

Press release

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Survey: LGBT+ inclusion efforts have a positive impact in the workplace – Deloitte Switzerland awarded recognition label

The new Deloitte survey of the global LGBT+ community indicates that the majority of respondents believe their employers are prioritising LGBT+ inclusion and that this is having a positive impact on the organisational culture. Nevertheless, more than four out of ten respondents had experienced discriminating behaviour in the workplace. Employers still have a lot to do to create a working environment that is free of discrimination. Deloitte Switzerland has been actively promoting an open and inclusive organisational culture for many years. In recognition of these efforts, it was awarded the Swiss LGBTI label this week.

Many organisations in Switzerland and other developed countries give high priority to LGBT+ inclusion. These efforts have a positive impact in the workplace overall, according to around 80 percent of the 600 respondents in Deloitte's new "LGBT+ Inclusion@Work" study. Over 70 percent of LGBT+ employees feel more inclined to stay with their current employer because of its active commitment to LGBT+ inclusion. This is particularly significant today, given the current climate of skills shortages.

The importance of visible support

Respondents cited visible support from colleagues (so-called "LGBT+ allies") and the promotion of internal networks and visibility as being major prerequisites for an inclusive culture. However, in spite of these efforts, 42 percent of respondents reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviour and discrimination at work.

Surveying 600 people from organisations across a range of sectors in 12 countries around the world (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the USA), the study provides a snapshot of the actual experiences of LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and more). It was designed to help others understand their daily realities and highlight where improvements can be made in the workplace. Swiss companies were not included in the survey, but the situation in Switzerland is comparable.

Risk-free outing must be possible

"Many organisations around the world have taken steps to increase LGBT+ acceptance and mutual tolerance in recent years, and this is also recognised and appreciated by the LGBT+ community. These efforts must now be incorporated into the companies' general diversity, equality and inclusion policies and approached in a strategic manner," says Liza Engel, Chief People Officer at Deloitte Switzerland. "However, organisations both globally and in Switzerland still have a long way to go before achieving a fully inclusive workplace culture. They need to move beyond isolated campaigns if they are to create a truly respectful culture in which non-inclusive behaviour is not tolerated. Every employee must feel they can safely be out at work."

Around 80 percent of respondents said that their organisation had introduced LGBT+ inclusion measures and initiatives. Of these, 95 percent believed that the actions had led to meaningful support for LGBT+ employees in their respective organisations. Almost all (93%) of the respondents working for global enterprises (55%) believe that organisation-level communication and actions around LGBT+ inclusion also translate into meaningful support in their home countries.

Discrimination persists at work

In spite of the positive steps that organisations are taking to support their LGBT+ employees, 42 percent of the survey respondents reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviour at work. Forms of unacceptable behaviour included unwanted sexual clichés or jokes (33%), hurtful comments about gender identity (25%) or about someone's appearance (23%), and unwanted physical contact (21%). Almost three quarters of those experiencing such behaviour had reported it to their organisation, and six out of ten were satisfied with the response.

Many still decide not to share their sexual orientation or gender identity with the majority of their colleagues. One in five (19%) do not reveal their sexual orientation to anyone at work, while a third (34%) discuss it with their closest colleagues.

Three main elements of an inclusive culture

In order to promote a sustainably inclusive organisational culture for LGBT+ employees, it will be incumbent upon leaders and managers to focus on three critical elements: ensuring that all employees feel comfortable at work, creating a zero-tolerance environment when it comes to non-inclusive behaviour, and promoting and communicating visible allyship. This is precisely the approach that Deloitte Switzerland has been consistently implementing –

efforts that have now been officially recognised with an award presented to it this week by [Arbeitsgemeinschaft Swiss LGBTI-Label](#) following a thorough assessment process. The label is awarded to companies and organisations that, through “holistic management of diversity & inclusion, have enshrined the diverse dimensions of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender characteristics in their organisational culture by means of systematic measures, putting into practice the concept of openness and inclusion in their daily operations”.

Deloitte Switzerland as a pioneer

“I am very proud of the fact that Deloitte Switzerland stands for a diverse, egalitarian and inclusive working environment, and am delighted to accept the award of the LGBTI label. We will continue to strive for excellence in order to attract the best and most motivated employees, to develop the most creative ideas, and also to adopt a pioneering role on behalf of our clientele,” says Reto Savoia, CEO of Deloitte Switzerland.

The sustainable cultural changes that have taken place at Deloitte Switzerland are the result of a range of measures, including the expansion of services for working parents to include non-birth, same-sex and trans parents (extended parental leave, access to coaching services, reduction of working hours). In addition, all Deloitte employees are encouraged to use their preferred pronouns in their email signature. Deloitte supports its own LGBT+ community in Switzerland and worldwide, ensuring high visibility within the organisation as well as externally.

Employee training around LGBT+ issues also plays an important role, together with the provision of interview guidelines for supervisors, e-courses to raise awareness of microaggression, and many other measures. As part of Pride Month, Deloitte has also promoted a high level of visibility for the community both within and outside the organisation.

About the study:

In February 2022, Deloitte Global surveyed 600 members of the LGBT+ community currently employed across 10 industry sectors in 12 countries. The LGBT+ acronym (which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and more) was used throughout the survey for consistency and included anyone who does not identify as heterosexual and/or cisgender.

The survey respondents comprised permanent full-time employees (93%), permanent part-time employees (5%) and sub-contracted staff (2%). Over half the respondents (55%) identified as male, 39% as female, 3% as transgender and 2% as non-binary, while 43% identified as gay, 34% as bisexual and 14% as lesbian. Other sexual orientations and identities represented included pansexual (3%), asexual (3%), queer (2%) and heterosexual (1%).

The survey respondents comprised adult LGBT+ employees across all age and experience levels, with a slight majority younger than 39. Most employees surveyed had at least six years of employment experience. Deloitte employees were not included in the survey.

Further information and full results of the Deloitte study “LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work” can be found at www.deloitte.com/lgbtatwork



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