanningen ten gunste van LHBT-acceptatie moeten door de organisatie heen, maar ook naar buiten toe worden gecommuniceerd

Bedrijven maken gebruik van verschillende communicatiemiddelen om hun werknemers voor te lichten over de voordelen van diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie. Dat gaat van aankondigingen over het bestaan van een LHBT-netwerk – in nieuwsbrieven, intranet of op de website –, tot het opnemen van een diversiteitsparagraaf in de

bedrijfswaarden of zelfs het ondertekenen van de Verklaring van Amsterdam. Een beperkt aantal bedrijven verwelkomt nieuwe werknemers met een informatiepakket, waarin de interne beleidsregels worden toegelicht en ook informatie is opgenomen over het LHBT-netwerk van de onderneming.

De meerderheid van de bedrijven maakt voornamelijk gebruik van intranet om hun beleid inzake diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie (maar bijvoorbeeld ook over de klachtenprocedures) kenbaar te maken. Hoe nuttig dit communicatiekanaal ook moge zijn, niet alle werknemers hebben toegang tot intranet. Daardoor wordt de informatie niet optimaal verspreid. Met name vallen werknemers buiten de boot die niet in een kantooromgeving of buiten de stedelijke centra werken.

Tot voor kort richtten HR-managers zich voornamelijk op sekseneutraal taalgebruik in de organisatie. Bijna alle deelnemers aan de enquête zijn van mening dat het taalgebruik in managementcommunicatie en in bedrijfsdocumenten steeds LHBT-vriendelijker wordt. De bewustwording bij collega's van adequaat en LHBT-vriendelijk taalgebruik is in grote mate te danken aan de inspanningen van LHBT-netwerken en individuele medewerkers.

Sommige bedrijven vermelden hun commitment ten gunste van gelijkheid en diversiteit expliciet op hun website, en vaak wordt ook LHBT-acceptatie, het bestaan van een LHBT-netwerk of het lidmaatschap van Workplace Pride genoemd. Vertegenwoordigers van publieke organisaties die aan het onderzoek hebben deelgenomen vinden doorgaans dat de private sector zich verder heeft ontwikkeld en over meer expertise beschikt in het naar buiten toe communiceren over hun waarden en verwezenlijkingen op vlak van diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie. Deze discrepantie in de manier waarop publieke en private organisaties communiceren over dit beleidsveld blijkt bijvoorbeeld uit het feit dat een aantal overheidsdiensten met een actief diversiteitsbeleid op hun website opvallend weinig aandacht besteden aan 'inclusiviteit'. Bedrijven daarentegen nemen diversiteit en een tolerante organisatiecultuur niet vaak op in hun mission statement en kernwaarden. Bij sommige organisaties ontbreekt niet alleen een hoofdstuk over diversiteit en de daaraan verbonden verwezenlijkingen op hun website, maar komt het begrip daar niet voor.



Contact van werkgevers met externe stakeholders

Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat deelnemende bedrijven weinig contacten onderhouden met externe organisaties die gespecialiseerd zijn in gelijke rechten voor LHBT's of zich inzetten voor de mensenrechten van LHBT's. Wereldwijd onderkennen bedrijven die met succes een diversiteitsbeleid hebben uitgerold de toegevoegde waarde van een nauwe samenwerking met externe organisaties. Zo kunnen externe organisaties dankzij hun feedback een waardevolle bijdrage leveren aan het verhogen van de effectiviteit van een diversiteitsprogramma. Ook kunnen ze laten zien wat andere bedrijven doen op dat gebied.

Aanbevelingen

Het rapport besluit met een aantal aanbevelingen die voor werkgevers en LHBT-netwerken een nuttige leidraad kunnen vormen bij de discussie en strategische planning van LHBT-acceptatie in de werkomgeving. Aanbevelingen voor werkgevers hebben betrekking op de rol van leiderschap, het verzamelen van gegevens over LHBT-werknemers, de integratie van diversiteit en LHBT-acceptatie in regulier beleid, effectieve communicatie en het onderstrepen van de rol van netwerken. Aanbevelingen voor de LHBT-netwerken hebben te maken met hun governance, het uitbreiden van hun ledenbestand en het verduidelijken van hun rol.

Our corporate identity is mainly male, even macho

Disclosure of sexual orientation depends on your personality, your locality and your management style

You don't look like a lesbian

Introduction

This study reports on the findings of a research on the extent to which employers in the Netherlands are promoting the business case for diversity and the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (hereinafter LGBT) employees, particularly through the implementation of strategies, policies and actions, and on the significance of the experiences of LGBT employees in the workplace in the shaping of their inclusion by employers.

The report is published by the Workplace Pride Foundation, in cooperation with FNV (the largest Dutch trade union confederation). This study is mainly concerned with the experiences and treatment of LGBT employees from 20 private companies and public sector organisations, among the largest employers in the Netherlands. The ultimate aim of the research is to identify means to improve the workplace environment for LGBT people.

The Workplace Pride study, 'Talent to change for: LGBT Employee Research Leading the Way in Diversity', also reports on the measures, including "good practices", that these employers have taken to guarantee the inclusion of LGBT employees within their company, with a view to underscore the business case for diversity and how LGBT inclusion can best be shaped and achieved. Most of these employers are based in the Netherlands, although many large corporations and public sector organisations also operate at global level. Most of the LGBT employee-resource networks from the companies who took part in this research are members of the Workplace Pride Foundation. This report is based on research and data collection carried out between November 2011 and April 2012 which aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the experiences of LGBT employees at work?
- What is the employers' understanding of the business case for LGBT inclusion (costs and benefits)? To what extent are they engaged in promoting it?

- How inclusive to LGBT employees is the organisational culture and work climate?
 - › What policies and concrete actions have employers implemented to ensure that LGBT employees are included and can achieve their full potential?
 - › To what extent employers engage with LGBT employees and their networks in the change process?
- What strategies, policies and practices could improve the situation of LGBT employees and contribute to building a business case for LGBT diversity?

There are widespread assertions about the financial and social benefits of fostering a diverse workforce, and of the marketplace imperatives which make diversity an economic necessity both in terms of attracting and retaining talented employees, and of making the organisation's products or services more attractive to a broader group of potential customers. Financial and social benefits of diversity also extend to public sector organisations that promote workplace equality and fulfil their responsibility to deliver quality services to the diversity of service users. Research makes clear that progress to date has been uneven, particularly when it comes to moving from the 'thought' phase to the 'doing' phase of promoting diversity and the inclusion of LGBT employees in the workplace.

Methodology

The research and data collection process was structured around two main phases.

PHASE ONE involved an in-depth desk and web-based review of academic, policy and research literature using international databases. Phase one focused on the collection and analysis of information and data on the available Dutch, European and international literature (to the end of 2011) on LGBT inclusion in the workplace and



on the business case for diversity. The literature review informed the structure of the two questionnaires¹ that were used in the second phase, and provided a general background for discussions on specific themes that are covered in this study.

PHASE TWO of the study was dedicated to collecting qualitative data and information both on the experiences of LGBT employees in the workplace and on strategies, policies and actions that public and private sector organisations are developing to create an LGBT-inclusive working environment in the Netherlands. The extent to which these strategies contribute to underpinning the business case was also considered. This part of the study was conducted through in-depth desk research and, mostly, through face-to-face encounters with employees, employers and other stakeholders engaged in equality activities for LGBT people in the Dutch and European contexts.

- Three focus groups and 28 semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted in the Amsterdam area and in The Hague
- More than 17 representatives from LGBT networks and diverse employees participated in a focus group and/or in an interview: a great proportion identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (verbally and in monitoring forms)
- Individuals from 15 companies, from 12 sectors and a range of occupational activities: e.g. engineering, financial, transports, information technology, consumer products and 5 local and national governmental organisations: Municipality of The Hague, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure.

The aim of this part of the survey was to explore issues, experiences and attitudes that facilitate or hinder the recruitment, retention and promotion of LGBT employees in their workplace, as well as to gather their suggestions on changes that are needed for employers to attract and keep LGBT talent, and on possible ways to improve their inclusion and create a climate that enables them to achieve their full potential. Similarly, managers and human resources (HR) and diversity and inclusion (D&I) personnel participated in qualitative interviews which aimed to collect information about strategies, policies and good practices in diversity, but also to gauge their level

of awareness of issues that affect LGBT employees, as well as their understanding of and support for the business case for LGBT inclusion.

By means of interviews and/or the review of written materials, the perspectives of LGBT organisations, trade unions and the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission were also collected and provided valuable data and information.

Limitations

A number of limitations, albeit involuntary, were encountered during the research process, although the qualitative research benefited from a high rate of positive responses, interest, contributions and cooperation from individuals and organisations (38 individuals from 20 organisations participated in the study, out of the over 100 individuals from 24 organisations that were contacted).

- Geographical coverage within the Netherlands: even if a few participants travelled from different locations, such as Eindhoven and Rotterdam, there was little input from employees from more rural areas
- Positions of participating employees: mainly in middle management and 4 directors
- Lack of involvement from companies' CEOs or management board members: only HR or middle management who report directly to them
- Limited data and no statistics on LGBT employees were shared by employers
- Very low participation rate from transgender employees and employees from ethnic minorities.

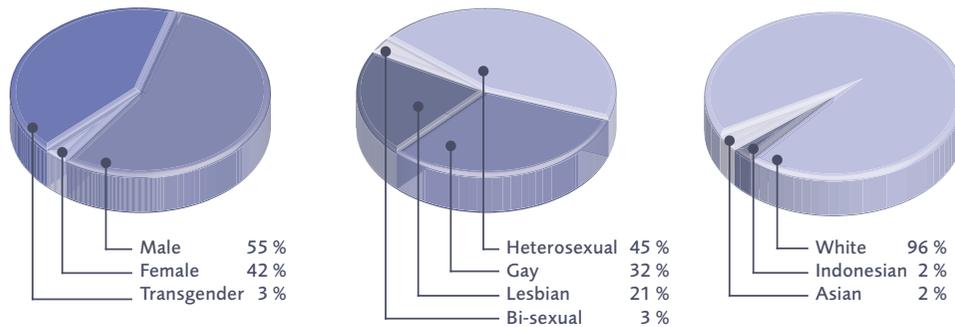
It should be noted that both LGBT networks and company representatives acknowledged that collecting data on LGBT employees was a challenge, but also a necessity in the near future. The study could have benefited from the contribution of employers' organisations, in their role as key stakeholders in discussions on this issue and social partners at Dutch and European level, who did not respond to requests to share their perspective on the topic at hand. Finally, participants in the study were nearly exclusively individuals employed in large or multinational companies or in large public administrations (with a workforce of over 1000). Therefore, our findings should not necessarily be generalised to LGBT people who are self-employed or seeking employment, and those working in small or medium size companies (SMEs).

¹ The questionnaires for the face-to-face interviews and focus groups are included in the appendices.



Composition of survey respondents

Data on the profile of participants in this study was collected by means of an equality monitoring form which respondents completed on a voluntary basis and anonymously. All respondents were Dutch nationals and they provided information on their gender identity, sexual orientation and ethnic origin.



Overview of LGBT situation in NL

The Netherlands provides a general positive climate for LGBT people and social acceptance of LGBT people has increased in recent years². Equality legislation provides a solid framework for the protection of the rights of LGBT people in employment and the Netherlands was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage in 2001. International research says the Netherlands occupies a leading position in acceptance for LGBT and other countries are studying the Dutch model³. However, the emancipation of LGBT people is by no means achieved in all spheres: even if 85% to 88% of the Dutch population has a neutral to very positive view of LGBT, one-third of LGBT people do not feel safe to come out in the workplace.

It is important to stress that LGBT people in the Netherlands benefit from support and commitment at political level. The Dutch government is keen to apply international standards on LGBT equality (and be a role model), such as those from the Council

of Europe. The government has adopted and is implementing an LGBT and Gender Equality Policy Plan in the Netherlands (2011-2015). This plan was preceded by another plan in 2008-2011 which main objective was to improve public attitudes towards LGBT people. Both public policy programmes are meant to address and reduce the existing gap between de jure and de facto equal treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. To this end, the current plan sets out a number of priorities for public policy in this field and highlights the role of the government, as well as the responsibility of the people -women and men, LGBT and heterosexuals- companies and social institutions in fulfilling national objectives on LGBT and gender equality. The study will explore whether the government's commitment to LGBT inclusion and acceptance permeates to other actors in Dutch society and to what extent it translates into similar accountability in the workplace through the contributions by employers, employees and other stakeholders to create cultural change both in words and deeds.

Report structure

In Chapter 1, we start by providing an in-depth review of research literature and focus on the analysis of information and data on the available Dutch, European and international literature that deals with the inclusion of LGBT employees and the business case for diversity. In chapter 2, we report on the experiences of LGBT employees and we discuss the main issues that were identified from the survey. In Chapter 3, we consider aspects of organisational culture, as they relate to LGBT inclusion. To this end, we start by exploring employers' understanding and promotion of the business case for LGBT inclusion. We then examine the extent to which employers are aware of issues that affect their LGBT employees, and what policy and practice measures they have taken to address them, as well as how they communicate their efforts internally and externally. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the contributions of some stakeholders in achieving progress on LGBT inclusion in the workplace. Chapter 5 describes a number of examples of good practices in LGBT workplace inclusion that were provided by participating employers. In Chapter 6, we summarise the research results and formulate a number of recommendations aimed both at employers and LGBT employee networks.

² SCP (the Netherlands Social Research Institute) national LGBT monitoring 2010 and Education, Culture and Science Ministry (OCW): Steeds gewoner, nooit gewoon (Increasingly Normal, never the Norm).

³ SCP LGBT monitoring 2010.

1 Literature Review

This literature review starts with providing an overview of research and reports at European level, published by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) which concern discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the efforts of employers across Europe to address diversity in their workplaces. In the second part, we present research from three EU Member States: Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK). The Irish report which focuses on the business case for diversity is discussed in the first section; the second section consists of research conducted by Dutch institutions: ministries, equal treatment bodies, and other agencies and bureaus; in the third section, we present a report by Stonewall, an LGBT non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the UK. Finally, we present a report on LGBT inclusion in the workplace issued by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), an NGO in the USA.

1.1. European research

1.1.1. Council of Europe 2011 report

There has been recent high level attention to the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity by the Council of Europe, including concerns about access to employment across Europe. In the report 'Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe', the section on employment first reviews the applicable legal rules, both in the Council of Europe and the European Union⁴.

The revised European Social Charter guarantees social and economic rights, including the right to work and the principle of non-discrimination applies to all rights set out in it. The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 explicitly puts sexual orientation and gender identity among prohibited grounds for discrimination in the employment sphere. A specific provision

covers effective protection of the privacy of transgender persons in relation to employment applications and disclosure of their gender identity history. The European Union Employment Equality Directive prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the private and the public sectors, not only in the place of employment, but also in procedures governing access to work, and in labour-related organisations.

The report also lays out the legal framework protecting transgender persons in employment.

"Sex" discrimination in employment is currently the legal basis of European Union legislation to combat employment discrimination on the ground of gender reassignment. One of the employment cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union on discrimination on the grounds of gender identity produced a landmark judgment. In 1996 it found that dismissal of a transsexual person for reasons related to gender reassignment was precluded under the 1976 Equal Treatment Directive on prohibition of discrimination on the ground of "sex".

The report presents data on recent Eurobarometer research with regard to homosexual persons in the workplace, and also on the business case concerning the importance for employees to feel comfortable with who they are at work.

LGB persons tend to conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace. The Eurobarometer survey found that 68% of European Union citizens think that it is difficult for a homosexual person to state his/her sexual orientation in the workplace...LGB persons may be more productive at work if they do not need to conceal their sexual orientation. Some firms in member states have used

4 Council of Europe, 2011



this argument and argued for the "business-case for diversity", which resulted in LGBT employee networks being established and partner benefits given to both LGB and heterosexual workers.

1.1.2. European Commission: reports on the business case for diversity

The 2005 study, 'The business case for diversity – Good practices in the workplace', uses survey research to ascertain what companies themselves believe are the benefits of diversity⁵. One of the surveys used the European Business Test Panel (EBTP) to test diversity awareness and practices of companies in the Member States of the EU. There were 798 responses to the EBTP survey, and the key findings concerned the major benefits which these companies are achieving, or expected to achieve with their diversity policies.

- For 42% of the companies: 'resolving labour shortages and recruiting and retaining high quality staff.'
- For 38% of the companies: ability to enhance a company's reputation and image.
- 26% of the companies mentioned that diversity improves innovation, leading to new products and services, and potential new markets⁶.

A follow-up study in 2008, 'Continuing the Diversity Journey: Business Practices, Perspectives, and Benefits' concludes: "A focus on diversity offers a business opportunity for all. The search for talent, competitiveness, and innovation – key challenges for small and large companies alike – rides on the ability to respond successfully to the opportunities presented by Europe's increasing diverse societies"⁷. The report states that it moves beyond the earlier study prepared for the European Commission entitled 'The business case for diversity.' More particularly, the 2008 report:

- moves beyond a human resource driven notion of the business case, to engage with the relationship between diversity, innovation, and productivity.
- focuses on the role of professional business organisations, the EU, and other governmental bodies to promote and monitor diversity initiatives.

- highlights the role of business schools and education in promoting diversity. Empirically the study focuses on small and medium sized enterprises in Europe.

1.1.3. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2010 report

In a recent report, 'Homophobia, transphobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the EU Member States', the FRA underscores the predicament faced by LGBT persons on whether to be out at work.

Research conducted in many Member States shows that where individuals are open about their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace, they face harassment from co-workers and exclusion from social activities. In addition, employers often treat them less favourably in matters of promotion, training or requests for holiday. Transgender persons, in particular, appear to suffer greater difficulties. As a consequence, LGBT persons are reluctant to 'come out' in the workplace, and those who do come out and experience discrimination are reluctant to make complaints for fear of negative consequences⁸.

1.1.4. European Commission, Network of Socio-Economic Experts in the Field of Non-discrimination 2010

The report entitled 'Synthesis Report: the Situation of LGBT Groups in the Labour Market in European Member States' draws a number of key conclusions that are important for our work in this study. First, that:

"Generally speaking, the situation of LGBT people has improved considerably over the course of the last ten years in most European Union Member States. The implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in transposing the EU Anti-Discrimination Directives has increased legal protection and stimulated debate. Activities of equality bodies, NGOs and other stakeholders have contributed to raising awareness of discrimination against LGBT people and the need to overcome it. Nevertheless, there is broad scope for action to improve the situation and several barriers still remain to the realisation of equality in practice".

5 European Commission 2005.

6 European Commission 2005, p. 5-6.

7 European Commission 2008, p.8.

8 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2010, p. 21.



This synthesis report also notes the difficulty of conducting research in this area.

There is a general lack of information about the situation of LGBT groups in the labour market. Information and reliable data on the sexual orientation of the population are nearly non-existent and, consequently, there is also no information on the labour market situation of the population broken down according to sexual orientation. Moreover, research in this area is very rare.

The level of under-reporting is particularly high for cases of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Many victims do not file any kind of complaint.

This phenomenon is even higher than for other grounds, as initiating a case means disclosing sexual identity and brings the risk of victimisation.

Diversity management initiatives within (international) companies are increasingly also tackling LGBT issues. These include LGBT networks and targeted recruiting, trying to attract LGBT people as employees. Research shows that diversity management strategies encourage more openness within companies and, as such, are the main positive factors in the wellbeing of LGBT people at work and in enabling them to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace.

1.2. Studies from EU Member States

1.2.1. Ireland

The Irish study addresses issues surrounding the business case for diversity. The Irish Equality Authority published an important study prepared by Kathy Monks: 'The Business Impact of Equality and Diversity'⁹. The study presents an 'Equality-Diversity Value Chain', linking overall business strategy, the equality and diversity strategy, and policies and practices to achieve these strategies, to three key business outcomes:

- Individual employee outcomes
- Employee performance
- Organisation performance

Thus, the value chain represents a conceptualisation of the business case, and the impact of diversity strategies, policies and practices on personnel (commitment,

motivation, job and life satisfaction), employee performance (reductions in labour turnover, improved employee relations, increases in innovation and creativity) and finally organisational performance (access to new labour pools and markets, enhanced service levels and customer satisfaction, and enhanced corporate reputation). The study focuses on indicators which are used to examine the business benefits of equality and diversity, and then provides examples of methods of measurement, and the value of these measures. The indicators for measuring programme implementation are cost reductions, labour shortages, access to new markets, improved performance in existing markets, access to talent, global management capacity, innovation and creativity, reputation with governments and other stakeholders, marketing image, cultural values, productivity losses.

The report concludes by presenting five levels that an employer can achieve on an 'Equity Continuum':

1. Legal compliance,
2. Beyond compliance
3. The business case
4. Employer of choice
5. Leader in diversity.

For example, for level three -the business case- employers "evaluate diversity opportunities qualitatively and quantitatively to identify programmes that will positively affect the future viability of the organisation"¹⁰. Higher levels, for example level 4 – employer of choice – is achieved when "organisations have internalised diversity as core organisational value" and 'diversity is integrated into all aspects of an organisation' and the commitment to diversity is not affected by economic trends. Finally, level 5 – leader in diversity – emerges when organisations have achieved their internal vision of equity and now "seek to foster diversity beyond their own boundaries' and act upon a motivation that the principle of diversity is an 'organisational, community, national, even global imperative".

1.2.2. The Netherlands

In this section, we discuss research conducted by the Ministry for Economic Affairs, the Equal Treatment Commission, the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau and

9 Irish Equality Authority, 2007.

10 Irish Equality Authority, 2007, Appendix 2.



Movisie, an organisation which works with local governments in the Netherlands on diversity issues and carried out research on SMEs, in partnership with Workplace Pride and the FNV labour union.

Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation recently published the study 'Advantages of a Gay Friendly Work Environment for Netherlands Employers'¹¹. In the study's conclusions about the Dutch business case for LGBT diversity, the report finds that there is "currently insufficient hard evidence that diversity pays," but concludes:

"Nevertheless, there are indications on both theoretical grounds and in the empirical literature that diversity has a positive impact on one or more of the relevant aspects of company performance (recruitment, sales, costs)".

The study concludes that, regardless of the current case of the business case, as the composition of the population becomes more diverse and the supply of labour decreases due to the aging of the society, in the future, "diversity will thus become more of a fact of life and less of a choice. It is not a question of *if* there is a business case to be made, but *how* can it best be shaped"¹². Another research conducted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation also concluded that, in respect to LGBT friendly policy, the Dutch business sector is still in the initial phase, the policy is mainly in the 'thought' phase and to a much lesser extent in the 'doing' phase¹³.

Netherlands Equal Treatment Commission

The Netherlands Equal Treatment Commission (CGB) recently wished to improve its understanding of employment situations which may lead to discrimination based on sexual orientation and commissioned the Verwey-Jonker institute to conduct research¹⁴. The conclusions of the study include:

"Homosexuality is currently barely conspicuous in mixed Male/Female and male dominated workplaces, and homosexuality appears to be of no significance, either as a category of HR policy, or in the workplace. That at first glance, would appear to be the end of the matter: there is no problem, and therefore no need for policy. A closer look, however, reveals a problem with treatment at work, precisely where homosexuality is the least conspicuous."

The study concludes: "Our study also confirmed that the working climate in the Netherlands is not generally homopositive".

Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP)

The report entitled 'Everything Normal? The social safety on the workforce for homosexual men and women'¹⁵ found that, in 2010, 28% of respondents among gay men and 14% of lesbian women were confronted with negative reactions about their sexual orientation. The research also asked those who are open about their sexuality at work (roughly 80% of the Pink Panel) about their experiences. In this group, 14% of the men and 5% of the women who were open at work were confronted with negative reactions.

What is the impact of this work environment on well-being and performance at work?

The study highlights that

"Virtually no studies have been carried out in the Netherlands on the effects of negative attitudes aroused by sexual preferences on the well-being and functioning of homosexual women and men (at the workplace)¹⁶". It notes that one study from over ten years ago, Sandfort and Bos (1998), was limited to trade union members working in the health care sector or in local government. The survey found that LGBTs and heterosexuals were found to suffer to the same degree from verbal and physical violence and exclusion. However, gay men did "more often report negative attitudes on account of their lifestyle".

The study also indicates that the only Dutch survey of transgenders (Vennix 2010) suggests that

11 Ministry of Economics 2010.

12 Ministry of Economics, 2010, p. 7.

13 Ministry of Economics, p. 11.

14 Commissie Gelijke Behandeling, 2009.

15 Social and Cultural Planning Bureau 2011.

16 Social and Cultural Planning Bureau 2011, p. 47.



"three-quarters of transgender women had experienced at least one form of unpleasant behaviour from colleagues during the six months prior to the survey". This usually consisted of "gossip and jokes in poor taste", but some reported much more serious forms of abuse, for example, "13% reported that they had been bullied at least once a week in the six months prior to the survey"¹⁷.

The SCP notes that although there is little evidence of anti-gay attitudes in the labour market at the moment, because of the lack of research on the negative effects, given the findings from other literature about the effects of aggression and intimidation at work, those negative effects certainly exist. For example, the National Working Conditions Survey (NEA) in the Netherlands (2003) shows that harassment by colleagues leads to occasional absenteeism among 7% of the respondents and to long-term absenteeism by 3%. In addition, 15% of respondents reported that they functioned less well, and 3% reported that this effect lasted longer than four weeks. The SCP concluded that this Dutch research, reinforced by the findings of international research, demonstrates the adverse effect of aggression and intimidation in the workplace¹⁸.

The national centre for social development (knowledge and advice institute), Movisie, recently published 'Face the Facts: The study of homosexuality and work in the Netherlands'¹⁹. This publication provides a brief overview of 21 different studies completed in the Netherlands on this theme and published in Dutch between 1988 and 2011. The study starts by presenting the overall findings, as follows:

"Levels of discrimination based on homosexuality are different for each company and each individual. Finding reliable statistical indicators of workplace discrimination is difficult, the problem being that it differs per sector and varies between the sexes".

Overall it is shown that 'task oriented' companies have a more negative workplace atmosphere with less attention and respect for diversity and individuality for employees compared to 'people oriented' companies. This negative mode is expressed by making LGBT employees feel as if they cannot be themselves. This translates into a

worsening of social relations with co-workers and management resulting in bullying, gossip, ridicule, negative remarks and sexual intimidation.

"A negative workplace atmosphere has negative effects on employees who not (completely) fit the (heterosexual) standard. Consequences are shown in stress, emotion exhaustion, de-personalisation (of work), more sick leaves and health problems".

The research indicates that these issues are compounded for transgenders.

"The risk of discrimination is greater when transgenders are deviating from the gender standard. Transgenders in transition are amongst those suffering from this but also transgenders who still show physical signs of their former gender".

Dutch research has more recently focused on the situation of LGBT people and employment. Workplace Pride and the trade union FNV worked in partnership on the research 'Lesbian, Homosexual, bisexual and transgender employees in Medium and Small Enterprises: Perspectives of employees and employers'²⁰. This research addressed three aspects of the relationships between employers and their LGBT employees: recognise openness, identify working conditions, and appreciation. The research was based on telephone interviews using questionnaires with SME employers and with an on-line questionnaire for employees. Important differences were found between the perceptions of employers and employees in these three areas.

- Employees see greater barriers to be open about sexual orientation at work than employers. Employees fear negative responses to being open at work.
- It terms of identifying work conditions, employers are more positive about the work condition for LGB employees than employees do. The research found that jokes about lesbian, gay and bisexual employees

*I don't want to be
seen as 'gay' at work*

17 Vennix 2010, p. 46.

18 Social and Cultural Planning Bureau 2011, p. 47.

19 Movisie, 'Face the Facts: Onderzoek naar homoseksualiteit en arbeid in Nederlands 2011.

20 EIM, 2011.



are occasionally made in approximately half of the companies.

- While employers see the value of having a diversity policy, nearly half of the participating SME employers have no written or unwritten diversity policy. Employees, on the other hand, are more positive about the role that employers could play in encouraging respect for diversity.

The report reached very different conclusions in relation to transgender persons – the consensus by both employers and employees is that the work situation for transgenders remains problematic. Once again, employees are more positive about employers taking appropriate measure than SME employers themselves²¹.

1.2.3. The United Kingdom (UK)

Stonewall in the UK, is a large NGO that focuses on both government policy and company policies toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (LGB). The organisation developed the 'Stonewall Equality Index', in order to organise an annual benchmarking exercise that ranks the best employers for LGB in Britain²². Part 1 of the index addresses institutional aspects in managing diversity. For example, policy statements which specifically mention non discrimination based on sexual orientation, strategies that link equality and diversity for LGB employees to the aims and values of the organisation, and a concrete action plan to achieve identifiable objectives and milestones.

- A connection between policy, strategy, and an action plan is seen as critical to the actual implementation and achievement of workplace equality for LGB employees.
- The index also asks about the system of accountability for these three aspects. It advocates the need for a diversity team or person, in order to discover who reports to whom and who has access to board or senior level management to discuss diversity and LGB issues.

Non discrimination responsibilities of companies are not limited to the issues of recruitment and promotion, since they apply to workplace climate for employees too. In this respect, the index also asks about the policies and procedures that are in place to deal with LGB-related bullying and harassment, and how grievances are handled. At this stage, companies are asked how they ensure that all staff are aware

of company policies towards bullying and harassment, encourage reporting of non-respect of this policy, train staff in dealing with complaints, and track how incidents are monitored and followed-up with actions.

Part 2 of the Stonewall index addresses staff engagement on LGB issues. The index asks whether the diversity champion on LGB issues for the company is at the board level, senior management level, or the human resource or diversity officer level. At the next stage, the index focuses on the activities and communication between the diversity champion on LGB issues and others in the organisation (for example, all staff, the board, or an LGB employee network group). Part 3 of the Index looks into learning, development and support. In this part, attention is centred on who the target groups of the LGB inclusive diversity training are: whether they are new employees, senior managers, line managers, or all staff. Part 4 concerns monitoring of the LGB diversity policy, Part 5 supplier policy, and Part 6 external and community engagement towards the broader LGB community.

Stonewall recently released a study entitled 'Peak Performance: Gay People and Productivity'²³, which is based on interviews and focus groups with 107 LGB staff from a range of 21 public and private sector organisations in Britain about their experiences in the workplace. The first dilemma that is discussed with the employees is whether to be open about their sexual orientation at work. Participants reported on the positive impact of coming out: efficiency is better, they feel more comfortable with who they are, they gain confidence in their ability to be successful, and experience increased creativity and motivation at work.

"Participants report that being out in a supportive environment increased their loyalty, commitment to and investment in their organisation". But participants also expressed their anxieties; they "worried that opportunities for career progression and development can rely heavily on contacts and networks within the organisation". Participants felt that a non-inclusive working environment or not being out means that they are unable to fully access these networks.

The second section of the Stonewall study considers barriers created by employers.

21 p. 13.

22 Stonewall 2012.

23 Stonewall, 2008a.



Many participants said that their work environment is male-dominated and heterosexist, and they felt excluded. Others reported that, when they came out of the closet at work, they were subjected to homophobic harassment and discrimination. Other themes of this section stress the importance of line managers in creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment, the importance of supporting employees in dealing with suppliers, partner organisations and clients, and the importance of visible leadership on LGBT and diversity.

The third section of the study discusses a number of ways that organisations can create a climate in which LGBT persons can be themselves and increase their productivity. The onus is in on the value of a two-way loyalty, the importance of role models, the potential for mentoring, reaching out to suppliers and clients, supporting globally mobile employees, and the role of employee network groups. As an example, participants in the research found LGBT employee networks a source of support and a demonstration that their organisation values them. The study finds, for example, that it is clear from the participants that

"network groups can have direct business benefits to the organisation, such as offering formal and informal career development opportunities and providing valuable networking opportunities across the organisation"²⁴.

The study concludes on remaining challenges: gaining a better understanding between openness towards sexual orientation and productivity, the challenge of monitoring progress made in LGBT diversity when participants may mistrust the monitoring process itself and voice concern about the security of the data and fears of being identified. In addition, there is a concern about failing to recognise contributions: employees make a lot of effort on behalf of their employers on the issue of LGBT and diversity, but these efforts are not fully recognised, even though this time adds value both to improving the internal policies of the organisation and the external reputation of the organisation. There is a concern about inadequate resources being allocated to diversity efforts. There is the challenge to reach not only gay men, but also lesbians within organisations. Finally, there is the challenge of location, to make sure that LGBT diversity initiatives extend beyond a particular office in a metropolitan centre, but across the business operations of the organisation.

Stonewall UK has also published research on Lesbians, for example, the report 'The Double-Glazed ceiling: Lesbians in the workplace'²⁵. This research was based on in-depth interviews with a range of lesbian and bisexual women about their experiences in the workplace. The study concludes with the following recommendations for employers and networks:

- Employers should provide opportunities of professional development. Many of the women interviewed felt that women are not encouraged to achieve at the highest levels
- Increase the visibility and support for role models within the organisation.

The next set of recommendations focuses on LGBT networks within organisations and the need to attract more women to these events.

- Women leaders involved in networks should personally contact others to attend events
- The tone of network events needs to be considered: altering the timings and venue to attract more women
- Consider networking across sectors, beyond individual companies, to bring more women together to events.

1.3. USA report

In 2010, the Human Rights Campaign in the USA presented a major study entitled 'Degrees of Equality: A National Study Examining Workplace Climate for LGBT Employees'²⁶. The study presents an assessment tool that addresses three core questions facing a business or work group:

- Is our organisation an LGBT-friendly and inclusive workplace?
- How does our current environment have an impact on our business?
- Where should we focus to improve our environment?

The study also recommends that training and consultations to improve the work environment for LGBT persons should focus on three types of organisational change agents: senior leadership and human resources professionals, midlevel managers and supervisors, and individual employees.

24 Stonewall 2008a, p. 19.

25 Stonewall 2008b.

26 Human Rights Campaign 2010.

2. Experiences and workplace issues of LGBT employees

This chapter provides an overview of the experiences of LGBT employees from 15 large companies and 5 public sector organisations in the Netherlands (4 ministries and 1 municipality) in the workplace. The information presented in this chapter was mainly collected during the focus groups and some of it was sourced from interviews. This part is structured according to the main themes that emerged from our discussions with LGBT employees:

- Issues around coming out, experiences of homophobia and transphobia, lack of visibility, international mobility and exclusion, and workplace climate and fitting in.

Participating employees spoke openly about their sexual orientation and gender identity and many of them have come out to their employer and colleagues: most were gay men or lesbian women (the percentage of men was 2/3) and one transgender woman participated. Most respondents were in middle managerial positions and 4 participants worked at director level.

Respondents related their own experiences, shared their perceptions and information, and reported opinions from network discussions and feedback from members. All participants in the focus group considered it very important to take part in the study in order to make colleagues and employers, and people generally, aware of the reality that LGBT employees experience in the workplace. More significantly, LGBT respondents were hopeful that this study's findings and recommendations would help achieve progress in LGBT inclusion in the workplace and feed into possible LGBT diversity action planning by their employers in the near future.

At times, it was observed that there were discrepancies between the perceptions of network members and those of HR managers, which are mostly integrated in chapter 3 of this report.

- LGBT employees did not always agree with the depiction of the situation at work by their colleagues from HR and management (mainly), although their accounts included both areas for improvement and examples of good practices by their employers.
- Most company representatives endeavoured to provide a realistic picture of the situation of their LGBT colleagues, based on their level of awareness, and were outspoken about the necessity to achieve better and faster progress on LGBT inclusion in their organisation.

2.1. Coming out

Participants in the qualitative research indicated that there is a general perception that most LGBT in the Netherlands have no difficulty with disclosing their gender identity or sexual orientation in the workplace, mainly on account of the relatively high national acceptance of LGBT people, existing LGBT equality legislation and government policy. The vast majority of respondents did not agree with that perception and provided a different picture of the reality faced by self-disclosed LGBT employees, on the basis of their first-hand experience or observation of how their colleagues were treated at work.

Many participants in the qualitative research stressed that a two-way process was essential for employees to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace: employers' inclusion of LGBT employees creates favourable conditions for employees to feel safe and confident to be open about their LGBT identity and when LGBT people 'come out' about their identity, they contribute to rendering LGBT employees more visible and better accepted by their colleagues. On the issue of coming out, we found that:

- Self-disclosure of LGBT identity is done on a person-to-person basis



- Working climate and corporate culture can facilitate or hinder that process
- The LGBT employee's position, particularly as it compares to the position of the person they come out to is an important factor
- Coming out is more prevalent in an office environment than on the shop floor where LGBT employees face greater barriers to self-identifying as LGBT
- The situation is more difficult in rural areas or provincial towns
- In technical sectors and technical occupational activities, in the armed forces or generally in male-dominated sectors or occupational activities LGBT are less likely to come out
- Coming out mainly happens at a later stage in the employee's career progression
- Having visible LGBT role models at senior level is an incentive
- The challenge is to be able to come out as any other day-today issue and not as an event to make an issue out of.

According to some gay respondents, 'masculine' managers made it more difficult to come out generally, but more so for gay men than for lesbian women, and definitely more so for transgender employees. In broader terms, transgender employees tended to reveal their gender identity mostly around the time of their decision to undergo sex reassignment surgery (this is only relevant to transgender employees who plan that option), whereas transgenders who had not planned to undergo sex reassignment surgery were less likely to come out.

One respondent commented that disclosure of sexual orientation depended on the following 3 factors/variants:

1. Depends on your personality and self-confidence
2. Depends on your locality
3. Depends on the style of your manager

Coming out was found to be more difficult in rural areas or provincial towns where blunt homophobic behaviour is more common and tends to be unchallenged by the company's senior and middle management. It was reported that this situation mainly prevailed in conservative towns. In addition, LGBT employees have less access to LGBT networks, although some networks aim to reach out to all areas in the

Netherlands, but they find that limited time and resources are real obstacles to their efforts.

- A significant number of LGBT employees 'feel more comfortable' to come out at a later stage in their career progression, as they feel more secure or established in their position, after they have built mutual trust with colleagues and, over time, when they have established the company's level of inclusiveness towards LGBT. But,

"The longer you wait, the more difficult it is to come out".

For example, at IBM many long-standing LGBT executives have never revealed their sexual orientation and are reluctant to do so at this stage of their development within the company, for fear of having their credibility questioned. Whilst IBM respects individuals' choices with regards to coming out, the company also acknowledges its responsibility, as an employer, in the issues at hand and is taking measures to create favourable conditions for employees at senior level to come out (presumably, if they wish to do so). The company is currently focusing on promoting the acceptance (on the shop floor) of LGBT managers who are at a level just below executives, so that when (or if) they get promoted to executive level, they would have already been 'out'²⁷.

This last point refers to the heteronormative assumption that someone is straight (heterosexual), which is an issue that featured throughout the collection of qualitative data. The tendency for colleagues to assume that an LGBT employee is straight was described as a frequent occurrence, particularly if the employee did not correspond to stereotypical attributes and 'look' of a lesbian woman (masculine) or a gay man (feminine). This point is further discussed in the next section which covers homophobia and transphobia.

A lesbian respondent indicated that the issue of whether to come out or not was less relevant when she was single or not in a relationship. She further explained that when she had a partner, she wanted to share her new situation with colleagues, but she was confronted with the dilemma of coming out, mainly because she did not know any out

27 Silvy Vluggen (Global GLBT Program Manager, Diversity and Workforce Programs at IBM) in an interview for "Zij aan Zij" (a Dutch lesbian lifestyle monthly magazine, newly named "This=US"), issue 3, 2012, p.32.



lesbian role models within the company. This respondent, therefore, highlighted that the visibility of LGBT role models provide, perceived or real, support for an employee to come out.

*Sexual orientation
is not an issue here
and there are no
problems with it
in this company*

Acceptance of LGBT employees is better at the higher levels in the organisation: there are more evident difficulties on the shop floor, with more apparent problems of homophobia, both in the private and public sectors. The easiness of coming out depends on the individual manager's attitude and openness. Some make homophobic and/or transphobic jokes, but as soon as people reveal their LGBT identity, the situation seems to improve and colleagues are more careful about their behaviour. For example, they become more aware of their use of appropriate and non-offensive language.

- In spite of the difficulties that can be encountered before or after coming out, LGBT deem it very important to be more visible in the workplace in order to encourage colleagues to come out (if they wish to, but are afraid to) and to help create greater acceptance.

"Many people think that if I can be an out lesbian and successful, it will not harm their career either to be out"²⁸.

LGBT managers as role models

The significant number of managers among the respondents provided the opportunity to consider the extent to which LGBT senior and middle managers (including

themselves when relevant) were visible and acted as role models in favour of LGBT inclusiveness. The contribution of non-LGBT senior and middle managers as LGBT diversity role models is reported in chapter 3. It was all the more pertinent to gather qualitative data on this issue, that senior and middle management is considered to be a key agent of change in an organisation, including on diversity-related issues²⁹.

The study found that there were various levels of visibility of LGBT employees at senior level who do not always choose to act as role models. Among LGBT in middle management, only a minority actively contribute to improving workplace climate for LGBT employees.

- Not all gay or lesbian senior managers were comfortable being role models in their respective roles and organisations.

A gay respondent at senior management level in his company considered that there was a moral duty for LGBT employees at his level to act as role models. He personally took this as a professional given and was successful in influencing the business case on LGBT inclusion in his company.

- Lesbian or bisexual women were less inclined to come out than gay men. Only one lesbian senior executive participated in this study and was cited by a respondent as "an example of a lesbian manager and role model who was able to express her sexual identity openly".
- Some LGBT at board or senior management level prefer not to publicise their sexual orientation, but they talk openly about it in conversations.

For senior managers, referring to the home situation and partner as "she" or "he", rather than the initial more neutral "we" is a way to disclose their sexual orientation in a standard conversation, without discussing it.

- LGBT network members from middle to senior management level tend to come out. Many act as role models and change agents.

Network members tend to come out and even reveal their sexual orientation in the public sphere through their participation in media events, but some members are assumed to be heterosexual. Most members are from middle to senior management level.

28 Alexandra van der Tuin, manager at Accenture, in the Dutch daily newspaper "Het Parool", 30/01/2012.

29 See section 1.3 in this report for the reference to the categories of change agents that HRC recommends.



"I don't want to be seen as gay at work", "I'm a woman and it's difficult for me to come out. I just want to be considered as a good manager".

These statements were made by respondents who are afraid of potential negative reactions and impact on their position or that their colleagues' attitudes towards them may change when they come out.

"I understand that it is not easy to be an openly lesbian manager in a macho environment, but in order to create change, you need to be openly gay".

Example: When the Chair of Philips' Pride Network was mentioned in an internal IT publication, he received positive reactions from colleagues who did not know that he was from the LGBT community. Following the participation of Philips in the Canal Parade, Corporate HR published the video on Youtube and the Philips news network, which resulted in a large number of positive comments and an increase in the membership of the LGBT network. Network representatives therefore consider that, if the company gives special attention to news on LGBT and publicly demonstrates that it is LGBT-inclusive, it has a positive impact on the engagement of LGBT employees.

During the research, we identified a number of LGBT senior and middle managers (men and women) from various companies and public administrations, for example Cisco³⁰, Post NL, TNT, Municipality of The Hague and UWV among many others, who are also network members, who act as role models and actively promote the participation of heterosexual (or straight allies) as ambassadors and role models, in the quest for LGBT acceptance and inclusion in the workplace. Some LGBT role models are more open and active in the public sphere (outside the workplace) than others, but they all dedicate a great deal of efforts in fulfilling their role as change agents with limited support and resources.

2.2. Homophobia and Transphobia at Work

This section reports on experiences of discriminatory treatment of LGBT employees that derived from the attitudes and behaviour of colleagues, customers/clients or service-users. Less visible types of discrimination included harassment in the form

of derogatory or sexually-tinted comments, innuendos, denial of self-identification as LGBT, insults, the use of offensive or abusive language, gossip and ridicule, and heterosexist attitudes. In very few cases, such attitudes translated into threatening behaviour that compromised the employee's safety at work.

In the previous section on coming out, we mentioned that there was a tendency in companies to make heteronormative assumptions on an employee's sexual orientation or gender identity. In this section, we further discuss this issue, as it relates to the theme of homophobia and transphobia. In addition, we explore the extent to which employees and companies make the assumption that every person is either a man or a woman, as defined by a gender binary system of male and female gender identities, gender roles and gender attributes, where 'feminine' and 'masculine' are viewed as two distinct and disconnected gender or sex. The binary gender system discourages people from crossing or mixing gender roles, or from creating other forms of gender expression, thus feeding into some of the prejudices that stigmatise transgender and intersex people, as well as lesbian and bisexual women, and gay and bisexual men.

The process of homophobic or transphobic treatment, therefore, involved three stages: making assumptions based on values, attitudes and "norms", expressing stereotypical and prejudicial views and discriminatory treatment based on the previous two stages.

2.2.1. Attitudes and behaviours from colleagues

More overt and direct homophobia and transphobia on the shop floor

The study found that there was a near consensus from all respondents that most of, yet not all of, the overt forms of homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours happen on the shop floor. This concerns what could be broadly categorised as "blue collar workers" (armed forces, admin employees, manual workers with secondary or lower educational background). Yet, as was mentioned in the brief description of the composition of respondents, this research did not benefit from the participation of this category of employees who could have given a more detailed account of the situation on the ground, and therefore, further corroborate or bring nuance to the perceptions of their colleagues who work at management level. Some of the respondents reported that, after some hesitation from their (self-identified LGBT) colleagues from the shop floor, they finally declined the invitation to be part of this study.

30 See for example the article in the Dutch newspaper "De Telegraaf", 3 March 2012.



- The lack of participation from employees from the shop floor in the study is itself a significant finding: it poses the question on the reasons for their abstention or, more pertinently, what approach could have been more effective in encouraging this category of employees to participate.

In light of employees from the shop floor being identified as a category that is more inclined to display overt transphobic and homophobic behaviour, in chapter 3, we explore both the level of awareness by employers of this phenomenon and what courses of action they have taken to counteract it.

Some research actually highlighted the absence of employees from the shop floor from most studies on the situation of LGBT employees in the workplace. Croteau³¹ reviewed eleven such studies (in the USA and English-speaking countries) between 1983 and 1994 and found that the profile of respondents was mainly people who self-identified as LGBT, white and very-well educated. A similar picture emerged from the analysis of more recent literature in Belgium, France, and Canada. The author explains a few hypotheses, based on research findings, for the overrepresentation (compared with the population at large) of LGBT with a university education in such studies: methodological bias (use of internet surveys, convenient samples), upward social mobility specific to gay men as a trend and the tendency for young people from working class background to go to cities to find professional jobs.

Furthermore, on the issue of homophobic or transphobic attitude from this category of employees, the author stressed that in sociological terms, working class culture (as a socially and politically identified category) highly values masculinity and virility, to be understood in the literal sense as referring to the typically masculine sexual characteristics (vigorous, strong and firm). This is reflected in the perceptions and stereotypical attribution of non-feminine traits to lesbian women and non-masculine traits to gay men.

A recent Belgian qualitative study (based on in-depth interviews) on LGBT employees on the shop floor highlighted that studies on LGBT employees in the workplace overwhelmingly focused on middle management or professional employees, with

higher levels of education³². The Belgian study found that LGBT employees from the shop floor had the following characteristics:

- highly reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation
- constantly on their guards
- constantly subjected to prejudicial homophobic jokes
- over manly characteristics for men
- explicit harassment and discrimination, with a verbal and symbolic violence

Disclosure of sexual orientation depends on your personality, your locality and your management style

31 Croteau J. (1996), 'Research on the Work Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People: An Integrative Review of Methodology and Findings', Journal of Vocational Behavior, 48, p. 195-209.

32 , Arbeidsituaties van holebi's die handenarbeid of een technische functie uitoefenen – Verkennend onderzoek Published by the Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities and opposition to racism and carried out by Hoger Instituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving (HIVA) from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, April 2010, Brussels.



In addition, the study highlighted the LGBT organisations' lack of awareness of the experiences of LGBT employees from the shop floor.

- LGBT employees from the shop floor were described as an invisible and quiet group (perhaps the majority) for whom being LGBT at work is more difficult, with additional factors that characterise that group of workers that are not taken into account: being women, ethnic minorities or in precarious work conditions.

A noteworthy point that was presented in the Belgian study is that norms and values exclude the most vulnerable or least-favoured social classes (from working class background) at structural level and they are in a position where they are least likely to counteract them³³.

Lower acceptance from religious colleagues

There is a widespread perception that religious colleagues are less accepting of LGBT people, therefore some employees are anxious about coming out to openly Christian managers or to Muslim colleagues who mainly operate on the shop floor. Respondents also highlighted the correlation between religious belief and lack of acceptance of LGBT employees by clients (in section 2.2.2 below). Similarly, respondents observed that colleagues who are openly religious experience discriminatory behaviour and language from other colleagues. This situation suggests that more could be done by employers to sensitise all employees on their responsibility to respect, if not value, the diversity of their colleagues, for example in terms of their sexual orientation or religious belief, and that there are norms of behaviour that are expected from them.

Covert homophobia: heteronormativity and inappropriate queries about LGBT private life

Many LGBT employees are open about their sexual identity, but do not necessarily share that information randomly at work. When employees find out that a colleague attends a company social event with her or his same-sex partner, and, therefore, they learn for the first time about their colleague's sexual orientation, they behave appropriately with the colleague in question during that event. However, on occasion, it was reported that they question this colleague in an inappropriate and intrusive manner after he or she returns to the workplace.

- Asking questions with sexual and/or private connotations that they would not normally ask heterosexual colleagues.
- More implicit forms of homophobic behaviour include prejudicial views, heterosexist attitudes and using negative stereotypical portrayals of LGBT people.

Example: an openly gay HR director whom senior managers made jokes about behind his back and who perceived that dealing with LGBT issues was part of his own personal agenda and not that of the company.

Example: in the case of some lesbian employees, their colleagues assumed that they were heterosexual because they are feminine and/or beautiful. Similar assumptions are made about gay employees who are perceived to be masculine. Inappropriate questions and comments directed at LGBT employees include the following:

"you don't look like a lesbian", "we didn't know you are gay", "did you ever have a girlfriend?", "when did you know you were gay?", "when did you have your first girlfriend?"

Offensive and demeaning language about LGBT people also occurs around the coffee machine: "it's not about you", was said to an employee who challenged some of his colleagues' prejudiced language about gay men and to whom he indicated that he is gay.

"I can get a present for you and for your girlfriend" was said to a gay manager who felt pressurised to come out, because of some of his colleagues' constant heterosexist perceptions of him and expected norms of behaviour.

An ILGA-Europe report summarises some of the reasons why homophobic and transphobic attitudes still occur at the workplace: "hesitation to approach what is often considered a 'touchy subject', lack of resources, different priorities and in most cases ignorance. Many people are simply not aware that their colleagues may experience their daily work lives in a fundamentally different manner... Some argue that sexual orientation is a private matter, best confined to the bedroom and has no relevance to the workplace. The flaw in this argument is that it fails to recognise the social dimension of the workplace. People's private and family lives permeate the

33 Belgian study on LGBT employees on the shop floor, p.20.



social situations in the workplace"³⁴

2.2.2. Clients' homophobia: exclusion by managers and hiding LGBT identity

Some respondents highlighted that LGBT employees whose occupation entails having contacts with clients and/or suppliers frequently faced difficult situations that prevented them from carrying out their work effectively.

- Sometimes, clients directly subjected LGBT employees to homophobic behaviour.
- More often their manager prevented them from dealing with clients from "conservative and religious" organisations because they are visibly LGBT.

In such cases, managers explained that their decision was based on their perception that the employee was visibly gay or lesbian because they were, respectively, "effeminate" or "butch", and therefore they assumed that the client would not welcome any interaction with them. Some of the concerned employees expressed their feeling of being discriminated to their manager who failed to provide satisfactory responses.

- One of the effects of these situations was to discourage openly lesbian or gay employees to disclose their sexual orientation, generally, and more specifically to be out to clients or suppliers from "known religious and homophobic" organisations.

Such cases, therefore, raise the issue for companies on how to deal with negative attitudes towards their LGBT employees by external people, on how to prepare managers to deal adequately and effectively with these delicate case scenarios, and how to avoid making decisions that are based on their own values and attitudes vis-à-vis LGBT people. This type of behaviour from some managers not only excludes LGBT people, but also their pre-empting the negative reaction of a "religious" client against an LGBT colleague reflects equally serious prejudiced views about people who have a religious belief, as also covered in the previous section.

- Other gay respondents shared that they had benefited from their colleagues or manager's support in a difficult situation with a client whom they suspected to be hostile to gay men, based on their previous interactions with this client.

It is worth evoking that under the Dutch equality legal framework and the Employment Equality Directive, 2000/78/EC, employers have an obligation to protect employees from discrimination and to ensure equal treatment on the basis of sexual orientation (also religious belief). The role of management and employers is deemed to be crucial in creating a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment for all employees.

Whereas the examples in this section demonstrated that it is important for diversity and LGBT inclusion policies to apply not just to the HR context and that their scope should also extend to external relations, such as with clients or service-users and suppliers, in chapter 4, we also consider the relevance for employers to communicate their diversity policy, inclusive values and respect for equality, both internally and externally.

2.3. Lack of visibility

"Sexual orientation is not an issue and there are no problems with it in the company", said a HR manager to a gay employee when he wanted the company to address issues affecting LGBT employees.

The reaction by this HR manager confirms previous Dutch research findings, as outlined in our literature review, on the lack of significance of LGBT issues in HR policies, or in the workplace in some organisations. Furthermore, the reaction of the HR manager was somewhat based on individual perception rather than on the basis of evidence of what 'problems' exist. The question that could be raised is: what efforts has the employer made to gather conclusive evidence to assess the need for further action? In the case of LGBT employees, it could be argued that it is challenging, yet very important, to find out about their experiences in the workplace, particularly if we refer to the difficulties around 'coming out' and discriminatory behaviour that we outlined in the sections above. Therefore, employers need to acknowledge and address the lack of visibility of LGBT employees in order to introduce meaningful changes to improve the working climate.

- Many respondents among LGBT network members and employers' representatives stressed that the lack of quantitative and qualitative data on LGBT employees in public administrations and companies are a hindrance to making the contribution of LGBT employees visible within teams and in the organisation, as well as effectively addressing their specific needs and issues.

³⁴ Quinn, S. And Paradis, E, "Going Beyond the Law: Promoting Equality in Employment", ILGA-Europe, Brussels, 2007, page 25.



- Lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees are less visible than gay men in the workplace, particularly at senior and middle management level, as well as under-represented in LGBT employees' networks.
- LGBT employees from religious and ethnic minorities are considerably less visible.

As previously mentioned, LGBT employees from religious and ethnic minorities and transgender employees were largely underrepresented in our qualitative research and we found that these employees are also considerably less visible both in the workplace and in networks. We also noted a tendency among some respondents to assume that there are no LGBT among their colleagues from ethnic minorities. On the basis of the lack of qualitative and quantitative data (most employers did not do any ethnic monitoring), it is difficult to ascertain the rate of employees, and more pertinently, that of managers from religious and ethnic minorities, hence establish some of the determining factors for their lack of visibility. The SCP research on LGBT in the Netherlands also highlighted the notable lack of visibility and data on ethnic minority LGBT young people, and identified this group of LGBT, and four others: young bisexuals, those who do not conform to gender type, young gays and religious youngsters, as warranting extra attention³⁵. The report further found that lesbians "face the problem that they are largely invisible"³⁶.

Transgender employees: the quiet voice

"The transgender voice is the quiet one" "T in LGBT needs to be more vocal".
This statement was made by the only transgender employee who participated in this study.

"It is estimated that 0.5% of Dutch men and women identify more with the other sex than with their own"³⁷. During the qualitative data collection process, very few examples that concerned the experiences of transgender employees were mentioned. However, among these few examples, there was some evidence of employers' support to transgender employees (mainly male to female), as outlined in the following cases.

- The HR department from a Dutch company based in Luxembourg provided support to a transgender employee, partly by granting time off for transitioning. Some respondents from LGBT networks acknowledged that the reintegration in the work place of the transgender employee "would be more problematic".
- In a Dutch public organisation, senior management supported a transgender employee and communicated with all employees about the necessity to support their colleague when she went through transitioning. This transgender employee had previously been subjected to much banter and harassment.
- In another Dutch company, a transgender woman experienced difficulties with finding career progression opportunities.
- In a predominantly male organisation, a gay man, who transitioned to female, experienced many difficulties and harassment, including life threats by a colleague. The situation improved after she announced her new identity and was supported by her HR manager. It was stressed that in that same organisation, there are a number of transgender employees at senior level who do not want to self-disclose their gender identity.

A recent study on the employment situation of Dutch and Flemish transgender employees, found that:

- Unemployed transgender are often rejected when applying for a job because of their gender identity;
- Transgenders are underrepresented in important positions;
- Transgenders hardly dare come out at work and when they do, it is usually just before they have planned to undergo sex-reassignment (pre-ops). However, pre-ops, who admit to wanting sex-reassignment surgery, are usually supported by their management and the majority of their colleagues accept their decision to have surgery;
- Male colleagues' attitudes are more depreciative towards transgenders than those of female colleagues;
- Female to male pre-ops have more difficulty in being accepted as men into the men's world at work;
- Male to female pre-ops are confronted with worse negative behaviour

35 SCP, OCW, "Increasingly Normal, Never the Norm", p.360.

36 SCP, OCW, "Increasingly Normal, Never the Norm", P.364.

37 Olyslager & Conway, 2007, source: study by Paul Vennix.



at work, but are more easily admitted into the women's community;

- Diversity management contributes to a large degree to a positive job experience and a good work relation with colleagues and superiors. Diversity management promotes transgenders' open attitude at work³⁸.

*We don't think you would
fit in the team because
of your sexuality*

2.4. International mobility and exclusion

The issue of international mobility and exclusion of LGBT employees was a recurrent theme in the accounts of respondents, in so far as some LGBT employees, often at managerial level, cannot avail of similar freedom of movement rights, in the course of their work, to countries that are hostile to LGBT people. In 85 countries, homosexuality is a criminal offence and it is punishable by death sentence in seven countries³⁹.

- The exclusion of LGBT employees from opportunities to carry out assignments in other countries (more significantly in emerging countries) is a serious issue that could have ramifications for their career progression, since international experience is often associated with or leads to promotion.

Some LGBT employees from various multinationals reported that they were advised

by their manager not to travel to or apply for an assignment in a country where homosexuality is illegal or socially unacceptable. The reason that was often invoked was that it was for their personal safety. Such issues are managed on a case-by-case basis, depending on needs and feasibility of action.

- Managers ask employees to hide their LGBT identity when on an assignment abroad.

In the case of a public organisation, employees who are openly LGBT in the Netherlands are requested by their manager not to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity when on an assignment abroad. These decisions are mainly taken with the agreement of the person concerned and it also depends on the operational section in that organisation.

A lesbian IT specialist from a Dutch company was given an assignment in China and was advised not to mention her sexual orientation there, because the atmosphere is unsympathetic to LGBT people. Similar cases applied to India in IT outsourcing and off shoring, including for an LGBT network chair who is supposed to be a public figure. The company made provisions for HR and managers to have their spouses accompany them, but it is not clear whether the company would support same-sex couples in a similar position, since taking an assignment abroad is regarded as a personal choice.

To what extent should a company only operate in compliance with the local laws and the country's societal hostility to LGBT people? Network representatives expect companies to protect their LGBT employees' rights even in countries where homosexuality is not legal, or where there is low societal acceptance of transgender people, but they acknowledge by the same token the challenges that this entails (the examples provided concerned Asian countries generally. Specifically Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Singapore). Employees would find it helpful to have a policy that provides guidelines on how their employer would guarantee them access to international experience and support of a manager that is adequately prepared or trained to deal with this challenging issue effectively, on a case-by-case basis.

38 Vennix Paul, "Transgenders en werk: Een onderzoek naar de arbeidssituatie van transgenders in Nederland en Vlaanderen", Utrecht, May 2010. Unemployed transgenders were among the 386 transgenders who took part in this online survey.

39 Iran, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. Source: ILGA World 2010.



2.5. Workplace climate, "fitting in" and the "macho culture"

- LGBT choose to work for an employer, partly because of their perception of the employer's acceptance and openness towards LGBT employees, whilst others avoided certain employers for fear of being discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation. Respondents deemed it also important for their employer to ensure a respectful and safe working climate.
- On the issue of workplace climate, LGBT employees encounter barriers such as "the fitting in culture" and "macho culture", which seemingly affect more so women generally, and more specifically lesbian, bisexual and transgender women employees.
- In the case of some companies, the effect of that phenomenon is that they fail to recruit, retain and promote women employees who are hence excluded from such employment opportunities. Aspects of male culture in some companies (the financial and technical sectors were cited as examples) did not just affect behaviour and values, but it often resulted in recruiting employees in gendered-stereotypical positions, thus accepting with difficulty men in secretarial positions or women in technical or leading roles.
- Workplace climate depends on the attitudes and values of people at political level. This particularly refers to public sector organisations. Political belief also impacts on senior management's acceptance of LGBT in the private sector. Certain (heterosexual) norms of behaviour are perceived as a precondition for career development and work success.
- Respondents spoke about the existence of a correlation between male culture and the level of LGBT inclusion, as well as the inclusion of other employees, such as women and ethnic minorities.

There is an expectation in male-dominated organisations that gay employees are acceptable as long as they fit in the "old boys network" culture and "they are like them". This leads to the acceptance of some gay men who adopt the established patterns or norms of (heterosexual male) behaviour.

According to a report by the Council of Europe, "some employment sectors are found to be more open to LGBT persons than others. Transgressing the traditional boundaries of gender is more difficult in sectors where, for example, traditional

notions of masculinity are prevalent, or where a certain traditional gender expression is perceived to be beneficial in relation to, for example, customers or clients"⁴⁰.

On the basis of the evidence gathered, it can be argued that companies that operate in such cultures hinder the inclusion of LGBT employees and the expression of such an excluding culture can even go as far as being discriminatory to a larger number of employees, such as women.

"Fitting in is important in occupations that require a significant amount of work in teams".

"We don't think you would fit in the team because of your sexuality" was said to an employee in a male-dominated business sector.

A company was described as "male, macho, Calvinistic and white" in the Netherlands but "less Calvinistic at international level".

"Corporate identity is mainly male, even macho" referred to a company whose executive committee is made up of men only.

In conclusion, a key finding is that a considerable number of LGBT people continue to experience a negative workplace climate where a heterosexist and "fitting in" culture prevails, and is not systematically addressed. The exclusion of LGBT employees concerns the inability to come out, homophobia and transphobia, lack of visibility, exclusion from international mobility and harassment which remains underreported. Anxiety about coming out and a homophobic climate impact negatively on the performance and well-being of LGBT employees. Some respondents considered that some LGBT employees are subjected to a form of psychological violence⁴¹.

40 Council of Europe, 2011. Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, page 165.

41 Discrimination has been added as a factor for psycho-social work pressure in the Working Conditions Act (since 1 August 2009) and therefore employers are obliged to issue a policy to combat discrimination.

3. Organisational culture and LGBT inclusion

This chapter reports on the measures that participating employers have taken to guarantee the inclusion of LGBT employees. Qualitative data for this chapter were mainly collected through the contributions of managers, HR and diversity professionals during interviews (a small number attended a focus group too), with some input from LGBT network members. The chapter is divided into the five areas that were researched, namely, on the employers' understanding and promotion of the business case for LGBT inclusion, their awareness of issues that affect LGBT employees, on their internal policies and practices and how they communicate LGBT-inclusion efforts throughout the organisation and externally. Although examples of 'good practice' are mainly presented in chapter 5, some are also described in this chapter and in chapter 2. Aspects of organisational culture are discussed throughout the various sections.

3.1 Understanding and promoting the business case for LGBT inclusion

This section reports on the participating companies' level of understanding of the business case for diversity, more generally, and on how their commitment to LGBT inclusion, more specifically, is articulated.

Political support

The literature review in this study provides an overview of Dutch and European empirical research on the business case for diversity, which demonstrates a general high level of support among companies for promoting diversity as a business advantage. For example, the European Commission's pan-European studies and surveys on the business case for diversity find that:

- Companies are making steady progress towards implementing diversity and equality strategies in the workplace.
- There is increasing political support, at national and European level, for advocating a business-oriented diversity management, as part of

a strategic response to a more diversified society and workforce.

- Political engagement on LGBT inclusion extends to other regions, for example, in the USA, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in a recent speech, confirmed the Obama's administration policy to support LGBT rights globally, which should have a particular significance for businesses that operate worldwide, as well as enhance LGBT human rights standards worldwide⁴².

"Pull" and "Push" factors

Organisations' commitment to implementing equality and diversity measures can be the result of some 'pull' and 'push' factors.

Firstly, significant number of large and SME companies throughout Europe have developed and implemented diversity management strategies that have resulted in:

- 'Resolving labour shortages and recruiting and retaining high quality staff'
- 'Enhanced the company's reputation and image'⁴³ and positively impacted on both employee and company performance.

Furthermore, many companies are moving beyond the human resource-driven notion of the business case and are focusing on the relationship between diversity, innovation and productivity. In fact, among the most advanced and savvy in this field, some companies are using indicators to measure the business benefits of their equality and diversity programme, with respect to cost reductions, labour shortages, access to new markets, improved performance in existing markets, access to talent, global management capacity, innovation and creativity, reputation with governments

42 <http://diversityinc.com/global-diversity/what-clintons-global-lgbt-rights-speech-means-for-your-company/>

43 European Commission. 2005 'The business case for diversity – Good practices in the workplace'



and other stakeholders, marketing image, cultural values and productivity losses.⁴⁴ Therefore, whether or not there is sufficient empirical evidence that "diversity pays"⁴⁵, these companies have developed their own understanding or definition of the business case for diversity, and have committed in words and deeds to promoting it.

Secondly, in addition to the business argument, there are also legal and ethical imperatives for respecting equality and diversity in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services⁴⁶. It should be further noted that some employers were "pushed" to improve their equality and diversity practices, as a result of being found guilty of discriminating against an employee or candidate on one or more of these grounds (see reference note 47). Likewise, some companies are equally committed to diversity for moral and ethical reasons, as it is the case for 70% of the signatories of the French Diversity Charter⁴⁷.

What employers in the Netherlands understand by business case for diversity

"There is awareness at senior level of the business case, but it's often not considered as a key driver for implementation".

"Senior Partners and the CEO understand the business case at a rational and intellectual level and it makes good business sense for our organisation."

Corporate culture also tends to focus on promoting gender issues, although some companies consider that "diversity isn't about counting women".

"Private companies understand this concept better than public administrations, where it is difficult to convince public officials of the necessity to be inclusive of LGBT employees".

Promoting Diversity - the Business Case

To opportunity

Increase the economic performance of the organisation:

Develop our capacity for innovation, enhance understanding of the requirements of our wide range of customers, gain access to new markets...

Move towards sustainable development: a "win-win" position

Enhance our human resources management:

Better management of competences, enhance employee involvement, prevent skilled worker shortages...

Demonstrate the commitment of the organisation to Corporate Social Responsibility...

Manage risks to the image of the organisation and preserve its reputation...

Ensure compliance with the Law...

From risk

"It's a target-driven company, so the business case would need to be based on figures to establish the business benefits of LGBT inclusion".

Whilst for some large companies, "there is no real awareness of the benefits of LGBT inclusion or costs of their exclusion at senior management level".

A manager highlighted that his company needs to be diverse around LGBT and delivering on the business case, that "a diversity mindset is needed to be smart and mirroring for customers".

A large number of company representatives reported that their leaders were committed to and actually promoted the business case for diversity, as well as LGBT inclusion.

Source : Non discrimination de la diversité dans les entreprises en France (IMS)

44 Equality Authority and National Centre for Partnership & Performance, Ireland. 2007. 'The Business Impact of Equality & Diversity: The International Evidence,' Kathy Monks

45 Ministry of Economics 2010. 'Advantages of a gay-friendly work environment for the Netherlands' Employers'.

46 Both the Dutch and European legal frameworks have provisions to protect people from being discriminated in the workplace, for example on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, religious belief and disability.

47 Charte de la Diversité en Entreprise <http://www.diversity-charter.com/diversity-charter-french-charter-overview.php>



Attempts to ascertain these companies' more specific understanding of the business case were not always conclusive. Although in some companies the definition was clearer, we found that many companies could not articulate the essential elements that constitute and support the business case. The business case for diversity and LGBT inclusion had a different understanding and lent itself to wide interpretation, often being confused for having some (stand-alone) diversity initiatives in place, but it was not necessarily linked to what exactly the business case translated to in the different organisations. Companies tend to rely on how diversity managers have translated the business case for diversity and what it means at a business level. A recurring theme was that corporate culture had a commercial focus and various understandings of what diversity meant, and what it meant in relation to LGBT inclusion.

If diversity initiatives are to be effective, they cannot be based on stand-alone policies and practices, but they must be integrated into business strategic planning. In order to successfully imbed diversity into the fabric of an organisation, diversity must have a home in the business model, and be a part of the strategic approach to success for the organisation.

LGBT employees recognised the importance of business benefits and also insisted on the moral dimension of their inclusion in the workplace.

3.2. Awareness of issues affecting LGBT employees

3.2.1. Senior leadership and middle management

"According to the Conference Board of Canada, the role and commitment of a company's leader is the number one element in creating an accommodating workplace rich in diversity"⁴⁸.

For organisations who engage in cultural change, diversity management forms an integral part of that cultural transformation and it is, therefore, led and actively supported by the CEO and others at the highest level of management. Genuine commitment to diversity by senior management cannot be limited to a statement of intent or to verbal support, though important too. In fact, sincere commitment and firm guidance by senior executives is a prerequisite, not only to the successful implementation of diversity strategies, but also to leading the organisation through

its change process, which can be challenging, particularly when it encounters some resistance. In addition, putting diversity in action requires the allocation of adequate resources.

For example, the CEO of Commercial Banking, TD Bank Financial Group is a "leading supporter of TD's Employee Pride Network and has been active in events organised by the network. He has talked frankly to shareholders about diversity at (the company's) annual general meetings and its importance to the future of business".

"Diversity is extremely important to me. I am physically incapable of leading an organization that is at odds with my own beliefs about fundamental human rights and respect for each other. I care that our customers and employees who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender have a comfortable experience at TD. I don't want people to feel they have to hide who they are because they're afraid we'll discriminate against them. In fact, I look forward to the day when all employees feel that their sexual orientation is a non-issue."
Ed Clark, President & CEO, TD

In the same article, the Executive Vice President of Commercial Banking at TD stressed the importance of leadership: "diversity is everyone's job, not just the domain of HR". For diversity to be beneficial, like any other strategy, it requires: deep-seated commitment, education and engagement of employees, support to what matters to the LGBT community and community involvement.

In this section, we present our findings on the engagement of senior leadership and middle management (including in HR) in LGBT inclusion within their organisation, and we discuss their key roles as change agents. As mentioned in the introduction, among the participating companies, no CEO or board members participated in an interview, and therefore it is difficult to gauge whether any would have made a statement in line with the above-highlighted statement by the CEO of TD. More importantly, the absence of first-hand affirmations that CEOs and board members are actively involved in diversity activity in their company was compounded by information and perceptions from a number of respondents that there is no systematic or widespread real support at that level within their company. However, in the case of some participating companies, evidence of support from top executives for diversity

48 <http://www.iveybusinessjournal.com/topics/the-organization/diversity-and-the-gay-and-lesbian-community-more-than-chasing-the-pink-dollar>



and LGBT inclusion can be found on the organisation's website and other sources on the internet. This is, for example, the case of Rod Adkins, senior vice president, systems and technology group at IBM⁴⁹.

"Cultural change has to be top down"

Our research found that:

- Top-down support for LGBT inclusion often depends on the personal commitment, convictions and values of individuals at leadership and/or management level.
- Network leaders also deem it essential for leadership and management to be competent at communicating effectively their support for LGBT inclusion throughout the company.
- Whilst some LGBT employees recognise manifestations of commitment to LGBT inclusion at senior level in some companies, in a significant number of cases, LGBT employees would like more concrete evidence of that commitment.
- Respondents from public administrations tended to perceive that the business sector was more advanced and effective in their communication strategy in this field than the public sector.
- Individuals were mostly left to champion the business case for LGBT inclusion, and became often the 'badge holders' with little support from senior management. As a result, many of these individuals became frustrated at the lack of action from the top and found it increasingly challenging to continue their endeavours.
- Whilst diversity role models or champions at management level were prevalent, some did not always want to be pro-active in leading on LGBT issues in their respective organisations. However, in some organisations, there was some awareness from senior management on LGBT issues and a certain level of commitment, mainly through communication (visibility through public events).

One of the key findings in this study also concerns the underrepresentation and lack of visibility of LGBT in senior management positions, at CEO level and in boards in many companies and public administrations where the tendency is to have a more heterogeneous group, mainly perceived heterosexual men, at leadership level. "Most CEOs are white, middle class, middle aged and straight men, so you have to be able to access them". This statement reflects the description of corporate identity that respondents provided on a few occasions and which they regarded as being often overpowering and putting barriers to change and improvement on LGBT inclusion.

Unbalanced representation was also reflected in the profile of network representatives and managers who were interviewed, as described in the introduction. The absence of diversity among this group of employees, that is to say professionals and/or with managerial functions, raises the question on the feasibility of building a business case for diversity without the involvement of a diversity of employees at higher level. In this respect, the global business community increasingly recognises and values the benefits of having diversity in executive teams and recent research by McKinsey, "is there a payoff from top-team diversity?", has tried to establish the link between companies with diverse executive boards and higher earnings and returns in equity (findings were consistent, though there is still insufficient evidence)⁵⁰. In recent years, extensive research in Europe and the USA on the link between business strategy and organisational performance, found evidence of the linkage between the diverse composition of top-teams within an organisation and organisational performance⁵¹. Although the issue of under representation concerns women more generally, transgender women, lesbian and bisexual women are even less present at leadership level. This can be illustrated by the following statement by Carolien van de Lagemaat, Chair of Transgender Netwerk Nederland:

"Transgender women often experience a double ceiling (also as transgender and lesbian). There are practically no transgenders (and even less transgender lesbians) in higher positions. There seems to be practically no place for them, even within the pink movement"⁵². To this end, the chair explained the

49 <http://diversityinc.com/diversity-management/video-of-2011-diversityinc-special-awards-ibm/>

50 Barta, T., Kleiner, M. and Neumann, T., "Is there a payoff from top-team diversity?" in McKinsey Quarterly, April 2012

51 For further details on the results of these studies, see Chapter 3, Equality Authority and National Centre for Partnership & Performance, Ireland. 2007. 'The Business Impact of Equality & Diversity: The International Evidence,' Kathy Monks.

52 "Zij aan Zij", issue 3, 2012, p.34.



importance of LGBT employee networks' collaboration and mutual support through the Workplace Pride Foundation.

Some companies that were described as "conservative" do not have any openly LGBT at senior executive level and experience a "pink ceiling syndrome".

"There are blatant differences in employee diversity across different industries and occupations. More than seven out of ten HR specialists are women"⁵³. In relation to HR managers, a number of respondents added that the chief HR officer is often the only woman in the executive committee.

- In the area of good practice in leadership and accountability, Cisco in the USA sets an example by requiring a yearly report by managers on their achievements to promote diversity. Their performance is assessed on the basis of objectives set at the beginning of each year.

This example illustrates that leadership and accountability are indivisible for some companies that recognise the role of middle management as main change agents. Indeed, middle managers are well-positioned to influence the debate on LGBT inclusion at senior level, particularly since top executives' understanding of the business case for diversity is often communicated to them by the Head of Diversity & Inclusion and by managers in LGBT networks. At the same time, these companies have taken measures to ensure that adequate resources are allocated, for example, by setting up D&I teams, and they ensure that the responsibilities for implementing their strategy are executed at all levels in the company from top to bottom.

3.2.2. Employee satisfaction/engagement surveys

Many companies organise an employee satisfaction or engagement survey, either on a yearly basis or every two years. In principle, companies analyse the data that they collect on the level of satisfaction of their employees, identify areas for improvement and, subsequently, take remedial action "in sight of potential danger zones that would be contrary to business lines" according to a manager.

All companies reported that they receive overall positive feedback, that there is a good level of employee satisfaction and an open culture. Occasionally, and in more recent years, these surveys include diversity-related questions and/or a question

on whether LGBT employees experience issues linked to their sexual orientation or gender identity, with no apparent issues emerging. Some network leaders pointed out that:

- The formulation of survey questions are not precise enough to gauge the real level of satisfaction of LGBT employees, nor do they ascertain exactly whether they have experienced homophobic or transphobic attitudes and behaviour. Such questions include, for example "can you be yourself at work?", rather than "do you feel comfortable to share your sexual orientation or sexual identity in your work environment?".

Although these surveys do not collect any information on employees' sexual orientation or gender identity, in the case of some surveys, sexual orientation may be disclosed on a voluntary basis.

- Some companies do not carry out the same survey consistently in all countries, so they do not hold comparable data that would enable internal benchmarking of policies and practices, which are needed to improve organisational culture.

The difference lies in the type of questions, the approach of the survey (e.g. online, on paper, anonymously or not), the frequency and the importance granted to diversity and inclusion, and more specifically that concerning LGBT employees (the UK is the only country that included a question on employees' sexual orientation in order to gauge the number of LGBT employees. For example, IBM does such monitoring).

The question that could be raised in this case is whether these surveys are a reliable tool to collect useful information on the level of inclusion of employees, with a view to identify areas for improvement. Some respondents recommended that surveys could be more strategically elaborated.

3.2.3. Diversity audits

Diversity audits or diagnosis are used by companies as a tool to examine their diversity strategy, systems, procedures and culture against a framework. This structured tool provides the means to identify and evaluate successes and areas that could be improved through customised action. Diversity audits provide qualitative and quantitative data that are analysed and followed by a set of recommendations which

53 Forbes Insight, "Diversity and Inclusion: unlocking global potential", January 2012, p.3



feed into specific, practical diversity action plans and strategies. They also provide a benchmark, both internal and external, against which progress can be measured.

For example, as part of a diversity audit, some organisations choose to make the gathering of data on the inclusion of LGBT employees mandatory in order to subsequently screen and review policies.

- A few organisations, notably in the public sector, conduct gender equality audits and audits on work/life balance.
- Most organisations do not carry out any wider diversity audits or LGBT-specific diversity audits: they mainly organise HR surveys and benchmark against other companies. However, most organisations find diversity audits an interesting tool that can be used in the near future.
- Most companies have yet to develop an understanding of the relevance of overcoming some barriers on data collection, in that they do not hold any information on issues that affect LGBT employees and on what disclosure means to LGBT employees, in terms of being able to be themselves in the workplace, free from possible negative reactions.

It is all the more important in this case that companies focus on how to engage with LGBT employees and build confidence, if they aim to facilitate their participation in data collection over time. Through a wider diversity audit, LGBT employees could provide employers with invaluable information that could help them develop adequate and effective actions, and avoid making assumptions on the needs and situation of LGBT people, as illustrated in the following statement in response to a question on the reasons for the lack of visibility of transgender in the workplace:

"After transitioning, they (transgender employees) often leave. They want a new life, they are like reborn".

3.2.4. LGBT networks

All the participating companies and organisations have an LGBT employee-resource network. According to respondents, the gradual establishment by organisations of such networks demonstrates that some progress is being achieved, and setting up and supporting networks constitute good practice. Some of the networks are longer-established and with a variety of roles.

For example, Philips's network was set up in 2008, with 60% of its memberships in the Netherlands, 26% in the USA and 14% in other countries (Poland, Germany, France, Belgium and Mexico).

- LGBT networks were described as both an informal and formal tool. They fulfil an important social function: for example, they organise baby showers for children adopted by gay couples or born in a lesbian couple. Many are used as an information and consultation channel, correct wording in manuals and discuss financial issues. For example, GALA, the LGBT network at ING informs the executive and HR.

Some respondents, among network representatives, pointed at the risks for LGBT networks to emulate the power structures that exist within some companies. To this effect, respondents indicated that particular attention should be focused on the composition of network members and boards (predominantly gay men), their profiles (mainly in management functions) and attitudes (power dressing at network social events). Networks should explore further whether there are variances between the experiences of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender employees. It is not common practice to establish the level of representation of LGBT within networks, as there is no tracking of members' sexual orientation or sexual identity. The evident and prevailing emphasis seems to be on gay and, to a certain extent, lesbian employees and little activity is dedicated to bisexual or transgender employees who are not so visible.

The issue of the need for balanced representation in the membership and governance of LGBT networks was further emphasised in the following statements:

"'Genius' is originally a mixed network, but we now see that the number of women members is decreasing. Gay men often have a different approach to issues"⁵⁴.

"Many LGBT networks are mainly concerned with the 'G' (gay). It is as if we all think that homosexuality is about men. In LGBT policy we always have to point out that this is not the case"⁵⁵. This statement was issued by Marion

54 Nicolette Straver, Vice-Chair of Genius (network of LGBT professionals), *Zij aan Zij*, issue 3, 2012, p.33.

55 *Zij aan Zij*, issue 3, 2012, p.32.



Mulder, the co-Chair of the Workplace Pride Foundation, who organised an "L-Women at Work" conference in Amsterdam in 2011, the first pan-European event dedicated to the advancement careers of lesbians, bisexual and transgender women in business. It should be noted that a 'co-chairing' approach is considered as good practice in governance, in that it addresses gender-balanced representation.

The other main issues that were identified by network members and other respondents include the following:

- Network boards need stabilising. Strategic plans are slowly emerging. There was a general consensus on the need to professionalise and strengthen the capacity of networks. Learning needs to happen, through best practice from other networks and the implementation of concrete actions. Workplace Pride is expected to play a role in this respect.
- Some fatigue or apathy was detected among some network members, with a minority who are more influential and active. The issue is on how to motivate participation and bring in some structure.
- Having straight alliances is very important. The Military Dutch Union was cited as good example on building such alliances.

With a global presence of most companies, there is an acknowledgement that networks operated differently depending on the country and issues raised. Membership can be very small and often limited to Amsterdam and The Hague. There are very few members in provincial towns, where LGBT people are less likely to self-disclose their LGBT identity, more isolated and require particular support.

Role of networks:

According to respondents, some networks played a strong role, although some were more advanced than others depending on when they were introduced and on the focus, depth and variety of their activities. For example, some smaller and more recently-established networks resort to virtual support via social network media.

It was found that sometimes networks struggle with defining their roles and most leaders feel that the networks should be more visible, both internally and with the outside world. For example, some network leaders would like to not only improve

their role in internal affairs, but also to be of service to the company's clientele.

- "Roze in Blauw" LGBT network within the police is considered as a good practice model. In cooperation with the police force, the network provides support services to members of the public who are victims of homophobic or transphobic attacks.

A number of network leaders affirmed their willingness to bring about change into their organisation on the basis of a bottom-up approach, channelled through the LGBT networks. They regard this approach as more effective. Some network leaders consider that networks could play a more proactive role in creating a safer work environment, particularly by empowering LGBT employees to effectively deal with transphobic and homophobic attitudes and behaviour.

In some cases, there was a tendency for some HR managers to rely on network volunteers to partly fulfil a HR role. Network leaders feel that this puts a strain on them as volunteers, given that they do not have the necessary resources or capacity to accomplish the tasks that are expected from them.

- Network representatives highlighted the need for networks to develop more business acumen and concentrate on internal activities, in particular activities that would emphasise the business case for the company.
- Some straight senior managers are network sponsors or Board members. Network representatives would like to encourage more participation from straight allies as LGBT advocate into networks. The strategic aim is to mainstream the company's message and stance on LGBT inclusion, as well as to avoid putting the responsibility solely on LGBT employees. It was pointed that there are considerably fewer women among straight allies. However, participants were not able to explain this phenomenon (somewhat reflecting the low number of women at corporate level?).

"LGBT inclusion is an issue that concerns everyone in the company, therefore, everyone should play an active role in creating an inclusive work environment, for the benefit of everyone and for that of the company".

- Straight allies were described as having positive characteristics of leaders who are driven by both business interest and personal sensitivity. In exchange, sponsors expect networks to deliver results.



- Networks are highly visible at public events such as the Canal Parade in Amsterdam, but:
- Most network representatives would like to develop the role of their network beyond its social function and into a more pro-active and structured role in improving the inclusion of LGBT employees at work. This is of particular importance since most LGBT employees from the shop floor, new comers and those with temporary contracts do not participate in social events that networks organise and have therefore little or no opportunity to engage with colleagues from their support network.
- Network representatives intend to review the format of these social events (a drink in a pub which would not necessarily appeal to all) and their location (mainly in larger cities such as Amsterdam) in order to encourage the participation of their colleagues from the shop floor. Some suggestions included organising cross-company social events in smaller provincial towns.
- LGBT employees envisage closer partnerships with other networks, including those for women, ethnic minorities and young employees, in order to address inclusion issues together and more effectively in the near future. For example, the LGBT network at RWS has already been cooperating with their colleagues from these networks.

Cooperation between HR and LGBT networks

There was some evidence of cooperation between LGBT networks and HR teams, whereas, in other instances, they had not even met. In one case, the network leader was unable to identify the colleague who was responsible for diversity and inclusion issues. Very few HR managers or consultants were members of the LGBT network.

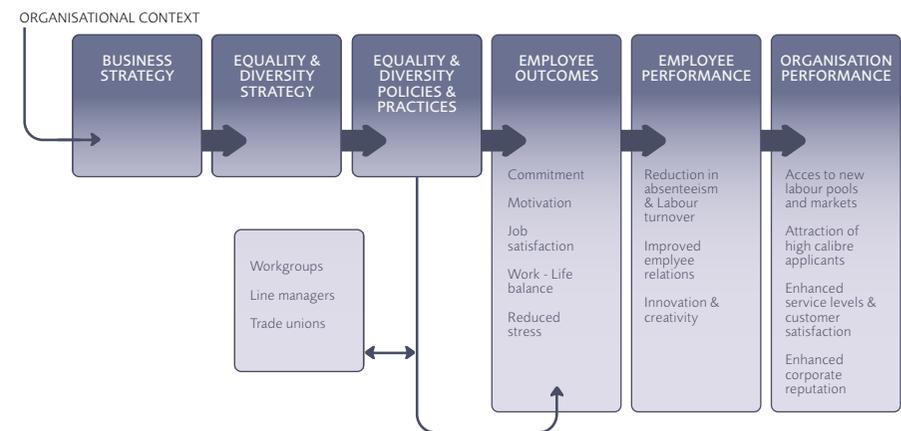
Both network representatives and HR managers expressed their willingness to increase and consolidate their cooperation on LGBT inclusion in the future. Network representatives advocate and value the participation of straight allies. Likewise, HR managers would like to benefit from the insight and knowledge of networks. For example, some HR and Diversity managers envisaged a stronger role for networks to facilitate access to internal policies by LGBT employees or to assist them with complaints. HR managers sometimes plan LGBT D&I initiatives without consulting or involving the networks. Some HR managers also indicated that progress on LGBT issues within their company depended on the level of commitment at senior executive

level. A partnership between LGBT networks and HR and diversity managers would be considered as a model of good practice in participative governance and decision-making. However, cooperation between HR and networks alone offered limited scope for real improvement.

3.3. Internal policies and practices

The study found that the general trend is for participating organisations to compartmentalise the issue of LGBT inclusion and to implement stand-alone policies. Employers tend to approach the issue of LGBT inclusion as a single issue, whereas they could benefit from drawing a link between different diversity grounds and adopting a more holistic approach to strategic planning in this field. In addition, mainstreaming LGBT issues and other diversity issues into business strategy, change management planning and operational level is more effective and cost-effective than approaching it as an isolated or separate action. Diversity measures could, for example, be integrated into management development programmes and management tools, such as performance appraisal systems (see Cisco as good practice), as it is crucial for employees to evaluate their leaders and measure what they do.

The Equality Diversity Value Chart



3.3.1. Diversity policy and strategy

- Many of the participating organisations have a diversity statement that is all inclusive and in which they specifically mention their respect for LGBT equality and diversity. Sexual orientation and gender expression



are mentioned in the (global) diversity or equal opportunities statement, alongside other equality categories, such as gender, ethnic origin or age.

When company representatives were asked if they had a diversity and LGBT inclusion in place,

- It was unclear whether companies referred to the statement (which is mainly intent) rather than to a specific policy that sets a framework for and is accompanied by a strategy and action plan that determine the areas of priority, specific objectives and how they will be measured.

It is therefore important to stress that, in the course of this research, no policy documents were made available and in the absence of internal data on LGBT employees (as covered in the sections above), it is uncertain what process companies used to develop a diversity policy.

- In some companies where a diversity and inclusion policy was in place, it did not include a specific course of action aimed at the inclusion of LGBT employees.

As was the case for gender equality audits, there was more concrete evidence on companies having developed strategic plans on gender equality. Corporate culture lends itself more to promoting the gender case and more specifically in relation to career progression. This was reinforced by the information provided by the HR interviewees who confirmed that gender diversity was their leaders' main focus on the wider diversity agenda.

- Some companies indicated that they intended to include diversity in their talent management programme, in internal and external marketing and in normal business operations, whilst other companies focused on the area of personnel and not on products or services.

For example, RWS recognises that it is important to work on its image as an employer and has developed a programme to attract talent, particularly among young people, as part of its diversity and inclusion strategy which is implemented by a D&I team. After the board endorsed the strategy, all managers underwent training on the benefits of diversity for the organisation.

- There were different approaches by organisations on how to organise the responsibility for the implementation of their policy: diversity

and inclusion is incorporated in the HR function mainly, some set up diversity teams (like ING), whilst some companies use volunteers.

A diversity mission statement should be followed by a diversity policy that states specific desired outcomes and establish a framework for determining whether those outcomes have been met. Thus, organisations must set quantifiable goals and objectives.⁵⁶ In order to measure success, the organisation must develop baseline data and compare that data to results achieved within a certain period of time, thus the importance of diversity audits. Hard data will be critical to any assessment of how an organisation performs against its competitors, or against organisations in other industries.

3.3.2. "Pink Competency"⁵⁷ - raising awareness on LGBT issues

There was evidence that a number of companies propose a diversity and inclusion training programme to their employees. The focus of some of these D&I programmes varied from a broader approach to, more seldom, awareness-raising on LGBT-specific issues. In terms of the employee target group, training mostly concerned managers, with some examples of programmes offered at induction stage too.

- Philips Benelux and FNV are developing a programme on LGBT awareness for managers and HR managers. The LGBT network was consulted for this training which is the first of its kind within the company.
- As part of Cisco's diversity and inclusion programme, there is a mainstreaming of LGBT training in different types of training. For example in customer care programmes, participants consider a case study that includes a lesbian executive customer.
- In the USA, KPMG has been a leader in LGBT philanthropy and in its support of its LGBT employee-resource group. The firm's diversity training reflects its commitment to its LGBT employees. Its pride@kpmg's Straight for Equality training, sponsored by the Diversity Advisory Board, is facilitated by the pride network and presented by PFLAG⁵⁸. It is a 90-minute interactive training aimed at general audiences with varying levels of understanding about LGBT issues.

⁵⁶ Establishing quantifiable objectives should not be confused with setting quotas. Thus, for example, organizations must be careful to clarify that less qualified (or, even worse, unqualified) candidates will not be hired or promoted because of their minority status or gender.

⁵⁷ "Pink Competency" is the title of a project by the Norwegian LGBT Association, funded by the Norwegian government, based on the provision of training to health care professionals on LGBT issues.

⁵⁸ PFLAG is a USA-based support organisation: parents, families & friends of lesbians and gays



- Post NL recognises that managers on the production floor have issues around inappropriate banter and language, so this is addressed specifically in the diversity training that is provided for managers that have responsibility for shop floor staff.

"How do you address someone who is male one day and female the next day? He? She?"

This statement is indicative of the sometimes unconscious nature of prejudice, which was covered in chapter 2, and the need for training to address it. Awareness on heteronormativity, heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia, as well as on LGBT inclusion should feature as an important part in diversity and inclusion training, and would be a helpful tool in counteracting some of the negative attitudes and behaviours that some LGBT employees encounter in the workplace. For "pink competency" training to be efficient, it should be included as a key D&I objective within the strategy and attended by all employees (particularly senior management) on a mandatory basis and customised to their respective occupation or level in the company.

3.3.3. Support against harassment & intimidation

All participating companies had harassment or complaint and disciplinary policies and procedures in place. Our research found that:

- these policies do not necessarily mention harassment directed at LGBT employees
- the rate of complaints by LGBT employees was extremely low, if not in-existent
- there was some awareness from HR and management that harassment of LGBT does occur although they did not investigate the reasons for low reporting and did not take remedial action.

The reasons for not using the formal complaint procedure include the following: lack of understanding of managers and/or lack of trust in their ability to resolve the matter satisfactorily

- lack of knowledge of the harassment and disciplinary procedures and how to access them
- lack of skills and confidence of the plaintiffs

- lack of competence of some persons of trust or counsellors in some companies who were not adequately equipped, through training, to deal with such a sensitive issue. More structural support was needed, particularly if the harassment was based on an employee's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some network leaders indicated that there is a tendency for employers to take for granted that there are no problems of intimidation or harassment on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation, just because no formal complaints are filed. However, network representatives indicated that they are often informally approached by LGBT colleagues with issues of harassment or bullying in the workplace.

Some organisations (mainly in the public sector) involve trade unions, such as FNV, to address the low level of formal reporting of harassment and/or bullying. There is an integrity bureau; HR and the person of trust/integrity collaborate to address this issue. There is sometimes a reliance on the LGBT networks to help explain under reporting and to identify possible barriers (regarding the formal procedure) or why employees use the informal route of the networks sometimes.

3.3.4. Recruitment, retention and advancement

In the area of employee recruitment, retention and career progression, our study found that:

- Most companies have an anti-discrimination approach to the recruitment, retention and advancement of LGBT employees. This means that the tendency is to take measures against discrimination when LGBT employees are already employed in the company. A pro-active approach to equality entails the implementation of positive action measures (not to be confused with positive discrimination which is not legal) that enable companies to address the underrepresentation of some groups as employees or in senior positions. Admittedly, given that most companies do not have qualitative or quantitative data about their LGBT employees, it would be more difficult to assess the level of their representation at these levels.
- There was limited information available on the recruitment strategies of many companies. Some shared that they aimed to target young people, people from ethnic minorities and women, without providing details on what types of occupations and at what



level that strategy applied. Some organisations indicated that they aimed to increase the number of women at management level.

- No company specifically targets LGBT people in their recruitment, retention or advancement strategies
- Companies tend not to conduct exit interviews or equality monitoring at recruitment stage or during employment. They can provide valuable information to employers on the employee's reasons for leaving the company, for example, whether LGBT-exclusion practices were part of the reason for leaving the company or on the factors that attracted the employee to seek employment with another employer or competitor.

Only one company mentioned the impact on bonus if managers do not hire women, but even then it may be a discretionary factor. Apart from the example of Cisco in the USA, there was no mention of measuring through diversity-related indicators in performance evaluation/appraisal systems, which could be relevant in the area of employee retention, in so far as managers can contribute to it by ensuring employee satisfaction and motivation.

There were discrepancies between accounts of employers and employees concerning complaints about LGBT employees that they were not promoted on account of their sexual orientation.

IBM wants to position the company as employer and supplier of choice. Although LGBT people are not specifically targeted for recruitment, IBM participates in job fairs and positions the company as open and inclusive to LGBT through conferences and other public events, in order to attract the best talent. The company has specific "top talent" programmes and leadership development programmes through mentoring and coaching: for women, for LGBT and for people with a disability. There are 250 LGBT top talent worldwide, of which 120 are in EAME⁵⁹ and most are gay men, there are some lesbian women with very few self-identified bisexual or transgender employees. In the Netherlands, IBM organises cultural awareness training for collaboration with countries like India, but no specific programme aims at the inclusion of people from ethnic minorities at national or global level. However, the company is developing a programme on cultural awareness at global level.

3.3.5. Recognition of same-sex relationships and partners' rights

- In all participating companies, the same sex partner or spouse of an LGBT employee has similar rights to the rights that are granted to the partner or spouse of a heterosexual employee: company benefits, entitlement to pension, etc. Same rights apply to couples, whether married or not.
- LGBT employees are also entitled to the same social (employment) rights in terms of parental leave, adoption leave and compassionate leave. Transgender employees are granted leave for sex-reassignment surgery (although it is not clear whether it is 'paid' leave. It was not ascertained whether this is company policy or treated on a case-by-case basis).

Employers acknowledged that LGBT employees and their partners availed of these benefits because they are legally entitled to them under Dutch legislation.

- Cisco in the USA applies measures to ensure that same-sex couples would receive similar benefits to those of married couples, in the absence of legislation that permits same-sex marriage.
- This good practice of extending the same rights for same-sex couples, and voluntarily compensate for the lack of protection of rights under the legislation, was not necessarily replicated by many employers who operate at international level.

Social events that include employees' families are rare and depend on departments within the company. When such events are organised, they are open to families, partners and spouses of LGBT employees who actually attend them. However, as the issue was raised in chapter 2, the company's openness to the families of LGBT employees is not always matched with similar openness from some of their colleagues.

3.4. Communicating LGBT-inclusion efforts throughout the organisation and externally

This section explores the extent to which organisations communicate on their LGBT-inclusion and overall diversity efforts internally and externally. As part of the internal communication, we also considered whether inclusive, particularly LGBT-inclusive, language and images were used within the company, both in verbal interaction and in written documents. In relation to external communication, we explored whether

59 Europe, Africa and the Middle East.



companies conveyed their stance on diversity and inclusion to the public at large and when targeting customers and suppliers.

Communication is a critical element to achieving the desired outcomes of a diversity and inclusion strategy. Therefore, it is crucial to communicate LGBT-inclusion and diversity efforts throughout the organisation, by means of clarifying its definition, by explaining that diversity adds value to business and by demonstrating commitment at the highest level.

In the case of promoting LGBT inclusion, it is all the more important to verbalise company's support in order to tackle the invisibility of this group of employees and the issues they face in the workplace. In this respect, senior and middle managers have a key role in demonstrating why diversity and LGBT inclusion makes sound business sense, in terms of how it benefits both the whole organisation and employees alike. Promoting the use of inclusive and LGBT-friendly language is a pivotal factor in encouraging attitudes and behaviour that are accepting of LGBT people. Given that language mirrors values and attitudes, achieving workplace equality for LGBT employees requires particular attention to eradicating prejudicial or offensive language, making specific mention of LGBT in company documents and recognising the self-identification of LGBT individuals.

Similarly, communicating externally about the inclusiveness and corporate social responsibility practices (CSR) of the company contributes to reflecting a positive image and to conveying messages that the company is an employer of choice which aims to attract the best talent, as well as meet the needs of a diverse customer base or service users.

3.4.1. Internal communication

Tools

- Some companies use different vehicles for educating employees about the benefits of diversity and LGBT inclusion, ranging from employee newsletters, intranet and web site announcements regarding the existence of an LGBT employee network, formal adoption of a diversity value statement and

signing the Declaration of Amsterdam⁶⁰. A limited number of companies provide a welcome package to new employees, which includes how to access internal policies, as well as information on the company's LGBT network.

- What prevails is an extensive use by companies of their intranet to communicate diversity policy (as previously mentioned, also complaints procedure) and LGBT inclusiveness. However useful this tool may be, it is not available to all employees and it is therefore not effectively disseminated. For example, this concerns mainly employees who work on the shop floor level and employees who work in different parts of the Netherlands in more rural areas. In chapter one of this study, these two groups were identified as particularly absent from discussions and actions on LGBT inclusion in the workplace.
- There is, by and large, no evaluation of how effective these tools are to communicate messages on LGBT inclusion.

Language

- Until recently, HR managers mainly focused on the use of gender-inclusive language in the organisation.
- However, almost all respondents considered that language was becoming more LGBT-inclusive at company level (language used by management and in organisational documents).
- LGBT networks and individuals play a major role in developing their colleagues' awareness around the use of appropriate and LGBT-inclusive language.
- During field visits, it was noted that there was a general lack of awareness of transgender issues and related terminology.

For example, respondents did not understand the term "intersex", including among LGB employees, and tended not to dissociate sexual identity from gender identity. This could be illustrated with the remark of a respondent about a discussion on the case of an openly-gay employee who announced plans to transition from male to female that:

"I don't understand how somebody can be gay and then become trans".

⁶⁰ See website of the Workplace Pride for details: <http://www.workplacepride.org/what-we-do/declaration-of-amsterdam>



- The word "gay" was frequently used to refer to LGBT employees or policies related to their inclusion (including by some gay employees).

This seems to indicate that there are variances in the understanding of what constitutes 'inclusive language', not least when it comes to acknowledging the specific identity of lesbian or bisexual women, bisexual men and transgender women and men. The use of accurate language by making a distinction when referring to a specific group would contribute to a better understanding that LGBT people are not a homogeneous group as such and that multiple identity or intersectionality is an important factor to consider when addressing the specific needs of individuals and visibility. Although it can be argued that LGBT people face some similar issues, as mentioned in section 2.3 on the lack of visibility, their experiences differ on the basis of a number of determining factors, such as gender and gender identity.

3.4.2. External communication

Some corporate commitment to equality and diversity is explicitly stated on the companies' websites, with a specific mention of LGBT inclusion, of the existence of an LGBT employee network or its membership of Workplace Pride.

- Most representatives from public sector organisations perceived the private sector to be more advanced and expert at communicating externally on their diversity and LGBT inclusion values and achievements. The divergence between the private and public sectors' communication on this policy field can be illustrated by the little evidence on the websites of some public administrations of being inclusive of diversity, even though they have diversity-related actions in place.

On the basis of information provided on the websites of some organisations,

- Diversity and inclusion is often absent in the company's mission statement and core values. In the case of some companies, not only there is no section in their website where they present their diversity priorities and achievements, but the word is not even mentioned at all.

One of the most public events in which an increasing number of companies and public organisations have been participating in recent years is the Amsterdam Canal Pride, mainly, though not exclusively, through their LGBT employee network. The Pride event in Amsterdam represents a large-scale opportunity for companies to

demonstrate their support for LGBT inclusion to the around half a million people attending and to the wider public through the significant media coverage that ensues. Representatives of companies and LGBT employees agreed that this company's public and highly visible display of their support for LGBT people was beneficial to (their) business and to employees, and it contributed to improving social acceptance of LGBT people in the Netherlands and beyond. Furthermore, substantial economic gains extend to municipalities that host such events⁶¹ and that compete, at national and European level, to attract LGBT visitors and their supporters.

It should, nevertheless, be noted that in the early years of company participation in such events (around 2006 for many), some took the stance of supporting publicly LGBT people at a Pride event, including with the participation of board members, whereas they had no guarantee of public support or approval. For example, according to a respondent, ING received both positive and negative feedback on this initiative from the public at the time. This illustrates that taking a positive stance and actions on diversity issues, such as sexual orientation and gender identity that are regarded as politically-sensitive, sometimes requires courage and vision from leaders in companies.

Suppliers

In relation to suppliers and public procurement, in the case of a considerable number of companies and public organisations, there is no mention about the company's standards on LGBT inclusion or diversity generally speaking. Therefore, there is no expectation of suppliers to apply similar standards in this field.

- For a limited number of companies, such as ING, their equal opportunities statement includes a clause on a requirement from their suppliers to practice similar ethical standards in respect for equality and promotion of diversity.

⁶¹ For example, the "Roze Zaterdag" event attracts large crowds. Municipalities have to submit a bid to be added on the candidates' list. Only one town is selected for this yearly event.

*The more you wait, the more
difficult it becomes to come out*



- Some companies, such as IBM, even go beyond stating their position on diversity standards and pro-actively seek to contract suppliers that are LGBT-run or LGBT-inclusive. The company works closely with the International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and has an extensive process to audit these suppliers.
- Accenture gives preference to suppliers that are inclusive of diversity and LGBT people⁶².

Customer base and service-users

An interesting finding is that

- Companies' external communication strategies on diversity and LGBT inclusion can be limited, inconsistent or even contradictory.

For example, marketing campaigns to target LGBT potential customers or to promote the company's LGBT inclusiveness were often limited to the "Amsterdam Canal Parade" events and most companies rarely used LGBT images or visuals in product marketing or corporate image.

More significantly, respondents reported that senior management was reluctant to publicly promote the company as LGBT inclusive, based on a fear of negative perceptions by their customers and their possible impact on the company. Sexual orientation and gender identity are considered to be politically-sensitive issues which are not accepted by society in general. The extent to which such fears are well-founded is questionable, given that, previous research findings on social acceptance of LGBT (outlined in the literature review and in the introduction) highlighted the relatively positive situation in the Dutch context. A representative from a company even indicated that some data on the company's diversity and CSR programme is regarded as confidential.

As mentioned in section 2.2.2 above, some employees experienced homophobic or transphobic behaviour from clients or service-users, as well as frequent and more overt ill-treatment of women employees, without such behaviour being challenged by their manager. Therefore, it seems all the more important to convey the employer's message of inclusiveness of LGBT people to this target group.

One respondent said that "most of the time, they (clients) would just ask to have the consultant replaced, but they would not explicitly say that it's because he is gay".

Some companies, such as IBM, focus on business development and social business aspects of LGBT inclusion, by targeting customers, sponsoring organisations and supporting conferences with an LGBT theme, under the coordination of a Diversity and LGBT markets department. Recently, some international media strongly denounced the gender inequalities practiced by the company that organises the Master's Golf tournament. The tournament is hosted by the Augusta National, a private club that only allowed black members in 1990 and still excludes the membership of women. IBM was also strongly criticised by international media for being the main sponsor of the tournament, particularly since its newly appointed CEO, who is the first woman to hold that post, would be excluded from the club's membership which, thus far, was systematically granted to the IBM CEO. This example illustrates the importance to consistently apply diversity and inclusion values and policies, as well as the business and credibility importance that communication can have on the achievements, or faux-pas, of a company's diversity and inclusion activities. Some recent examples on coverage by media and LGBT organisations on corporations' D&I practices include:

- JC Penny stood by its choice to appoint the actress and talk-show celebrity Ellen De Generes as company spokeswoman after a right wing activists group tried to mobilise customers to condemn the company for choosing an out lesbian to represent it⁶³. This resulted in wide public support for JC Penny.
- H&M used LGBT-inclusive images (Black lesbian couples) in their holiday ads⁶⁴.
- Southwest Airlines (part of Delta Airlines) excluded from a flight lesbian actress and singer Leisha Hailey for kissing her girlfriend, on account that they were a 'family airline' and that the actress's 'excessive' actions triggered complaints from some passengers. Delta Airlines have an LGBT-inclusive policy, participate in the New York Pride and other LGBT events and actively target LGBT customers in their marketing campaign⁶⁵.

63 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-news-blog/2012/feb/09/jc-penney-support-ellen-degeneres>

64 <http://www.afterellen.com/column/morning-brew/2010-12-7>

65 <http://aviationblog.dallasnews.com/archives/2011/09/leisha-hailey-and-southwest-ai.html>

62 A. van der Tuin, manager at Accenture, Het Parool, 2012.



In the case of some of the surveyed companies, LGBT-targeted advertising depends on the country. For example, ING does not publish many ads in LGBT media in the USA, but privileges mass marketing for products.

At a KPN conference, the business unit used a picture of two men texting in bed, after the network spoke to corporate marketing. In this respect, many networks push for the use of LGBT marketing and the use of LGBT image, but they find it challenging to convince their colleagues from marketing of the business case of LGBT inclusion. However, some examples of how the business case was recognised and acted upon were reported. This is the case of Post NL who introduced a Valentine's card for LGBT customers alongside cards with a heterosexual message. This Post NL LGBT-inclusive action resulted in a sales increase of 17%.

A network representative indicated that "LGBT images are more easily used in retail. In the private sector, there are different perceptions of the impact and value of marketing products by using LGBT images". The interviewee explained that perceptions and values operate in this case, rather than rational and evidence-based market research.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Recently, some USA-based companies have not only moved away from a human-resource driven to a business-oriented notion of diversity, but they go as far as publicly demonstrating their commitment to (LGBT) community engagement and their contribution to the social acceptance of LGBT people. The Economist reported that "some companies vocally support gay marriage. In the past fortnight Lloyd Blankfein, the boss of Goldman Sachs, has accepted an invitation from HRC to become its first corporate spokesman for gay nuptials, and seven big companies, including Microsoft and Nike, have written to Congress to support the idea".⁶⁶

3.5. Employers' engagement with external stakeholders

- The study found that individual participating companies have very few contacts with external organisations that work on LGBT equality or are advocates for LGBT human rights.

Some LGBT network members are involved in the management board of LGBT

NGOs, but in their own time and as individuals, rather than as representatives of their organisation. Diversity partnerships with national professional organisations and organisation sponsorships tend to be better developed in the USA (e.g. ING).

This finding is worth noting, since many companies, that successfully implement diversity initiatives, recognise the value of building alliances with external organisations. For example, external organisations can provide valuable feedback on a company's diversity efforts, thus contributing to their effectiveness, as well as information on what other companies are doing in this field. In Europe and the USA, some companies establish relationships with minority student networks in universities, as part of their recruitment and internship programmes. In France, the cosmetics leader L'Oréal has developed a 'talent development' programme in close cooperation with NGOs that operate in some of the least socio-economically developed Paris suburbs. The partnership aims to identify young people from a disadvantaged socio-economic background who are talented, but who cannot develop or make use of their full potential (due to barriers and exclusion related to their social and/or ethnic origin), and to sponsor their studies in one of the Paris high achieving or elite universities (Grandes Ecoles), with a view to offer them an internship within the company and improve their employability.

A number of Dutch-based multinationals engage with NGOs such as COC (the main Dutch LGBT civil society organisation) in the Netherlands, Stonewall in the UK or HRC and DiversityInc in the USA. Their efforts in LGBT inclusion can result in a public recognition of their achievements in their respective reference lists: "LGBT Equality Index", the IGLCC⁶⁷ index of the most LGBT-inclusive companies "Best company to work for" or "Top 10 LGBT employer", which can boost the company's image among potential customers and employees.

The next chapter covers how some external stakeholders contribute to advancing the situation of LGBT employees in the workplace and explores the extent of their cooperation with employers to this effect.

⁶⁶ Schumpeter, "Of companies and closets: being gay-friendly is cheap and good for business", The Economist, 11/02/2012

⁶⁷ International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

4. LGBT employee inclusion and stakeholders at national and European level

4.1. Trade Unions

Two representatives of FNV participated in an interview and explained the engagement of the largest Dutch trade union federation's activities on promoting LGBT inclusion in the workplace. FNV and the Workplace Pride Foundation are partners in the gay-straight alliance supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences⁶⁸ and cooperate on increasing the visibility and acceptance of LGBT at the workplace.

4.1.1. FNV

FNV is a partner in the Gay-Straight Alliance with Workplace Pride.

FNV's members are active on the issue of prevention of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the following ways:

- Training and information for members on LGBT inclusion in the workplace effectively.
- Developing a strategy with trade unions to increase their visibility on LGBT issues
- Projects on creating an inclusive environment in the workplace
- Training to HR and first-line managers (TNT and Philips), particularly on how to introduce LGBT issues on the shop floor
- A tool on how to set up an LGBT employees network. This tool is a result of cooperation through an alliance between FNV and Workplace Pride, whose members contributed some feedback to this tool. The tool includes guidelines for decision-makers and managers.

In 2008, FNV set three political priorities in its work on LGBT equality:

- Create a platform for members and union officers who deal with LGBT issues
- Encourage union leaders and politicians to integrate LGBT issues in collective agreements and laws
- Develop measures to improve the climate on the shop floor and political climate regarding LGBT rights⁶⁹.

It should be noted that there is no collective agreement on LGBT employee in the workplace.

A recent study on the situation of Dutch and Flemish transgenders employees recommended that both in diversity management and in the Collective Labour Agreements, special attention should be paid to transgenders⁷⁰.

FNV is also working on improving public knowledge of their work on LGBT inclusion through participation in the Canal Parade, press releases and articles in mainstream media and research on the business case for LGBT inclusion. The trade union confederation pointed out that research that supports the business case for LGBT inclusion is particularly difficult, because there is a lack of visibility of LGBT on the shop floor and lack of data to support it. The FNV Secretary General has a visible role and is involved in LGBT issues. ABVAKABO FNV is the largest Dutch trade union federation in the public sector and has a "HomLes" group.

FNV acknowledges that there are some examples of good practice among companies and public administrations, and that employers should keep this issue high on their

68 The Dutch government supports 4 such gay-straight alliances (work, education, the elderly and sports) as part of its policy plan on LGBT and gender equality.

69 ETUC, "Extending Equality", conference report, 2008, p.25.

70 Vennix Paul, "Transgenders en werk: Een onderzoek naar de arbeidssituatie van transgenders in Nederland en Vlaanderen", Utrecht, May 2010.



agenda in spite of the current economic crisis. FNV also recognises that it should expand its own activities on LGBT inclusion in order to make progress. FNV is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

4.1.2. ETUC

The ETUC represents the interests of working people at European level and represents them in the EU institutions. At its congress in Seville in May 2007, ETUC also adopted a four-year action programme on LGBT inclusion⁷¹.

Findings of the "Extending Equality" project in partnership with the European LGBT network ILGA-Europe, which surveyed member confederations: LGBT people are often invisible in the workplace and their rights are often not recognised or denied to them⁷². As a result, the ETUC Executive Committee adopted some recommendations for actions and activities on promoting equal rights, respect and dignity for workers regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity in 2008 and it set up an informal network of trade unionists willing to share news and information on LGBT policies and activities. Recommendations included exchanging best practice, gathering examples of collective agreements which promote diversity and antidiscrimination in the workplace (trade unions in France, Germany, Ireland and the UK) and facilitating networking among trade unionists and with NGO's dealing with LGBT issues across Europe.

4.2. Civil society organisations

4.2.1. Transgender Network Netherlands⁷³

Transgender Network Nederland (TNN) is an umbrella organisation that was set up in 2009 and represents the interests of transgender people and their relatives in the Netherlands. TNN cooperates with FNV, Workplace Pride and COC. Although companies are not pro-active in attracting transgender potential employees, TNN is aware of a limited number of good practices in inclusion among employers.

- KLM supported a pilot, a transgender female born male, throughout her sex-reassignment process. After returning to work, the pilot benefited from her colleagues help.

- Radio NL International employed a transgender even if the employee's identity had not yet been changed officially in her passport.
- Employment agencies include transgenders on their lists and help with finding employment.

However, good practices among employers are, by and large, rare. In line with what we highlighted in different parts of this report and from previous research, TNN confirmed that the situation of transgender people with regards to employment is particularly difficult. Transgenders experience severe forms of exclusion, discrimination and harassment in the workplace in the Netherlands, which are summarised in the next section.

Large employers among multinationals and the public sector, should be models for smaller employers and do more to communicate internally about being inclusive of transgenders, educate their HR and recruitment panels, and actively seek to recruit transgender employees.

4.2.2. Transgender Europe (TGEU)⁷⁴

TGEU's mission is to improve the living conditions of transgender people all over Europe. TGEU highlighted the following information:

Work has a "triple effect" for transgender people:

1. Social inclusion - especially when links to family of origin are broken
 2. Financing medical transition or part of it, if not (fully) covered by medical insurance
 3. Prove "stable live", as part of required real life experience in order to obtain diagnosis and be able to undergo gender reassignment treatment and legal gender recognition (e.g. Ukraine: unemployment is considered a counter indication for granting legal change of gender).
- High level of unemployment
 - Those in a job are over proportionally harassed/ discriminated
 - High likelihood of being employed under actual qualifications and related underpay
 - Over proportional high percentage of self-employed

71 <http://www.etuc.org/r/1355>

72 <http://www.etuc.org/a/5808>

73 Information is based on telephone interviews with the Vice-Chair on 15/02 and Chair on 29/02. TNN website contains further information: <http://transgendernetwork.nl/themas/transgender-en-werk/>

74 Interview on 22/03 and written information provided.

How do you address someone who is male one day and female next day?

In the Belgian study, the majority of those who did want to transition gave as a reason why they do not go ahead with it: fear of losing their job or be unable to get a new job.

- Risk of dismissal during transition
- Widespread problem of changing retroactively educational certificates and employment certificates (even after legal gender recognition)
- Entering active part of pension for transgender women at the age of other women (specific problem in UK and potentially Austria and Switzerland where retirement age for women and men differs)
- Privacy protection of personal data within company or after leaving company
- Many employers fear costs and negative effects on internal and external relations if they recruit or retain transgender employees
- Management is rarely competent to deal with trans issues generally

Good practice: In Scotland, the police actively builds relationships with the transgender community and is pro-active in recruitment⁷⁵.

4.2.3. ILGA-Europe⁷⁶

ILGA-Europe is the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. It is a membership-based organisation that advocates for LGBT rights at European level. For example, the ILGA-Europe engages with employers' and employees' organisations and other relevant stakeholders at European level on

the business case for LGBT inclusion of LGBT in the workplace. The following points were raised by the organisation during an interview.

- LGBT employees have greater facility to come out at middle or senior management level and tend to be in networks, whereas employees from the shop floor tend to seek support from trade unions. Some trade unions questioned the role of some networks: keeping issues that affect LGBT only internally is counter-productive
- Some employers' good intentions are not necessarily followed up with actions
- It is positive that some companies make their LGBT inclusion highly visible, so long as it does not just remain a media opportunity
- Business case: the link with productivity should not necessarily be the only focus. Other important aspects need to be seriously considered, such as harassment
- Employers can contribute to increasing societal acceptance of LGBT by using (positive) images of LGBT when advertising their products and services
- Many employers see the benefits of liaising with civil society organisations (Belgium, Ireland, UK). There could be better links between CSR and LGBT communities
- Some companies that are recognised as being inclusive of LGBT in practice, are still reluctant to be perceived as LGBT-friendly by the public
- In some European countries, it is still difficult to set up LGBT employees' networks (Slovakia)
- There is a lack of visibility of employers' LGBT policies or actions (an ING manager in Belgium did not know about the policy or existence of the network)
- Companies should avoid taking tokenistic or isolated LGBT actions and be consistently inclusive of other equality issues (gender, ethnic origin, age, etc)
- The current role of networks is appropriate and serves a purpose.

⁷⁵ Further information on trans people and employment is available in TGEU Policy paper (2009), p 4-6 http://www.tgeu.org/sites/default/files/TGEU_policy_transgender_withRecommendations_final.pdf

⁷⁶ Interview on 17/02. <http://www.ilga-europe.org/>



Networks should be more pro-active in ensuring that adequate policies and practices are in place. Some networks tend to be heavily gay middle management men-oriented and "sheltered" by the company: discrimination on the shop floor is not tackled (cost of not being inclusive) and the emphasis is on the "pink Euro" (benefits of inclusion)

- TNT in the Netherlands is a good example of the business case: LGBT inclusion and efforts resulted in increased profit for the company
- Through procurement, the public sector could have a greater impact and influence on the private sector regarding the adoption certain diversity standards.

For ILGA-Europe, LGBT equality is primarily a human rights issue and the business case should not take precedence, though it is important. The organisation is supportive of companies' efforts in LGBT inclusion in the workplace and recommends that companies aim for the highest standards.

4.3. The Dutch Equal Treatment Commission⁷⁷

Commissie Gelijke Behandeling (CGB)

The most frequent problem that homosexuals (M/F) perceive and report on the way they are treated at work appears to be concerned, in particular, with remarks and ostensible jokes that result in everyday discomfort: incidental or more regular remarks, innuendo and references of little importance for heterosexuals, but that could be offensive to homosexuals.

Request for an assessment of one's own practice or regulation

Individuals or organisations may want to know whether their own conduct, policies or regulations fall within the scope of the equal treatment laws.

- There are not many employers who have requested such assessment, but these opinions are not related to the ground of sexual identity or sexual orientation.

Investigation carried out on the Commission's own initiative

The Commission does not have to wait for petitions to be filed. It is entitled to investigate on its own initiative in specific areas where systematic or persistent patterns of discrimination are suspected.

- On the ground of sexual identity and orientation, there are no investigations carried out on the Commission's own initiative. There are several individual cases about sexual identity and sexual orientation, but these are requests from individual persons.

A specific example concerning a transgender woman is opinion 2006-33: discrimination on the ground of gender identity in employment. The plaintiff was a transgender woman who had her contract terminated by her employer after she had transitioned from man to woman. When she returned to work after her operation, she was subjected to disrespectful behaviour by her colleagues and by her employer. The Commission refuted the defendant's claim that the transgender employee's contract was terminated on the basis of her poor performance at work and not because she is transgender. As the employer did not provide any satisfactory evidence to substantiate their decision to dismiss the employee, the Commission's opinion was that the employer unlawfully dismissed the transgender employee and that she was discriminated against on the basis of her gender identity.

Burden of proof:" it shall be for the respondent to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment"⁷⁸.

Brochures, newsletters, web site and press releases

The Commission is committed to making its work and its judgements known both to the general public, employers and to the legal profession.

CGB has co-operated with non-governmental organisations and emancipation movements. For example, in the last few years the CGB has held meetings and discussions about the inclusion of LGBT in the workplace with the Workplace Pride/FNV Gay-Straight Alliance.

The CGB commissioned the Verwey-Jonker Institute in 2007 to carry out research in order to clarify the issue of the factors that may contribute in employment situations to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ <http://www.cgb.nl/english>: information based on a response to a questionnaire sent by the Commission on 02/03/2012 and 05/03/2012.

⁷⁸ Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, Chapter II, Article 10, paragraph 1, <http://eurex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:EN:HTML>

⁷⁹ "Discriminatie is het woord niet, Lesbische vrouwen en homoseksuele mannen op de werkvloer: bejegening en beleid", Verwey-Jonker Instituut, april 2009, English summary on CGB website.

5. Good practices in LGBT workplace inclusion

This chapter provides a brief description of examples of good practices in LGBT inclusion by employers who participated in this study. These "good practices" were identified by a representative from his or her own employer and their description is based on the information that was shared. This is, therefore, not an exhaustive list of existing good practices which vary in scope or nature. Many other examples of such good practices are mentioned throughout the report.

Many employers' representatives quoted a particular company as their diversity and inclusion benchmark (for example, IBM). However, when asked to describe what specific D&I good practices they had identified, they were sometimes unable to mention specific examples and instead explained that they were referring to that company's image. This suggests that attention can be focused more so on image than on concrete actions or organisational culture, for some companies.

In the case of a significant number of multinational companies, the company based in the USA was frequently cited as a good practice example. Respondents demonstrated their knowledge of that company's LGBT-inclusive actions and highlighted that similar (higher) standards were not necessarily applied in the Netherlands.

UWV

Operates throughout the Netherlands. Has a workforce of around 17,000 people nationwide with around 2,000 in the headquarters in the Amsterdam area. The organisation has a diversity statement⁸⁰. The Board is supportive of LGBT inclusion and attends the LGBT network meetings, for which some members also act as sponsors. Board members also participated in the Amsterdam Canal Parade, with

visible signs of the organisation's name. The chair came out on the intranet which can be read by all employees.

UWV's LGBT network, multicultural network and young employees' network cooperate together to improve the inclusion of their respective membership in the company. This partnership is regarded as particularly helpful to deal effectively with multiple identity issues.

The company provides some awareness training on relationships with clients, in order to better meet the needs of diverse clients. In addition, client satisfaction surveys include diversity-related questions and the results of these surveys are rather positive.

ING

ING is a Dutch multinational that operates in around 40 countries, with 110,000 employees worldwide and about 30,000 in the Netherlands. ING has an LGBT network (GALA Network since 2004). The company has a global human rights and diversity policy, which is managed by a global vision and diversity office⁸¹. There are customised diversity plans at national level. The equal opportunity statement applies to LGBT employees, customers and suppliers who are LGBT-owned enterprises and to whom the company is committed to provide equal access. Board members have the role of ambassadors for the Gala network. "Being at the forefront, without being pushy". There is a diversity plan in the Netherlands and in larger countries, such as the USA. Good communication between the global diversity and HR manager and diversity coordinators at national level, including on LGBT inclusion issues.

80 http://www.uwv.nl/OverUWV/wat_is_uwv/maatschappelijk_ondernemen/index.aspx

81 <http://ing.us/about-ing/diversity/equal-opportunity>.



Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

The former Minister was openly lesbian. Member of the Dutch Government Pride Platform, since its launch on 6 August 2011. The Ministry has an LGBT network, Roze in Groen since May 2011. Equal treatment information is available in English on the website⁸². More recently, partnerships between the LGBT network, the women's (informal) network and the young professionals network.

Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment⁸³

"Becoming an employer of choice and attracting talent"

RWS employs around 11,000 people throughout the Netherlands, with about 500 at its HQ in The Hague. The Board at RWS has adopted a broad approach to diversity and inclusion, with a view to attracting talent into the organisation. The diversity programme encompasses different dimensions: gender, age, ethnic origin and sexual orientation. The diversity and inclusion strategy was elaborated in order to address underrepresentation in the workforce (80% are men and the average age is 48). Through an internal diversity and inclusion advisor, there are positive action and outreach measures to enable the training and recruitment of younger people, women, ethnic minorities and LGBT people. Each region's HR manager reports to the board and there are 50 Diversity and Inclusion ambassadors among employees and managers whose remit is to raise awareness on diversity and inclusion-related matters. RWS's LGBT network, Regenboog Netwerk, set up in 2011 has around 100 members. "The relationship between RWS and the network could be better structured". Under the umbrella of the leadership, the D&I policy is updated each year.

KPN⁸⁴

"Developing leadership that thinks outside the box"

With a worldwide workforce of 30,000 of which 20,000 work in different locations throughout the Netherlands, KPN employs a diverse workforce. Until recently, the

company has focused mainly on gender diversity (23% female employees, with 17.5% at middle management and 16.5% at senior level). A D&I programme will be applied to talent development programmes, internal and external marketing and in standard business operations. The talent development programme will extend to cultural identity, LGBT and people with a disability. For example, there will be a mentoring programme for ethnic minorities. The programme and diversity manager set up a network of diversity coordinators who are responsible for drawing yearly diversity plans which are submitted to the corporate affairs department. These plans focus on personnel rather than products. KPN's LGBT Pride network has 125 members.

Ministry of Defence

"if you can add your diversity to our quality"

The Ministry of Defence provides a high level of support and funding to the LGBT network and is a pioneer in setting up a NATO members Network which aims at improving the position and social safety of LGBT people in the armed forces. There is a social leader programme for managers and the Ministry ensures that its recruiting teams are diverse.

IBM

IBM has an Eagle LGBT network in each country. In some countries, the company collects data on sexual orientation and gender identity, by means of the BU (be you) indicator, which enables employees to self-identify as LGB or T. On a voluntary basis, the respondent completes the information that she or he wants the company to register (including information on education and skills). This is an informal way of finding coaches and mentors. An example of positive action aimed at management level, IBM identified 250 LGBT High Potential/Top Talent worldwide (mostly gay men, there are less lesbian women and very few transgender or bisexual).

Cisco

In the USA, Cisco gives a bonus to LGBT employees who have a partner in order to make up for an anomaly in the American tax code (the cost of various insurance premiums is deducted from the pre-tax income of married employees, whereas it is deducted only deducted from post-tax income for employees in a partnership).⁸⁵

82 <http://www.government.nl/issues/work-employment-rights-and-duties/documents-and-publications/leaflets/2011/09/02/q-a-equal-treatment.html>

83 RWS: Rijkswaterstaat <http://www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/>

84 <http://www.kpn.com/corporate/aboutkpn/company-profile/company-profile/the-company/this-is-kpn.htm>

85 Based on information provided by Cisco and in the Economist, 11/02/2012.

6. Recommendations

This section contains a series of recommendations that may be useful as guidelines or pointers for debate and strategic planning on LGBT inclusion in the workplace by employers and LGBT employees' networks. In the first part, the recommendations are structured in five particularly significant areas for employers' activities. These areas are further detailed into specific recommendations⁸⁶. Whereas it should be stressed that some companies already have put in place some of these actions, these recommendations present a more systematic approach to taking action on diversity and inclusion in an organisation.

Developing an organisational culture that sincerely embraces diversity and inclusion requires conscious effort and adequate resources. It is the responsibility of senior management to set the stage for diversity initiatives. However, these initiatives will be successful only if senior management can convince employees throughout the organisation of the need for and value of such initiatives, and if the tools for implementing such initiatives are made available. We hope that the following recommendations provide practical guidance to organisations seeking to be proactive in improving the inclusion of LGBT in the workplace and in contributing to build a business case for diversity.

EMPLOYERS LEADING THE WAY IN DIVERSITY AND LGBT INCLUSION

1 Leading by Example: demonstrating courage and commitment

Lead by Example and "Walk the Talk"

- Become a diversity champion for the company's benefit, the welfare of LGBT and other employees, and as a model for other companies to get

inspiration from. This point is of particular significance and relevance, since it was reported that companies tend to emulate what happens in other companies with a positive reputation in a specific field, such as diversity. Therefore, this would extend a company's corporate social responsibility to enhancing diversity in the business sector.

Senior Role Models

- Identify more role models at senior and middle management levels: both LGBT and straight employees from diverse backgrounds that could be developed and supported in their role, through training, mentoring and coaching.
- Ensure senior executives endorse and establish clear leadership in advocating and implementing a diversity and inclusion policy, with the support and involvement of HR and D&I specialists and management.

Define the Business Case for the Organisation

- Take responsibility for defining, building and communicating the business case for diversity in the company or the organisation. Making the connexion with the ethical and legal imperatives of equality in the workplace and in service provision is a must.
- Address corporate culture in relation to the inclusion of LGBT employees, by identifying and challenging exclusive aspects of the culture, such as "macho" trends and discriminatory behaviour.
- "Workplace pride, not prejudice": Positioning the company as a key actor in setting standards in the business or public sector: for example, see Diversity Charters in Europe⁸⁷.

⁸⁶ These recommendations were elaborated on the basis of information gathered from participating employees and employers, LGBT organisations, from the literature reviewed and were also drawn from the extensive experience of the diversity experts who carried out this study.

⁸⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/diversity/diversity-charters/index_en.htm



Accountability for Diversity and Inclusion

- Focus on accountability and designated responsibilities for the implementation process. For example, by setting up a taskforce on diversity and inclusion with a remit to coordinate, evaluate and review the action plan. Regular reporting to senior management will rely on accountability at that level too by means of support and follow up actions.
- Introduce diversity achievements as an indicator in performance appraisal systems.
- Ensure regular monitoring, review and measurement of progress, with the possibility to introduce remedial action within a short to medium time span.

Resources

Allocate adequate staff and financial resources to ensure effective implementation of the D&I strategic plan.

- The lack of resources and the cost of implementing a diversity policy should not be an excuse for lack of action or initiatives. Some of the benefits of implementing such policies are often intangible or difficult to measure, particularly in the shorter term. This could be, for example, the impact of a marketing strategy that targets LGBT customers or uses LGBT positive images, or awareness-training of employees, as part of a wider strategy to change organisational culture. It is widely recognised that companies that project a positive image through their corporate social responsibility actions (respect for the environment and people's dignity) benefit from it, or at least do not experience the negative impact that socially irresponsible companies encounter.
- Optimising resources could entail exchanging best practices and networking between diversity and inclusion specialists (who need to improve their skills). In this respect, what constitutes a "good practice" needs to be more clearly defined both internally and in relation to external actions. This can materialise through the development of action plans that contain a number of performance indicators, which would enable the measurement of successful implementation and reaching targets.

2 Collect qualitative and quantitative data on diversity, and increase the visibility of LGBT employees

Diversity & Inclusion Audits

- Conduct regular diversity and inclusion audits or diagnoses. Employee engagement surveys could be superficial and ineffective in assessing the situation of LGBT employees and other employees, such as young employees or those from an ethnic minority. Diversity audits would contribute to raising awareness of and making visible the situation of LGBT employees, survey attitudes, review policies to ensure they are inclusive of LGBT.
- Draw an analytical picture of the situation of LGBT employees in the workplace (in terms of strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities and challenges) and improve recording practices.

Best Practices

- Exchange best practice with the company in other countries, with a view to achieve the highest standards and not just to benchmark with other companies.

Monitoring

- Monitor sexual orientation and gender identity, and on other data in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin, types of contracts, job tenure, career progression and other relevant information. Collect data from recruitment stage to exit. Explain the rationale for monitoring and communicate data in disaggregate format. Define what LGBT means for the organisation, while focusing particular attention on the lack of visibility or the absence of transgender and bisexual employees in the workplace.
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality for the protection of personal data stored for longer periods for historical, statistical or scientific use (gender at birth and gender identity, marital status, family reunion, mobility, etc). If this is not possible, the identity of the data subjects should be encrypted.



3 From strategy to practice: mainstreaming diversity and inclusion

D&I Strategic Plan

- Elaborate a strategic plan on diversity and inclusion that would address the particular situation (and meet the needs of) of LGBT employees, customers and service-users. The strategy should link LGBT equality to organisational aims, objectives and outputs. All policies should be implemented by means of a short and long term action plan, with SMART objectives, designated responsibilities, timetable, performance indicators and adequate resources.

Positive Action

- Develop and implement measures that go beyond the legal requirements of labour law or anti-discrimination legislation.
- "Pink Ceiling": Diversity policy and practice need to be consistent in all countries where the company operates, in order to provide similar inclusion to LGBT and other groups, particularly in countries where legislation is lacking or offers a lower level of protection of rights than in the Netherlands. This is of crucial importance in order to facilitate freedom of movement, which is often associated to or a prerequisite for career mobility. The range of benefits and social rights available for LGBT employees and their same sex partner or spouse in the Netherlands could be offered to them in other countries where the company operates.
- Collect external best practices that could be implemented and adapted to the company's context. Also internal best practices and diversity standards: for example, ING has a more robust diversity policy in the USA-based companies that could be replicated in the Dutch context, particularly as the legal framework supports it.

Recruitment and Selection

- Use targeted advertising and outreach through LGBT NGOs and media, social networks, LGBT student networks and job fairs to convey the message of an inclusive employer.
- Devise specific recruitment strategy to reach out to transgender candidates. Link with employment agencies that are transgender-inclusive.

Inclusive Diversity with no Hierarchy

- Apply policies that are inclusive of the diversity of employees and ensure consistency in their implementation.
- Multiple identities and the gender dimension should be taken into consideration when developing D&I policy or targeting a particular group for recruitment: e.g. young people of diverse backgrounds, including young LGBT people, job fairs, university graduates and links with LGBT student associations. It would put into question the credibility of a company if it actually was, or was seen to be, inclusive of LGBT employees but gender-biased (or vice-versa). Social background should be taken into consideration, with respect to addressing the particular situation of LGBT employees on the shop floor.
- Adequately respond to the situation of LGBT employees in smaller towns or more rural areas, by proposing diversity plans that are tailor-made to address the issues that the company faces at regional level, not just for the situation in Amsterdam or The Hague.

Complaints & Harassment

- Develop HR policies that include LGBT-specific initiatives. For example, this applies not only to the general diversity and inclusion policy, but also to the complaints and disciplinary procedures.
- Develop confidential reporting structures that are accessible and known to employees.
- Ensure competence of staff that handle complaints: provide training on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. Monitor homophobic and transphobic incidents.

"Pink Competency"

- Provide customised training on LGBT inclusion and diversity to raise the awareness of employees from induction stage to the shop floor and through to senior management level. Recruitment and selection panels need specific LGBT-inclusive training. Emphasise the company's stance, policy and standards on non-discrimination and on creating a working climate free from intimidation or harassment against LGBT



employees and other employees, on whatever ground, such as religious belief or gender. Explain the business case for inclusion.

- Specific training to sensitise on transgender issues should also be integrated.

Suppliers, customers and service-users

- Public sector organisations require a policy that sets LGBT equality standards for service-users and in relation to service-users' behaviour towards LGBT employees. Communicate support to employees who deal with hostile attitudes from clients.
- Supplier policy: privilege suppliers who are LGBT-inclusive (policies and practices) or that are LGBT-owned businesses.
- Communicate support from LGBT-friendly customers.

4 Ensure efficient and consistent internal and external communication

External communication could be customised to various target groups, such as customers or clients, suppliers, service users, other companies and the wider public.

Commit Publicly to the Business Case

- Promote the business case for LGBT inclusion and diversity within the organisation and externally. Internal and external communication strategies on the organisation's commitment and actions on diversity and inclusion can be an effective tool to promote LGBT equality. However, it should be noted that over-emphasis on communication, particularly if it is not backed by actual actions can be counter-productive to advancing the situation of LGBT in the workplace. For example, the unsubstantiated and excessive use of a positive image by the employer would send the message that "we don't have any problems in our company", which could inhibit LGBT employees from reporting their experiences of homophobic or transphobic attitudes.
- Promote a positive image of the company as an employer of choice that is inclusive of LGBT employees, customers and service-users. Celebrate LGBT diversity and take a public stance against transphobia and homophobia.
- Liaise and build partnerships with LGBT organisations and other external relevant stakeholders, such as employers' organisations and trade unions.

- Make policies (including on diversity, complaints and disciplinary procedures) accessible and user-friendly for all employees.
- Communicate expected and acceptable standards in the use of LGBT-inclusive language. Take sanctioning measures on abusive language, whether directed at a specific person or not.
- Greater transparency and accountability on diversity relating to LGBT. Information on the organisation's activities, achievements and commitment to diversity and LGBT inclusion could be included in:
 - › Annual or CSR report
 - › Internal newsletter and brochures
 - › Intranet
 - › Recruitment literature
 - › Website
- Use LGBT-inclusive language when communicating and make use of the words "transgender", "bisexual" and "lesbian", rather than "gay" to refer to LGBT.

5 Promote and value the role of networks

- Support LGBT and other internal employee networks and encourage cooperation between networks, as well as their contribution to the development and implementation of diversity-related action within the organisation. Not only this approach would stimulate acceptance, cohesion and collective responsibility, but it would be more cost-effective and effective in achieving diversity targets, as well as mainstreaming diversity and recognising the multiple identities of some employees. Support could include the following components: financial, strengthening of skills, sponsoring from senior management, active participation of straight allies.
- Consultation with LGBT employees and their networks (as well as cooperating with LGBT organisations, employers' organisations and trade unions) forms an essential part of the process of policy development and implementation. This participative approach would also enable companies to make informed decisions, and develop tailor-made, innovative, cost-effective and effective actions.
- Set up a network of cross-company and cross sector diversity and



inclusion HR managers. Being innovative and creative without reinventing the wheel involves learning from good practices that proved successful in the company in other countries and in other companies.

- Sign up to the 10 steps of the Declaration of Amsterdam: expanding links with Workplace Pride network.

II EMPLOYEES LEADING THE WAY IN DIVERSITY AND LGBT INCLUSION

Role of LGBT networks

In order to lead the way as change agents for LGBT diversity in the workplace, there is a need for a paradigm shift in the role of LGBT networks from social networks to support and advocacy professional networks for LGBT employees. In addition, as it is the case for employers, LGBT networks would benefit from "leading by example" too, by ensuring that both their leadership and membership reflect the wider diversity of their colleagues. What could this new role look like?

- Organise outreach strategies to encourage LGBT employees to become members of the network.
- Hold discussions on "gender, class or social origin and ethnic origin" within the network⁸⁸.
- Address the low participation or membership of LGBT employees from the shop floor, from rural areas, from transgender employees, lesbian employees and bisexual employees. This could be achieved by, for example:
 - › Carrying out a needs assessment survey among employees and network members an leadership: to collect information on the needs of LGBT employees that could be met within the remit of the network, as well as to raise awareness on LGBT issues and the role of the network.
 - › Reviewing type of events, venues, timing, and dress code at social events.
 - › Governance: Ensuring balanced representation in boards by women and men (40/40) and for transgender or those who neither identify as men or women (20). Co-chairing by one woman and one man or one transgender should be considered as a good practice option. A balanced

representation also entails giving regard to the representation of employees from the shop floor, younger or new employees and ethnic minorities.

- › Liaising and cooperating with other employee networks (women).
- Actively identify and support potential role models among underrepresented groups, such as lesbian, transgender and bisexual colleagues, as well as colleagues from the shop floor and from rural areas.
- Devise support and advocacy measures:
 - › Information on the network to new comers in the company during the induction phase, in cooperation with HR.
 - › Support to employees on harassment and liaising with HR.
 - › Liaising and meeting with the organisation's taskforce on diversity.
 - › Build alliances with other employee networks.
 - › Cooperate with employees' organisations and LGBT organisations.
- Actively seek the support and involvement of straight allies among senior and middle management.
- International networks: take into account their country needs and identity at country level: more involvement and more support are required.
- Professionalise and strengthen the capacity of networks, so that they become adequately equipped to provide a meaningful contribution to introducing change in their organisations.
- Improve "diversity intelligence" in a workplace context, with a view to participate in consultative processes that could help shape and influence decision-making and policy development in the organisation.
- Consider what role the Workplace Pride Foundation should fulfil in order to better support and guide networks in their efforts to advance the inclusion of LGBT employees in the workplace, as well as underline the business case for LGBT diversity and inclusion

88 See recommendations from the Belgian study on LGBT from the shop floor, page 46.

Conclusions

There is evidence from our research that many employers from the public and private sectors in the Netherlands have achieved some progress on LGBT inclusion in the workplace and that they are committed to LGBT inclusion at baseline level. There are examples of good practice in the form of policies and actions, and support from middle management and some senior executives. However, in many instances, employers have yet to eradicate persisting and serious problems, such as homophobia, harassment against transgenders (aggravated by under-reporting), exclusion and discrimination.

Valuing the diversity and LGBT identity of employees implies acquiring knowledge of the issues they face and enhancing the quality of their working life, so that they can perform in the best conditions. It also requires attention to and an acknowledgement of their age, cultural background, (dis)ability, their position within the company (shop floor), geographical location (rural areas or in another country where LGBT acceptance is low).

Corporate culture lends itself more to promoting gender equality and more specifically in relation to career progression. Employers approach gender equality as a single diversity issue. It does not take into account the diversity of identities, such as those of lesbian women, transgender employees and bi-sexual men. In this respect, a more holistic or integrated (mainstreamed) approach to diversity would better ensure the inclusion of the wider diversity of LGBT employees, as well as create a cohesive and inclusive workplace for all employees.

The study findings demonstrate that LGBT inclusion is seldom fully embedded into the organisation's culture, business strategy and structures. There is little evidence to suggest that diversity and inclusion is mainstreamed into an organisation's core business activity and decision-making. Some companies are indeed building an understanding of the benefits of diversity for the organisation and for their employees. That learning process entails moving towards a more comprehensive understanding of the business case for diversity and LGBT inclusion, which would help shape the way business is performed and how employees interact at work. It could

likewise lead to a more consistent approach and implementation of strategy and policies. Not least, it could result in an inclusive culture that encourages creativity and innovation.

LGBT networks continue to fulfil an important role in supporting employees and in helping employers achieve their diversity targets. However, they cannot be expected to substitute their employers' primary role and they require further development, notably through capacity enhancing measures backed by adequate resources. In this respect, the Workplace Pride Foundation could increase its efforts to empower these networks to bring about the necessary changes within workplaces. A shift within networks is equally essential in order to increase the membership, visibility and participation of lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees, and LGBT employees from the shop floor and rural areas. They too can become role models and change agents in the near future.

In relation to change agents, this report highlights the quintessential role of CEOs and Board members in committing to diversity in words and deeds, whilst underpinning the business case.

Being a role model, by definition, implies exemplary and irreproachable behaviour and leading by example, including being authentic and acting like a benchmark that inspires others to aim for. Therefore, role models also need to be aware of their power of influence and the responsibilities that ensue from that influence. To this end, many successful companies have already established the link between the business case for diversity, their corporate social responsibility and the promotion of human rights, with positive effects that impact on the countries where they operate and beyond. In other words, being an exemplary employer that is inclusive of LGBT people and that understands the value of diversity can have far-reaching outcomes: it can result in attracting and retaining LGBT talent (thus keeping a competitive advantage and benefit business), in creating a cohesive working environment and in contributing to the social acceptance of LGBT people in Dutch society and elsewhere.

Interview Questionnaire

Details on the company

- › Sector of activity, geographical location, number of employees in NL and in that branch
- › Any statistics on employees in terms of gender, age, sexual orientation, length of time in service (turnover), promotions, etc: any monitoring data at any level?

Details on the interviewee

- › Job title and areas of responsibility (in what way are you responsible for/contribute to LGBT diversity management?)

Business case for LGBT inclusion: costs and benefits

1. To what extent are the Board and/or CEO aware of and committed to/promoting the business case for LGBT inclusion, in terms of costs and benefits to the company, as well as to the individuals concerned?
 - › **experiences** of negative outcomes due to anti-LGBT climate
 - › **experiences** of positive outcomes due to LGBT-friendly and inclusive work environment
 - › Productivity (Impact of exclusion on individual or organisational performance)
 - › retention (satisfaction)
 - › Professional relationships (trust and cohesion): team support, management support, leadership support, external stakeholders (clients, suppliers, public). Workplace climate

"Sexual Orientation Identity In Corporate Culture"- A Culture Of Inclusion/Exclusion In Your Organisation.

2. Has your organisation ever carried out a diversity audit or diagnosis, evaluation, an internal employee satisfaction survey or consultation on LGBT issues? (Was it done by an external expert?)
3. To what extent do employees feel comfortable to self-disclose their gender identity and/or sexual orientation? Do you perceive any difference in the experience of

any particular group, for example transgender employees?¹

4. Are there any openly LGBT managers? How do they act as role models? Are you a role model?
5. Do you organise social events involving partners and families, including those of LGBT employees?
6. Do you consider that your company's internal and external communication is inclusive of LGBT employees, in terms of the language and images used?
 - › internal, including the drafting of policies; also is emphasis on "gay" or "lesbian" or "bi-sexual", etc
7. LGBT awareness-raising training and activities (campaigns, publications, posters, information):
 - › senior leadership, human resources and diversity professionals
 - › Midlevel managers and supervisors
 - › Individual employees
8. Has there ever been any formal complaint of discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual identity and/or sexual orientation against your organisation?

Internal policies and practices (needs and quality of working life)

9. Could you tell me about the following policies that your company may already have? (since when, who is responsible for their implementation, are they implemented, etc)
 - › Equality and diversity policy and/or strategy - written or unwritten (action plan + budget): does it include sexual identity/expression and sexual orientation, is multiple identity taken into account (e.g. gender balance, ethnic minorities, age, etc)
 - › Harassment and bullying: anti-LGBT comments and behaviour. Counsellor in place or helpline?
 - › Disciplinary/grievance
10. How do employees know about these policies and other LGBT-related policies and what has the company done to make them accessible?

¹ For example, bi-sexual employees, on their invisibility page 33 "Degrees of Equality".

11. What specific LGBT inclusion actions has your company undertaken in:
 - › Recruitment (job fairs, contacts with NGOs, outreach)
 - › Retention (satisfaction, LGBT-sensitive management tools for appraisal and supervision, work assignments and workload, etc)
 - › Promotion (professional development-LGBT employee network group? (how long, who's in it, agreement, consultation, how could be improved, role and effectiveness, etc)
12. Do you offer the same company benefits and social rights to LGBT and non-LGBT employees? In the case of same-sex couples, are they entitled to the same benefits whether married or not (beyond State benefits)? Issues related to (lack of) legal recognition of preferred gender identity (transgender people's identities)
 - › For example: social rights of LGBT employees and those of their partner or spouse, or partner's child (pension, insurance rights, adoption leave, parental leave, compassionate leave (sex realignment, bereavement, carer, people living with HIV, holidays leave, violence outside the workplace)

LGBT Inclusion and External Stakeholders

13. Describe the company's relationship or initiatives with:
 - › Trade unions' and employers' organisations' activity on LGBT employees inclusion: social dialogue, collective agreements/bargaining
 - › Supplier policy, corporate socially responsible, public procurement policy
 - › Supporting LGBT client base
 - › Links, involvement or partnerships with civil society and institutions (LGBT rights groups, education providers, Dutch Equality Commission), Workplace Pride membership

Example of best practice in LGBT inclusion in the workplace

Challenges and opportunities (from anti-discrimination to promoting diversity)

NB: Collect relevant organisational documents (titles + relevant extracts)

Focus Group Questionnaire

Understanding LGBTI inclusion & What It Means In Your Role.

1. why do you consider it important to participate in a study...
2. What are the current LGBT issues, needs, challenges that your organisation is facing?

"Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity In Corporate Culture"- A Culture Of Inclusion/ Exclusion In Your Organisation.

3. If we were to say: "take a temperature check of your respective organisation", what would you say is the working climate/ corporate culture on LGBT issues? By this, we mean that most organisations have a visible/invisible "fitting in" criteria and this is demonstrated in everyday treatment of LGBT colleagues. Examples of this include some of the language and banter/ jokes that takes place at work. One study found that the common language used in the Netherlands was "Hey homo" and "Butches". Has your employer created a comfortable work environment for you to be able to express your sexual orientation and/or sexual identity openly?
4. We are aware from research findings that it is often harder for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees to express their sexual orientation or sexual identity at work. What have your experiences been? Please share examples of some of the perceived attitudes/behaviours that you have had in your workplace from your colleagues and managers.
5. Research also indicates that sometimes homophobic attitudes are more prominent on an external basis. We would like to know for those of you who have face-to-face contacts with clients what have been your experiences with suppliers, partner organisations and clients. How did your manager respond?

Recruitment & Selection.

6. How has diversity been promoted and inclusion achieved at the different stages of your career? Could you please tell us about your experiences around:
 - a. Recruitment and methods of selection.
 - b. Opportunities for professional development.
 - c. Opportunities for promotion and career progression to higher grades and

management positions.

- d. Do you perceive that employee retention is high/low for any LGBT employees?
- e. After you disclosed your (or one of your colleagues disclosed her/his) sexual identity and/or sexual orientation, did you feel that it had an impact on your performance? If so, what contributed to that situation?

Role of Leadership In Supporting/Promoting LGBT Inclusion In Your Workplace.

7. Can you share with us any examples of openly LGBT management either colleagues/individuals.
8. Can you share with us examples of how Senior Managers in positions of leadership have demonstrated their commitment to both supporting and promoting LGBT inclusion in the workplace? Are there any examples of best practice that you can share?

Incorporating the Business Case.

9. The Corporate sector has focused on the business benefits of diversity.
10. Are you aware of any LGBT initiatives/examples of how in particular LGBT issues can benefit the business case in your respective organisation?

Good Practice Examples on Areas Of LGBT Policy/Procedure and Practice.

11. Can you share with us any good practice examples/initiatives of LGBT inclusion policies or procedures or practices that you have undertaken or have been involved in your organisation?

NB: It would be interesting to gauge whether companies treat same-sex married couples differently to those in a same-sex relationship only: going beyond legal requirements.

Improvement/Way Forward on LGBT Inclusion In The Workplace.

How satisfied are staff with the culture and environment of your organisation, and what suggestions, if any, do they have for necessary changes and ways forward in making LGBT inclusion a progressive/priority issue in the workplace?

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