COMMUNICATING COMMITMENT TO TRANS INCLUSION

The trans inclusion journey and communicating commitment to all staff

SUPPORTING TRANS STAFF IN THE WORKPLACE

In collaboration with

Stonewall
Acceptance without exception
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THE BUSINESS CASE FOR TRANS INCLUSION

Much has been written about the business case for diversity and inclusion. So why does LGBT inclusion matter?

According to Open for Business (2015), LGBT diversity and inclusion in the workplace impacts upon two key areas of productivity – business and individual performance.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

LGBT inclusion leads to improved talent attraction and retention, innovation, collaboration and brand strength.

Talent attraction and retention: by demonstrating you are an LGBT inclusive organisation, you will gain a greater diversity of applicants and talent.

Innovation and collaboration: bringing together staff with different backgrounds helps facilitate innovation and collaboration; employees will have varying perspectives on business problems and solutions.

Brand strength: showing commitment to LGBT inclusion in the wider community will increase your brand strength and potentially capitalise on the spending power of lesbian, gay, bi and trans consumers.

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

LGBT inclusion develops staff by enabling them to bring their authentic self to work and leads to higher levels of motivation and satisfaction.

Greater job commitment: staff will be more committed to their job and employer if the organisation values the unique input they bring.

Higher levels of satisfaction and motivation: creating an LGBT inclusive working environment increases staff satisfaction and motivation levels as employees will feel supported.

Improved workplace relationships: LGBT inclusion will improve relationships between employees by increasing understanding and awareness.

A 2013 study (The Williams Institute) found that employers' LGBT-supportive policies and workplace climates led to positive business outcomes.

DISCLOSING GENDER IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Disclosing gender identity or a trans history is a decision each trans person makes according to many different personal factors, including how inclusive an organisation feels. Trans people should not be forced to disclose their trans history or gender identity, however according to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index 2016 Staff Feedback Survey, respondents who identified as trans and felt comfortable disclosing their gender identity were:

- 77 per cent more likely to be satisfied with their job security, compared to those who are not comfortable disclosing their gender identity to anyone (78 per cent compared to 44 per cent)
- 68 per cent more likely to be satisfied with their sense of achievement (79 per cent compared to 47 per cent)
- 67 per cent more likely to be satisfied with the support they receive from their manager (82 percent compared to 49 per cent)

Trans employees are valuable assets for organisations. Several different research surveys have found evidence that trans people have higher average educational levels than the wider UK population and also that trans people are more likely to work in professional and managerial occupations compared to the wider UK population. Most recently, the Scottish Transgender Alliance found 55 per cent of its survey respondents had achieved a HND/Degree or Postgraduate Degree qualification.


ACTION POINT

Before you begin action planning for trans inclusion we very strongly recommend that you get active senior buy-in to LGBT and specifically trans inclusion. The studies cited above and our research can help you with these conversations. Having a senior sponsor is critical to success, they can help you navigate your own organisation, resources and time.
THE TRANS INCLUSION JOURNEY

As with any diversity and inclusion initiative, you should design an action plan for trans inclusion which suits your organisation.

This will ensure that work is consistently implemented, cascaded across all staff and has the most impact. No inclusion work is ever ‘done’ or ‘finished’ and this includes trans inclusion. Your plan, milestones and objectives should reflect a proactive and continuing approach.

THIS WORK SHOULD FOCUS ON A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS:

1. **Organisational commitment** – It’s important to create a sense of organisational commitment to trans inclusion. Demonstrating commitment shows your trans staff that you will support them and value their contribution to your work; visibly demonstrating a commitment externally to the wider trans community and trans equality will help in recruiting a diverse workforce and impact customers and service users through brand association.

2. **Policy** – Good policies which protect employees are the bedrock of inclusion. Making your policies trans inclusive will ensure employees are supported in the workplace. Creating a transitioning at work policy should be a proactive exercise and not reactive when you have an employee who is transitioning. Having sound policy is a good start, but bringing the policy to life within the culture of your organisation is key.

3. **Physical spaces and facilities** – Trans staff may face extra barriers when using gendered facilities or spaces within your office. You should work with your facilities or office manager to ensure you have trans inclusive facilities (for example gender neutral toilets), and when necessary, communicate to staff effectively people’s rights to use facilities which match their gender identity.

4. **All-staff engagement** – All staff should be involved in trans inclusion. Effectively engaging everyone from the board and senior management team to middle managers and junior staff ensures that support reaches the whole of the organisation. Understanding that different employees will have different roles and responsibilities around inclusion will enable you to tailor your resources and practices to different groups, such as training and communications.

5. **Service delivery and customer service** – Trans service-users may have distinct needs in accessing and using the services you deliver. Effectively anticipating and resolving barriers, in addition to visibly signalling your commitment to the trans community, will ensure your service is inclusive. For customer-serving businesses, enabling and creating a trans inclusive brand will drive consumer commitment and ensure an inclusive customer journey.

WHAT DOES GOOD PRACTICE LOOK LIKE AND HOW DO WE MEASURE IMPACT?

Most employers are now familiar with evaluating the impact of inclusion through workforce monitoring; both in the diversity of their staff base and staff satisfaction. Conservative estimates by Gires (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) on the size of the gender variant community are around 650,000 people in the UK. This means for a large number of employers, they will not be able to collate enough data to measure satisfaction without the risk of disclosing people’s trans history.

This does not mean it’s impossible for organisations to see the impact of trans inclusion work, it simply requires looking at indirect metrics and variables. Within your organisation you should decide on what information you will track and gain agreement on the accuracy and value of those measurements. Some examples could be:

- Staff satisfaction with training around gender identity equality
- The number of trans allies in the organisation (not just LGBT allies)
- Engagement with trans issues in the LGBT staff network group
- Activities which demonstrate a commitment to trans equality both within the organisation and in the wider trans community
- The successful adjustment of facilities to ensure there are no barriers for use by trans staff
DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT TO TRANS INCLUSION

Demonstrating commitment to trans inclusion cannot be summed up by a single act or statement; it’s a process that involves the whole organisation.

Effectively demonstrating commitment impacts all staff. It requires those who plan communication and engagement activities to take a broader look across the organisation to ensure messages are reached by staff from a variety of levels.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WILL:

• Demonstrate to trans staff the organisation will support them and who they are
• Demonstrate to trans staff the work they do is valued and respected
• Demonstrate to all staff that the organisation takes trans inclusion seriously
• Empower all staff to begin to ask questions in a sensitive way and increase their knowledge of trans equality
• Empower all staff to become trans allies

COMMUNICATING COMMITMENT

There are many different ways of communicating within an organisation, a lot of which will be bound by size and budget. These factors may mean you have to be more creative with the ways you communicate to your staff. However when you communicate, you should ensure that:

• Communications come from a variety of levels from within the organisation
• The communication type is appropriate and tailored to the staff group
• You plan for the year ahead what communications will be sent out and when, ensuring they cover trans specific issues
• The communications are both about your staff and the wider trans community

Fewer than half of trans respondents (42 per cent) felt their senior leaders demonstrate visible commitment to trans equality, and more than a quarter (28 per cent) disagreed.

WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX 2016, STAFF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

In February 2015 my employer hosted a round table session and invited a trans professional to share her journey about transitioning at work. This event showed me that the organisation is engaged with trans issues and happy to educate employees about trans diversity and inclusion.

Her story gave me an insight into what it’s like living as a transgender individual socially and more importantly – at work. Until then, the only obstacle I had in ‘coming out’ was whether I would be able to sustain my living if I started my transition. The trans speaker gave me a lot of confidence that the society we’re living in, including my company, were safe environments in which to transition.

When my transition timeline was confirmed, HR worked very closely with all the relevant departments to help me, for example making sure the payroll system was set up correctly and also employing an external consultant to provide in-house training to educate colleagues.

My employer has always sent out internal communications emphasising the importance and benefits of an inclusive and diverse working environment. I think it’s important for organisations to demonstrate commitment to trans inclusion as this raises awareness of trans issues and increases people’s productivity when they can be themselves.

ROXANA
LGBT INCLUSIVE VS. TRANS SPECIFIC MESSAGES

Often when people talk about the LGBT community, the prominent voice and association is of sexual orientation, with gender identity and the trans community being invisible.

Sometimes it’s appropriate to group the LGBT community together as a whole and at other times to focus on specific issues relating to separate identities within the LGBT acronym. In order to communicate trans inclusion effectively, you should consider carefully the gender identity specific content.

TIPS FOR MESSAGING:

The LGBT acronym — if using the acronym LGBT, do not refer solely to sexual orientation in other associated text and ensure the content is relevant.

Consider how the message reflects upon the trans community — it can be easy to focus on difficulties trans people face, but remember to also communicate positive messages of empowerment and success.

Use the correct terminology and definitions — staff members may not know what different terms mean, so ensure you define and use correct terminology in communications.

Be clear in your call to action — think carefully about what you want your staff to do from the communication. Is the communication about awareness raising or getting employees to an event?

Use trans voices — where possible you should use trans voices to talk about trans issues — the individual’s should be happy to have this role, but the burden of responsibility for trans inclusion should not fall solely on them.

TRANS SPECIFIC EVENTS

Many organisations use key events throughout the year to organise activities and communicate key messages to their workforce. The following events can be used to anchor messages around trans inclusion, particularly from senior leaders.

**International Women’s Day (WID) — March**

Observed since the early 1900s, WID highlight and take action against the continued social, economic, cultural and political inequality woman face, including trans women.

[internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com)

**Stonewall riots anniversary — June**

Trans people played a pivotal role in the Stonewall riots, which are often considered the birthplace of the LGBT rights movement.

**Transgender Awareness Week — November**

A week dedicated to raising the visibility of trans and gender non-conforming people, addressing issues these communities face and culminating in the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

**International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDoV) — March**

A day dedicated to celebrating the trans community and raising awareness of discrimination faced by the trans men, women and non-binary people worldwide.

**Sparkle and Trans Pride — July**

Sparkle (Manchester) and Trans Pride (Brighton) are events which celebrate gender diversity. Both events attract trans people and trans allies, promoting equality and diversity through visibility.

[sparkle.org.uk](http://sparkle.org.uk)  
[transpridebrighton.tumblr.com](http://transpridebrighton.tumblr.com)

**Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) — November**

TDoR began in 1999 to commemorate people killed as a result of transphobia and to bring attention to the violence the trans community endure.

[tdor.info](http://tdor.info)

PLEASE NOTE, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) is not a celebration — it’s a day to mourn and honour those who have lost their lives as a direct result of trans discrimination and prejudice. If you plan any communications or activities around TDoR, be aware and considerate of this.

LGBT EVENTS

You can still utilise LGBT inclusive events throughout the year to highlight the trans community and demonstrate your organisation is committed to trans inclusion, such as LGBT history month, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and events throughout the Pride season — just be clear with the messaging. You should consider the different identities you’re highlighting in order to profile everyone under the trans umbrella, including non-binary people.
CASE STUDY: TRANS INCLUSION AT ASDA

At Asda, almost one per cent of our workforce identify as trans and we want to ensure they feel as supported as the rest of our team.

In 2014 we undertook an engagement process, reaching out and communicating to our colleagues. The results of this activity threw up a new challenge. This one per cent was the least engaged segment across our business and, for us, this was a clear call to action.

As with any survey, the numbers often hide the people, so our first port of call was to listen to our colleagues. Listening groups were held across home offices, retail and distribution to ensure there was a true representation and capture of experiences. Importantly this included all colleagues, as those who do not identify as trans still require support to understand and learn. This was vital to refining policy, approach and ensuring it was brought to life effectively - a policy is not just a point in time, but is the architecture that helps the house to feel like a home.

Working with more than 160,000 colleagues over numerous locations raises an additional challenge of how to reach all colleagues effectively.

All communication channels were and continue to be utilised to spread both messages and resources, such as policy and line manager toolkits. These include bulletins, the Green Room (online portal accessible for all colleagues) and huddle notes (designed to give short updates and direct colleagues to information and guidance).

One of our most successful tools for engagement in reaching and impacting colleagues is our video ‘Getting to know you’. This video consists of two colleagues, Adrian and Gemma, telling their story of transition at Asda. It was a fantastic way for us to bring the policy to life with an inspiring human element - helping showcase what it means to get it right and including some practical tips. You can see the video at greenroom.asda.com/asdadiversity/inclusive-networks

SO WHAT HAS CHANGED?
The impact of our initial work and continued engagement with trans inclusion has meant that:

- More trans colleagues are talking to us and now well over 1 per cent of our colleagues identify as trans.
- Engagement scores of trans colleagues have doubled in the past 12 months.
- We have an increasing number of trans colleagues getting involved in our Transgender group, who meet and have an online platform to support each other and the business.
- We won Organisation of the Year at the first ever National Transgender Awards.

After listening to our transgender colleagues it was clear that we had work to do to ensure that they felt valued and engaged and that is exactly what we did and continue to work on throughout the business.

HAYLEY TATUM, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE AND STORES

I don’t think Asda could do much more than they have to show respect for the individual – they do a marvellous job of that. I don’t think I would be here today if it wasn’t for the support of my colleagues.

I would say to any transgender colleagues out there: don’t be scared. I know it can be one of the most frightening things in the world to take that first step but just do it – you are in the perfect environment.

GEMMA LEATHERBARROW, ASDA COLLEAGUE

TOP TIPS FROM ASDA:

1. Listen – extensively! With your colleagues, stakeholders and external experts

2. Make it safe – make it safe for colleagues to ask questions, whether they identify as trans or not

3. Training – this was (and still is) a real challenge and we continue to seek ways to engage with all colleagues across areas of the business

4. Engage – with key stakeholders, HR business partners, general store managers, Academy managers, Diversity networks, policy teams. Make sure everyone is on board

5. Create – resources, materials and spaces for staff to engage, e.g. line managers toolkit and secure methods of communication for peer to peer support

6. Grow – sometimes consultation can feel staged, but the legacy of authentic listening is continued engagement and participation with trans inclusion
CASE STUDY: TRANS INCLUSION AT ASDA
COMMUNICATION AND COLLATERAL

A listening group held to understand the needs of trans people and raise awareness was advertised alongside an interview with Stephanie Hirst.

Example of communication utilised during weekly meetings for all Senior Directors, Vice Presidents, Senior Vice Presidents and Exec.

Internal communication around the trans specific event Sparkle.

ASDA LGBT Network highlighting their work through social media.

Line manager guide produced on how to support trans colleagues.
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1. First steps to trans inclusion – an introduction to trans inclusion in the workplace.

2. Communicating commitment to trans inclusion – the trans inclusion journey and communicating commitment to all staff.

3. Creating a transitioning at work policy – how to support your staff through their transition.

4. Trans inclusive policies and benefits – how to ensure your policies and benefits are trans inclusive.

5. Engaging all staff in trans inclusion – how to engage all levels of staff in the trans inclusion journey.

6. Getting it right with your trans service-users and customers – how to ensure your service delivery or customer service is trans inclusive.

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