

HOGAN LOVELLS ON LGBTQ+ AT WORK

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Do more than talk the talk

As a global firm we are supportive of LGBTQ+ colleagues around the world but there can be structural and legal issues in certain jurisdictions. We launched Pride+ to find a framework where all colleagues can celebrate LGBTQ+ inclusion without danger.

Our Pride+ initiative was launched in May 2017 in order to unify and show broad support for LGBTQ+ people. The firm has devoted resources to diverse lawyers and diversity leaders around world. Stonewall provides the framework for Pride+ which looks at how you can speak up for LGBTQ+ people, and the ways in which you can and should be out and open, to lobby and ally and how to increase inclusiveness.

The framework has had remarkable success - the framework and ally guide has included much-needed extensive definitions around terms (which are still shifting) but that have given us a core of definitions for LGBTQ+ people.

Our Pride+ network provides a structure to protect the activities of LGBTQ+ lawyers and staff throughout the world, so they can feel mentored and protected where they are. The network is for allies and LGBTQ+ so no one can make assumptions about what you are, and this is a great way around structural obstacles.

Events Matter

We have had a lot of success with regional events, even in places like Moscow. It's about making people comfortable at work. We are active with Out Leadership and we have run a number of events supporting National Coming Out Day. We want to make sure people can be out in the office, even if not elsewhere.

Invest in pipeline and development

The most important work we do is look at our LGBTQ+ pipeline, asking how we can make sure LGBTQ+ individuals are offered the work assignments, development and sponsorships they need to be successful at the firm. This work is led by our CEO Steve Immelt.

Identity is crucial

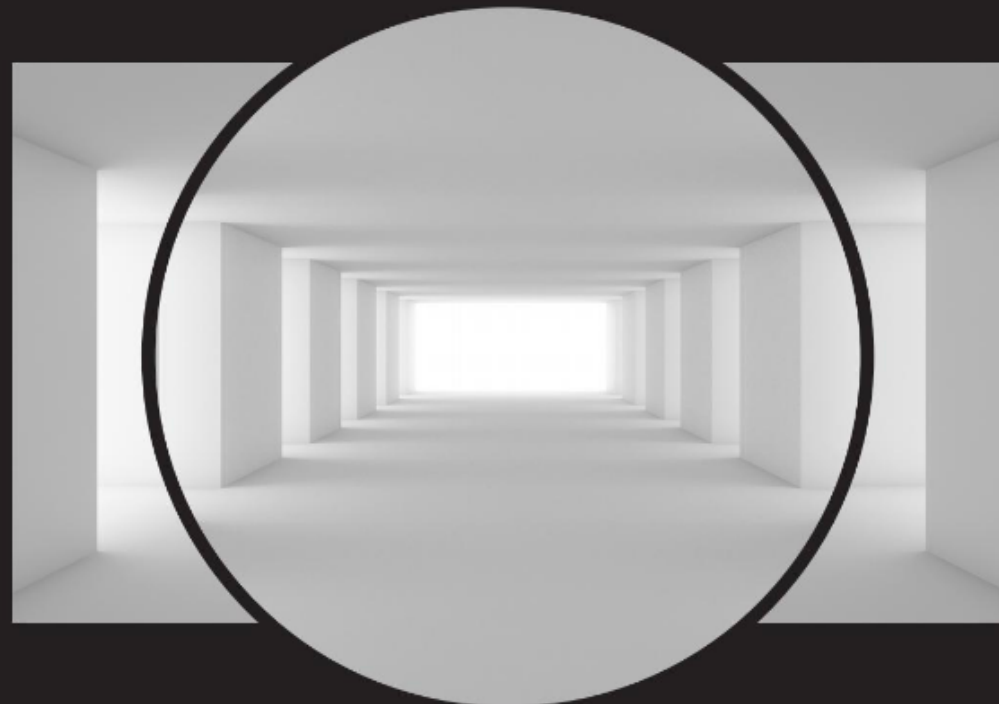
In many circumstances you may have to declare gender. In the US, everyone who has elected LGBTQ+ has self-identified in our system, but I think in terms of professional development, self-identification is not only what matters because if people suspect you are LGBTQ+, then that can have an impact on you. Todd Sears, the CEO of Out Leadership has a really great radar for LGBTQ+ people. There's an impact even when you just suspect someone is LGBTQ+; unconscious bias exists for everyone everywhere.

All sorts of norms we attribute to different sets of people make a difference. A lot of this is conflated with gender; if a man is viewed as too feminine then he may not get benefit of male privilege; for women if you don't conform to or retain gender expression norms, it can result in bias. If there's a speaking engagement and someone decides an LGBTQ+ man may not have gravitas, or if there is uncertainty as to how clients will react, or if there is a question of whether LGBTQ+ folk can be included in traditional social activities; a lot of factors can conflate with gender expectations. We need to be aware of making sure such biases do not affect professional development for ALL of our lawyers.

The Power of Naming

We recently rolled out the option for firm personnel to add the gender pronouns they prefer to use in their email signature block; we feel this initiative shows how we are supporting our people to be who they are in the workplace.

Everyone has the option to identify the pronouns of their choice, including the use of gender non-bi-



nary terms such as: 'they', 'ze', 'sie', 'zir', 'co', and 'ey', or personnel can identify that they do not use pronouns and just wish to be called by their name.

This allows LGBTQ+ individuals whose gender expression may not correspond with their gender identity to allow others to know how to refer to them. Identifying proper pronouns is also helpful for individuals across boundaries and cultures: for example, for those with names that can be associated with multiple genders leading to wrong assumptions about gender identity.

Even though individuals in some of our global offices may not be able to take full advantage of being fully 'out' at work due to cultural and legal issues regarding LGBTQ+ identity, having the initiative available shows them that they work at a law firm that supports them. Ultimately, this is about easing communication barriers among people.

Be a role model

At our business support center in Louisville, Kentucky, Bendita held a presentation about being out at work. "The reaction was immense; I had a number of meetings with our business services professionals in that office and I discovered so many of them joined the firm because we were so out and open and supportive of the LGBTQ+ community."

Keep the faith

Our center in Louisville is largely millennial - our younger generation has greater numbers of LGBTQ+ individuals and they have grown up in a world where things are progressing, although now federal and local administration might challenge all that. But they find so much comfort in going to work in a place that will support them and their peers, where you can be yourself and not be fired. This is incredibly important.