

# The Future is Now

## LGBTIQ+ Workplace Inclusion in Japan



30 September 2022

Supporters :



Organiser :



Host:



Co Hosts:



Dear Workplace Pride Members,

On Friday, September 30, 2022, The Workplace Pride Foundation held a full-day conference on the theme of "LGBTIQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace" at the Accenture Innovation Hub in Tokyo. The 100-person venue was filled to capacity, and both speakers and attendees actively participated in the many discussions held throughout the day.

We received great feedback from many participants.

Some examples are: "I was impressed by the amount of enthusiasm" and "It was a valuable opportunity to meet a person in charge of DE&I from a different industry."

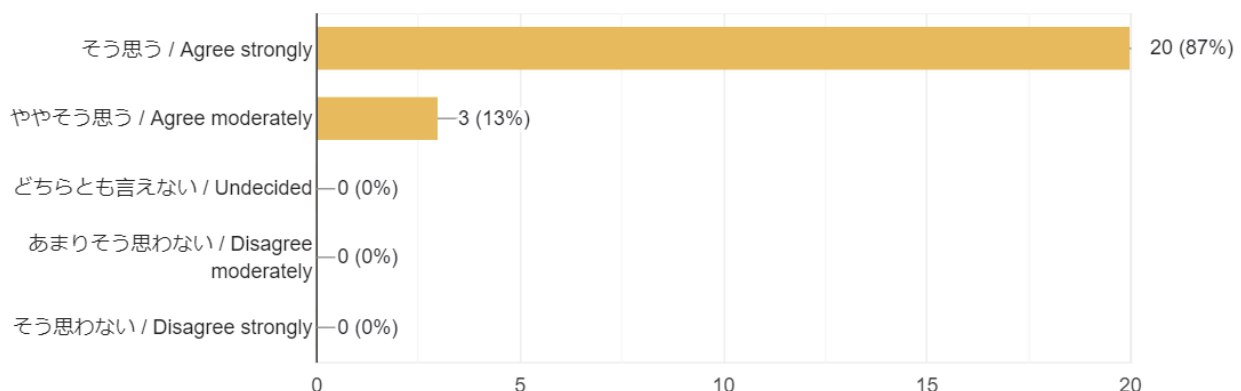
Also, we are happy to share that we received a high evaluation from the post-conference questionnaire. (100 participants, 23 valid responses).

会議に参加することで、職場におけるLGBTIQ+ インクルージョンとビジネス成果の関係性に関する理解が深まった。



The conference helped me understand the relationships between LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace and business performance.

23 responses



Participants were mainly from Workplace Pride member companies, but because of word of mouth we did have some participants from companies that are not members (yet)! The enthusiasm surrounding this conference proved how passionate the business community is about this topic.



Akiko Horie



Joy Ho



Jenny Lee

Opening remarks were by Akiko Horie (Accenture). She introduced the dynamic initiatives at Accenture in great detail. She also explained why diversity and inclusion are priorities at Accenture and how they are essential in differentiating their services from other companies. Next, Joy Ho (Unilever Japan) delivered a moving speech based on her personal experience. She explained clearly why Unilever, as a global company, places importance on equity and spares no effort in educating and instilling the importance of it in its employees. Jenny Lee (Kraft Heinz) sent us a supportive video message about the importance of diversity based on their corporate philosophy. She also introduced Kraft Heinz's efforts toward LGBTIQ+ issues.

We then welcomed a fantastic surprise guest. Robbert Dijkgraaf (Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) happened to be visiting Japan. When he learned about our organization's conference, he sent a message saying, "I would like to participate as a representative of a government that makes gender equality a priority." The Minister, also a scientist, spoke about the importance of meticulously analyzing the process, not just looking at the results of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and any social change.

In the morning panel discussion, Toshiyuki Fukuchi (IBM Japan), Alexander Dmitrenko (LLAN Co-Director, Ashurst Law Office), and Ginger Griggs (ASC Leader) joined Workplace Pride Executive Director David Pollard on stage. They talked about why it is vital to understand same-sex couples and diverse families and why companies should offer support. Giving specific examples, they explained how the "freedom to marry" directly reflects the maturity of a society. In Japan, there is an urgent need to create a system where anyone can legally marry. Marriage equality is particularly relevant for the business community, and this discussion offered excellent insight to the participants.

Maki Muraki (Nijiirō Diversity) shared a detailed report on the current situation of LGBTIQ+ people in the Japanese workplace, explaining in detail how the regional and national governments and companies have shifted over the past ten years.





After a delicious lunch provided by Kraft Heinz, we held four interactive breakout sessions. Quotes from the breakout participants include:

"I felt that by learning how to apply data points logically to this issue in the workplace, it would be beneficial toward changing awareness within the company."

"The content of my session was so rich that I learn more than I would in a three-day conference. The participants were all very energetic, and it was a great inspiration."

"It was a great opportunity to understand the importance of this topic and that leadership should make this a strategic priority."

Later in the afternoon, Gon Mastunaka (of the Good Aging Yells organization) gave us an inspirational message about why LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace is essential, based on his personal experience. Gon is active at the corporate level and in civil society, making waves in support of LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Many participants remarked on the significance of Gon's speech, with one saying: "I felt the importance of agreeing with and supporting trends that bring about social change beyond the boundaries of companies."

Fumino Sugiyama (Tokyo Rainbow Pride), Jun Shinohara (Accenture), and Chiho Shibaoka (Nokia) join me on stage to participate in the afternoon panel discussion. We discussed why companies should foster LGBTIQ+ inclusion. They shared their knowledge and varied experiences, including the challenges of being a member of the LGBTIQ+ community. They also discussed the diverse needs of the LGBTIQ+ population in Japan; for example, some people do not necessarily want to come out. Also discussed was how to involve allies (supporters) and how to include more diversity beyond LGBTIQ+ people.

Theo Peters (Minister Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Japan) closed the conference with wise words regarding workplace inclusion. "The workplace is a place where we spend a lot of time each day, and it is important to create an environment where everyone feels

safe and secure. This is because it creates an environment where you can concentrate.” He also mentioned that in the Netherlands, LGBTIQ+ inclusion and gender equality are essential to enrich society and that the Dutch government makes LGBTIQ+ initiatives a priority.

Workplace Pride Foundation organized this conference, but it would not have been possible without the cooperation of member companies and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Japan. Once again, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Accenture for providing the venue and volunteer staff as the primary host and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kraft Heinz, and Unilever for agreeing to co-host the event. Thank you to IFF, Avery Dennison, Nokia, Kyndryl, and Sodexo for sponsoring.

On a personal note, when I came to Holland 12 years ago to study abroad, I never dreamed that I would be able to hold such a conference in Japan 12 years later. I left Japan because I was worried that the future I envisioned would not be possible, living as a Korean-Japanese person and as a lesbian. After leaving, I had several experiences in The Netherlands that made me believe that I could be treated like anybody else. I thought to myself “Is this what it feels like to live life normally?” At city hall, the marriage certificate was accepted smoothly; at the nursery school, I am not questioned about my relationship with my wife; at work, I can say "my wife" without any problems, and I can talk about my family weekend plans with my colleagues. I can talk about...the list goes on and on. Different countries have different cultures. I hear that not everyone in Japan wants to come out. When I think about bringing my authentic self to work, it doesn't mean that I have to wear a rainbow flag every day, but rather that I can bring my whole self to work without fear. I believe you can only explore your identity in a safe work environment. Finally, I would like to ask for the support of every individual in the workplace (including allies) to help us to realize the day that this becomes normal for more people in Japanese workplaces.

Director of Program Development,

Yuli Kim  
Workplace Pride Foundation