

Inclusion of LGBTQ Employees

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Introduction

- The Human Rights Campaign releases an annual Corporate Equality Index (CEI) that claims to rate businesses on their LGBTQ diversity and inclusion.
- However, the CEI is derived entirely from information gathered from the companies, not the employees. This means they are only able to measure diversity and not whether their employees feel as though they're part of the company's culture. Therefore, they measure only diversity and *not* inclusion.

Purpose

To determine if employees working at organizations the HRC has labeled as a “best place to work” for the LGBTQ community feel their company is inclusive. If these employees feel excluded from company culture, the number of LGBTQ employees (i.e., diversity) isn't important.

Methods

- Conducted literature review.
- Interviewed seven (5 LGBTQ identifying and 2 non-LGBTQ identifying) employees that work for businesses that scored a 100% on the HRC's 2018 CEI.
- Semi-structured interviews included questions about what inclusion looks like and what measures their companies consider reflective of inclusivity.

Major Literature Cited

HRC. (2017). *Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index 2018*.

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Results in Participants' Own Words

What does inclusion look like to you?

“Personally, inclusion looks like when coworkers take an interest in my personal life and ask about my husband. For the company in general it looks like having a seat at the table.”

-gay male, telecommunications

“It’s not a fad of pride month; it’s year round.”

-straight female, telecommunications

“Diversity is inviting everyone to the school dance. Inclusion is making sure they get asked to dance while they’re there.”

-gay male, retail& consumer products

“Championing for people no matter their preference or gender.”

-straight male, computer software

Examples of Inclusion in Participants' Organizations

“Employee resource groups talk about inclusion and even more so during Pride month.”

-gay male, banking & financial services

“Our company recently got gender neutral bathrooms and added preferred pronouns to employees' online profiles.”

-lesbian female, consulting & business services

“There’s an employee referral program specifically for LGBTQ people.”

-gay male, retail & consumer services

“Our CEO gave a speech about inclusivity and told everyone to reject tolerance and move towards acceptance.”

-straight female, telecommunications

“Our company hired and outside LGBT consulting firm to come and provide education surrounding LGBT issues. They also provided a new channel on our wiki explaining what [gender] non-binary means.”

-straight male, computer software

“They provide adoption and surrogacy benefits to everyone and have an LGBT family resource group where LGBT parents can share their experiences.”

-gay male, banking & financial services

Conclusion

As answers varied so drastically, it can be concluded that the HRC's CEI does not measure inclusion of LGBTQ employees as their experiences at work are not consistent.

Recommendations

- Leaders can encourage visibility for LGBTQ employees by speaking specifically about LGBTQ inclusion.
- If you identify as an ally, make sure you're an engaged in your allyship and take action.
- When making decisions, reflect on your organization's commitment to the LGBTQ community.
- Practice mirroring: if your coworker asks about your weekend, ask about theirs.

“I believe no one should ever have to choose between a career we love and living our lives with authenticity and integrity.”

-Selisse Berry, Out & Equal Executive Director



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