



DEGREES OF EQUALITY

A NATIONAL
STUDY
EXAMINING
WORKPLACE
CLIMATE
FOR LGBT
EMPLOYEES



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION

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The Human Rights Campaign Foundation believes that all Americans should have the opportunity to care for their families, earn a living, serve their country and live open, honest and safe lives at home, at work and in their community.

Through pioneering research, advocacy and education, the HRC Foundation pursues practices and policies that support and protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals and their families in education, healthcare, corporate, public and private organizations across the country.

The HRC Foundation also provides accurate, timely research and information vital to the LGBT community, straight allies and policymakers on a wide range of issues, including: family law, senior health and housing, parenting, schools, workplace policies and law, religion, civil unions, marriage, adoption, financial planning and healthcare.

Our programs, which include the Workplace Project, the Religion and Faith Program, the Coming Out Project, the Family Project and Youth and Campus Outreach, are possible through the generous gifts of individual donors and corporate and private philanthropic foundations. Contributions to the HRC Foundation are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. See www.hrc.org/foundation for more.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation encourages LGBT Americans to live their lives openly and seeks to change the hearts and minds of Americans to the side of equality. The HRC Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

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A HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, businesses have engaged in sustained efforts to implement policies aimed at creating safe and productive workplaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees. The majority of Fortune 500 companies have prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation since 1995 and have offered partner benefits since 2006. More than one-third prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. The number of companies that receive top ratings on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index, the pre-eminent benchmark on LGBT policy, rose from just 13 in 2002 to 305 in the 2010 report. These policies have had a positive impact on productivity, recruitment and retention of a diverse and motivated work force.

Nevertheless, significant numbers of LGBT employees continue to experience a negative workplace climate that appears to be unaffected by organizational policies and which varies by location, manager and work team. **The majority of LGBT workers (51 percent) hide their LGBT identity to most at work**, the simplest indication that more work needs to be done to translate inclusive policies into an inclusive climate. Hiding one's LGBT identity is even more pronounced among younger workers. **Only 5 percent of LGBT employees ages 18 to 24 say they are totally open at work**, compared to more than 20 percent in older age cohorts.

Employees who are not open at work experience more negative outcomes from their workplace environment that affect productivity, retention and professional relationships. For example, **54 percent of LGBT employees who are not open to anyone at work report lying about their personal lives**, compared to 21 percent of employees open about their LGBT identity. LGBT workers' inability to participate honestly in everyday conversations hinders trust and cohesion with their co-workers and superiors.

An employee's sexual orientation or gender identity are often unavoidable in casual, non-work-related conversations among co-workers. **A total of 89 percent of LGBT employees say conversations about social lives come up at least once a week; 80 percent confront conversations involving spouses, relationships and dating at least once per week**; and, 50 percent say the topic of sex arises at least once a week. These frequent conversations are the most likely to make LGBT employees feel uncomfortable: Fewer than half feel very comfortable talking about any of these topics.

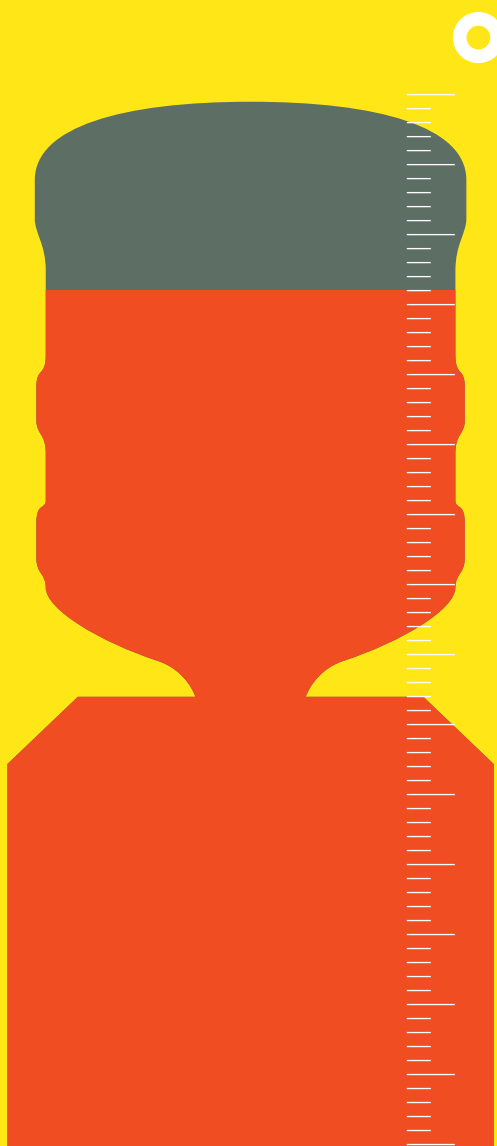
Derogatory comments and jokes still happen at work and are a major indicator that it is unsafe to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity at work. A total of **58 percent of LGBT workers say someone at work makes a joke or derogatory comment about LGBT people at least once in a while**. Similarly, jokes and derogatory comments about other minority groups are equally indicative of a negative climate. About **two-thirds (62 percent) of LGBT employees say negative comments about minority groups are made at least once in a while at work**.

Many LGBT workers also view their employer's use of the words "spouse" or "partner" as an indication of whether or not a climate is open and accepting. **More than half of LGBT employees (51 percent) say their employer rarely (13 percent) or never (38 percent) uses terms such as "partner" or "significant other" instead of or alongside "spouse" in communications.**

While non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental to establishing a productive workplace climate, their presence alone is not an indicator of employee experience. Even with inclusive employment policies, significant numbers of employees report negative consequences of an unwelcoming environment for LGBT employees. Moreover, **the vast majority of LGBT workers do not report instances when they hear an anti-LGBT remark to human resources or management. On average, 67 percent ignore it or let it go, 9 percent raise the issue with a supervisor and only 5 percent go to human resources**

While these issues can have a costly impact on LGBT employees, most workplaces can improve with targeted assessments and teachings around everyday opportunities to signal an inclusive workplace. Providing an anonymous and confidential method for employees to identify as LGBT, along with other demographic information, allows businesses to gauge success and target areas for improvement. **Seven in 10 (72 percent) LGBT employees say they would self-disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity along with other demographic information in an anonymous human resources survey.**

The HRC Foundation has devised and piloted the first-ever LGBT workplace climate assessment tool to assist organizations in identifying LGBT employees and improving their work environments. In addition, the HRC Foundation is developing a series of toolkits that focus on three core tiers of influence in an organization — senior leadership, human resources and diversity and inclusion professionals; middle managers and supervisors; and individual employees — designed to help improve workplace climate for LGBT employees.



INTRODUCTION



To understand and bridge the gap between policy and real-life experience, the HRC Foundation embarked on an ambitious research plan to study how LGBT identity surfaces and unfolds in the workplace, how environment can affect the retention and productivity of all employees and how organizations can identify and address opportunities to improve climate.

In collaboration with Lake Research Partners, the HRC Foundation conducted 14 focus groups to examine current LGBT workplace experiences and identify key elements of workplace climate. Since there is no uniform LGBT experience, focus groups were constructed around the diversity of the community, from union workers to people of color to transgender and other sub-groups of the LGBT population.¹ In addition, the HRC Foundation commissioned the largest national survey of LGBT workplace experiences to date, administered to 761 LGBT workers from across the country. Finally, in-depth interviews supplemented the research.

The results highlighted in this report show a patchwork of experiences, ranging from overt harassment, to subtle cues of exclusion, to positive experiences as LGBT workers. The ultimate goal of the research effort is to identify methods to improve workplace environment. This research lays the groundwork for creating an effective data collection tool designed to assess workplace climate and generate resources to improve it.

¹ For a full description, please see the Methodology section.

**WORKPLACE
CLIMATE
AND LGBT
OPENNESS**

When asked, LGBT workers describe a positive climate as one in which they feel free to be themselves, voice their opinions and engage openly in non-work-related conversations, they feel safe from discrimination and believe they are valued, accepted and part of a team.

They describe a negative climate as one in which it is unsafe to be open, they are vulnerable to harassment and hostility, their family and relationships are not recognized, they experience alienating situations and they fear that their sexual orientation or gender identity will overshadow their performance.

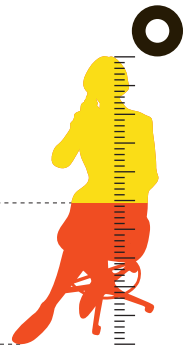
The majority of LGBT workers (51 percent) hide their LGBT identity to most at work, the simplest indication that more work needs to be done to translate inclusive policies into an inclusive climate. A total of 23 percent are open to a few people and 28 percent are not open to anyone with whom they work. A total of 27 percent are open to everyone and 22 percent are open to half or most people with whom they work.

DEGREES OF OPENNESS AT WORK

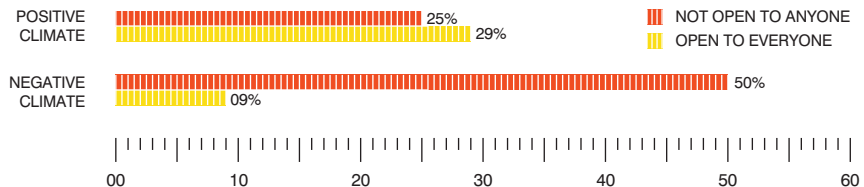
Which of the following best describes how open you are about being LGBT at work?

**51% NOT OPEN TO ANYONE/
OPEN TO JUST A FEW**

**49% OPEN TO EVERYONE/
OPEN TO HALF OR MOST**



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED CLIMATE AND BEING OPEN



DIFFERENCES IN OPENNESS AMONG SUB-GROUPS

The degree to which LGBT employees are open about their identity at work varies widely among sub-groups.

AGE

Surprisingly, given the level of acceptance among generational peers, only 5 percent of LGBT employees ages 18 to 24 say they are totally open at work, compared to more than 20 percent in older age cohorts. A majority of this cohort has been with their current employer less than two years. They say they are not open to everyone at work because they are worried about adversely affecting relationships with new coworkers, many of whom are older and might be perceived as less accepting. The top reason 18 to 24 year olds are not open at work is they do not want to make people feel uncomfortable (65 percent).

GENDER

Gay men are more likely to be closeted at work — only 12 percent of lesbians say they are completely closeted, compared to 24 percent of gay men. On the other hand, lesbians are less likely to feel accepted by certain coworkers. For example, 59 percent of lesbians feel very accepted by their direct supervisors, versus 69 percent of gay men. Forty-three percent of lesbians feel very accepted by subordinates, versus 56 percent of gay men.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Survey participants who have a significant other are more likely to be open about their identities because they can simply insert their partner's name or pronoun into a conversation. Fifty-six percent of employees in a relationship were open to everyone at work, compared to 32 percent of single people.

RACE

Racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to be open to everyone at work. Only 18 percent of Latinos/as are open to everyone at work, compared to 25 percent of African Americans and 29 percent of whites.

EMPLOYER SIZE

Of the LGBT employees in large businesses 63 percent are men and 37 percent are women. LGBT employees in large businesses are less likely to be open to everyone at work (20 percent) than those in smaller businesses (32 percent).



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR OPENNESS

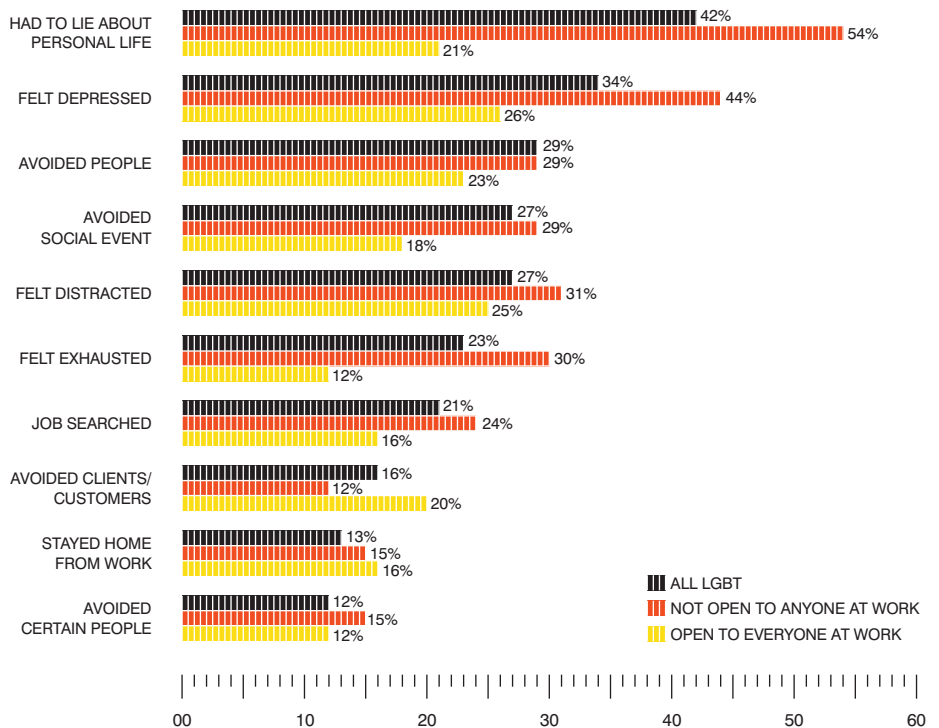
Employees who are more open at work experience fewer negative outcomes from their workplace environment. These negative outcomes affect productivity, retention and professional relationships.

For example, 54 percent of LGBT employees who are not open to anyone at work report lying about their personal lives, compared to 21 percent of employees open to everyone about their LGBT identity. LGBT workers' inability to participate honestly in everyday conversations hinders trust and cohesion with their co-workers and superiors. Open LGBT employees are also less likely to feel depressed, avoid people or events and search for another job.

Being open at work does not eliminate the negative outcomes of working in an unwelcoming environment. For example, one in five (21 percent) LGBT respondents had searched for a new job within the past 12 months and more than one in four (27 percent) felt distracted from their jobs, whether they were open or not.

EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE CLIMATE THAT IS NOT ALWAYS ACCEPTING OF LGBT PEOPLE WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Thinking about the past 12 months, about how many times has the following happened as a result of working in an environment that is not always accepting of LGBT people? (Percentage reporting occurrence at least once in the last year.)



LGBT EMPLOYEES:**CLIENT-FOCUSED WORK**

LGBT employees whose work is client-focused, such as consultants or lawyers, face the additional variable of switching among multiple client and work team relationships. Some client-based LGBT participants shared hostile experiences with anti-LGBT clients that were difficult and often occurred without managerial support. Most client-focused LGBT workers say it is unnecessary to come out to clients. However, when non-work related conversations arise, LGBT workers in these fields are more likely to be open.

CUSTOMER-FACING WORK

Customer-facing workers, such as those in retail, service or other industries, feel less compelled to be open in their interactions with customers, as they tend to be brief.

HOW EMPLOYEES REVEAL THEIR LGBT IDENTITY

For many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees, being open at work about sexual orientation or gender identity is a continual process done at the person-to-person level, one co-worker at a time. A common way in which LGBT workers disclose their sexual orientation is by mentioning a current or former same-sex spouse, partner or significant other by name or pronoun in everyday conversations at work. This often happens in response to a specific question about relationships asked by a co-worker, which requires LGBT employees to choose whether to answer honestly, lie or evade the question.

Gender identity is sometimes revealed when an employee transitions “in place” – by changing gender presentation while staying with the same employer, but other transgender workers may live in “stealth” – by not disclosing their former gender presentation to their new colleagues. It may become public, however, because of complications with legal documentation, being identified by personal characteristics or other circumstances. In either case, the way in which management and Human resources engage in this process directly affects workplace climate for transgender employees and sets the tone for acceptance or discrimination throughout the organization. Without thoughtful guidance and consistency, the process can breach a transgender employee’s privacy, causing embarrassing or stressful situations and affecting all employees’ morale.

A major issue among many transgender workers, particularly those who have not or do not plan on undergoing sex reassignment surgery, is the degree to which their employer acknowledges the employee’s stated gender identity. Some say their employer will not acknowledge an employee’s gender identity unless or until the transgender employee undergoes surgery and changes legal documents to correspond with identity. Employers should use the individual’s preferred name on company materials and directories, maintain gender-neutral standards for attire and allow the use of gender-appropriate restrooms that comport with the employee’s full-time gender presentation.

I participate in conversations just like anyone else, talking about their kids, husbands or wife. I talk about my partner. I can feel and see people tense up at times. People get quiet at times. People give me a double take at times.

LESBIAN, WHITE, 50, CINCINNATI,
TEAM LEADER/SUPERVISOR
AT SMALL EMPLOYER



Where I work, all my co-workers are very accepting and fully support me. Management gives lip service toward that end; although, like I said, they do insist that I dress in male clothing for work and use my male name, which is [name redacted], so if you’re ever at my bank, that’s what you’ll see on my name tag. At any rate, I don’t think promotion is an option.

TRANSGENDER WOMAN, IDENTIFIES AS
“OTHER” SEXUAL ORIENTATION, WHITE, 59,
CONN., ADMINISTRATIVE WORKER
AT LARGE EMPLOYER

I think it’s much easier to be out at work if you’re in a relationship. Then you can talk about your partner. You’re not talking about what your sexual preferences are. You can say, ‘I have a male partner.’

GAY, WHITE, SOUTH MIAMI, FLA., 56,
EXECUTIVE AT MIDSIZED EMPLOYER

REASONS TRANSGENDER WORKERS DO NOT SELF-DISCLOSE

Transgender workers are much more likely than other groups to report “fear for personal safety” as a reason for not being open about their gender identity, with 40 percent citing this as a reason. The next-highest group was gay men at 20 percent. Similarly, 42 percent of transgender workers fear getting fired for disclosing who they are, compared to 22 percent of gay men, the next-highest group citing this reason. About three-quarters (76 percent) of transgender workers raise the possibility of being stereotyped, compared to 41 percent of gay men, the next-highest group.

WHY EMPLOYEES HIDE THEIR LGBT IDENTITY

Many participants in the qualitative research who are not open to everyone at work say that they will not deny their sexual orientation or gender identity if asked directly but that they choose not to self-disclose for a variety of reasons.

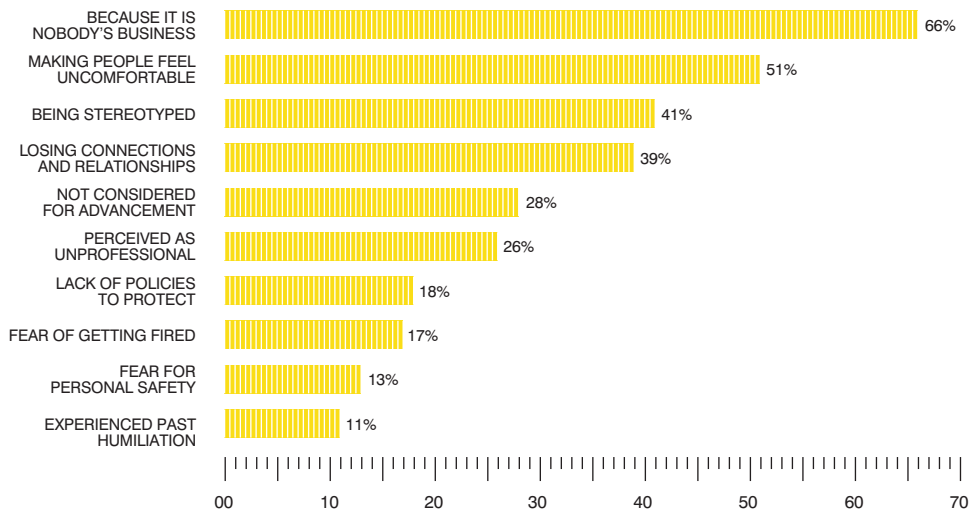
Half (51 percent) of all LGBT employees say one reason they are not open is because disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity may make co-workers feel uncomfortable, and 39 percent do not want to risk losing connections with co-workers. Four in 10 (41 percent) say the possibility of being stereotyped is a reason for not being open. Nearly three in 10 (28 percent) decide not to be open because they feel it may be an obstacle to career advancement or development opportunities. Slightly more than one in 10 (13 percent) LGBT employees would fear for their personal safety.

IS LGBT IDENTITY NOBODY’S BUSINESS?

Two-thirds (66 percent) of LGBT employees say one reason they are not open to everyone at work is because “it’s nobody’s business.” However, further analysis of survey results reveals that this feeling is strongly tied to reported incidence of negative climate. These employees were most likely to feel not accepted by co-workers and tend to exhibit signs of distress from a negative climate, such as staying home from work, feeling distracted from work, feeling exhausted from hiding, and avoiding certain clients or customers. While being open is a personal decision, this sentiment may be a defensive response brought about by previous negative experiences from employees whom, under better circumstances, would be open about their LGBT identities.

REASONS EMPLOYEES ARE NOT OPEN TO EVERYONE AT WORK

Are any of the following reasons why you personally are not out to anyone at work?



BEING OPEN IS FALSELY PERCEIVED AS UNPROFESSIONAL

The qualitative research found that an underlying component of workplace climate relates to perceptions about what is professional and appropriate in the workplace. While both LGBT and non-LGBT workers emphasized that everyone at work needs to maintain professionalism, the term “professional” is often used by non-LGBT workers for their rationale that LGBT co-workers should not “flaunt their lifestyle”: They insist that they do not talk about their sex lives at work — contrary to what the data show — so neither should LGBT employees. Nearly three in 10 closeted LGBT employees (26 percent) say a reason they are not open at work is because co-workers or managers will think talking about sexual orientation or gender identity is unprofessional.

This dynamic presents an important challenge for fostering an inclusive work environment. Non-LGBT employees directly link sexual orientation or gender identity to sex, whereas LGBT employees see discussions about their own relationships, spouses and personal lives as a natural part of their environment. Gender identity is even more often misunderstood and linked to sexual orientation.

Destigmatizing the innate characteristics of sexual orientation or gender identity remains an important theme to address because conversations about personal lives comprise such a large, unavoidable part of workplace climate for all employees.

It doesn't make me feel uncomfortable as long as they don't make any advances at me or sit and talk about what they do in a loud voice because to me that's very unprofessional, talking about that kind of stuff at work. I don't have a problem with people who are gay as long as they keep it to themselves. That's just my feelings.

NON-LGBT, WHITE, FEMALE, 49,
MADISON, WISC., SALES AT LARGE EMPLOYER



I think straight people would be more comfortable if gay people didn't talk about their sexual preferences or anybody really. I don't think that's something that should be discussed at work anyway.

NON-LGBT, LAS VEGAS,
SERVICE INDUSTRY WORKER



Everybody has a good common sense of what to say and what not to say at work, but what I find is that it can be when you're at work and straight people or gay people or whatever are talking about dating, going out on a date. It's a very common topic when you have a lot of people who work together, and I think it's harder as an LGBT.

BISEXUAL, WHITE, FEMALE, 31,
FOOD PREP FRONTLINE WORKER
AT LARGE EMPLOYER



FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO WORKPLACE CLIMATE

What causes an LGBT worker to worry about being open with certain employees? LGBT workers report common clues, ranging from overt negative comments to nuanced interactions with people — from co-workers to executives — that have an impact on their personal assessment of workplace climate and whether or not it is safe to be open.

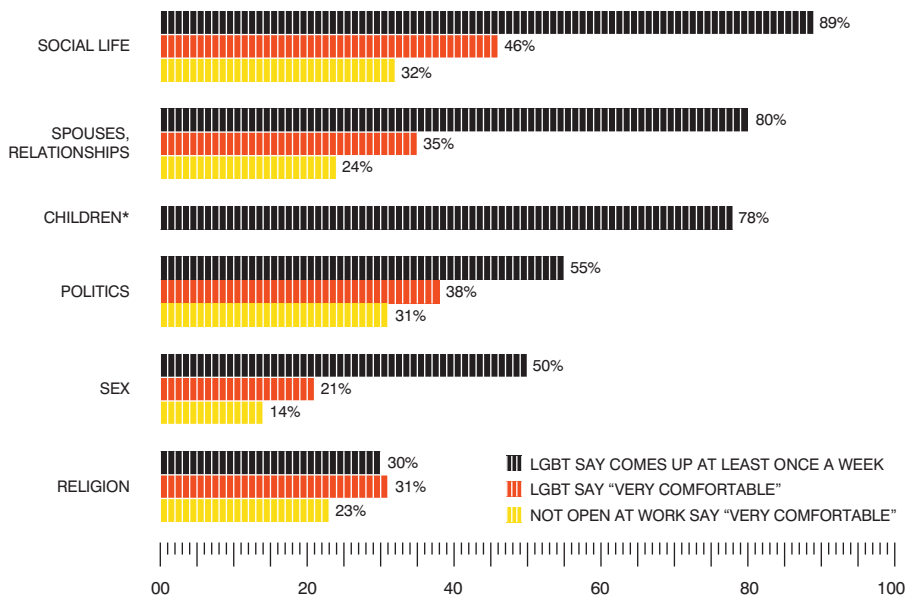
WATER COOLER CONVERSATIONS

An employee’s sexual orientation or gender identity are often unavoidable in casual, non-work-related conversations among co-workers — particularly those related to spouses, partners, relationships, children, social lives and even sex. Issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity arise on nearly a daily basis at work for most employees. In these conversations, LGBT employees must decide whether and how they will engage and respond. Will they be caught off guard when someone asks if they are married? When asked what they did over the weekend, will they say they saw a movie with their partner? Or will they evade the question to avoid risking work relationships?

LGBT employees do not insist on bringing their sexual orientation or gender identity into the workplace; rather, the workplace itself demands it. While these conversations are important to building working relationships, they can often make LGBT employees feel uncomfortable. Fewer than half of LGBT employees feel very comfortable talking about any of these topics, particularly those that are not open at work. Some LGBT workers say they spend a lot of energy trying to dodge these conversations and the questions they evoke.

FREQUENCY AND COMFORT WITH CONVERSATION TOPICS AT WORK

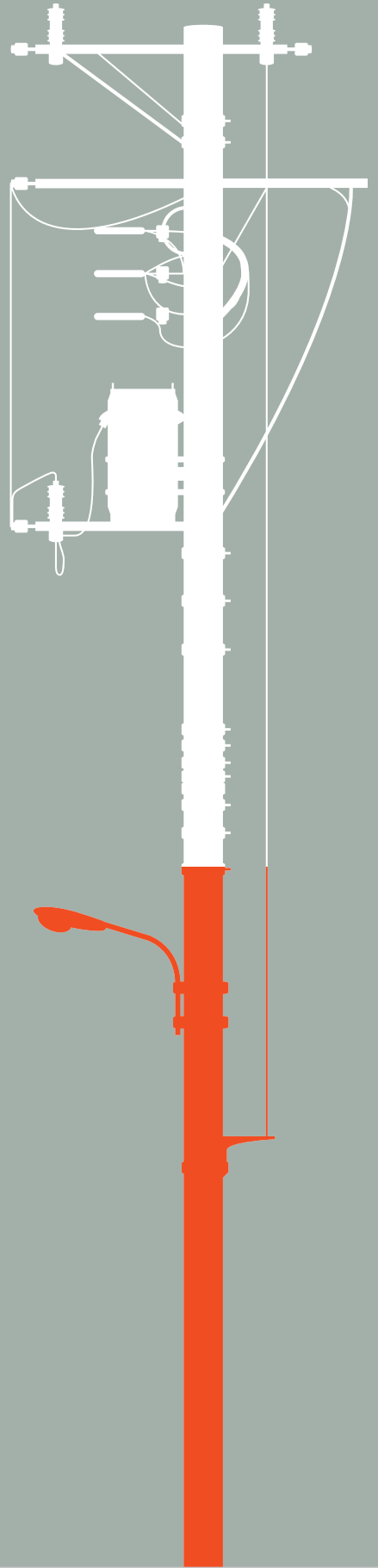
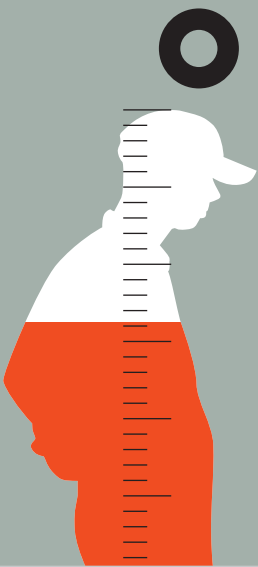
In some workplaces, conversations come up that are not work-related. How often do you hear the following topics come up at your workplace? Thinking about these topics, how comfortable are you talking with co-workers about these?



*Sample size of LGBT respondents who have children under age 18 at home too small to compare.

NON-OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS

LGBT employees in non-office environments tend to be exposed more often to hostile, harassing climates. Seven in 10 LGBT employees in non-office locations (69 percent) hear anti-LGBT jokes or derogatory comments at least once in a while — compared to 59 percent in office environments. And 38 percent hear these comments frequently or sometimes, compared to 26 percent of those in office workspaces. Additionally, 72 percent of those in non-office environments hear jokes and comments at least once in a while about other minority groups, compared to 60 percent of employees in offices.



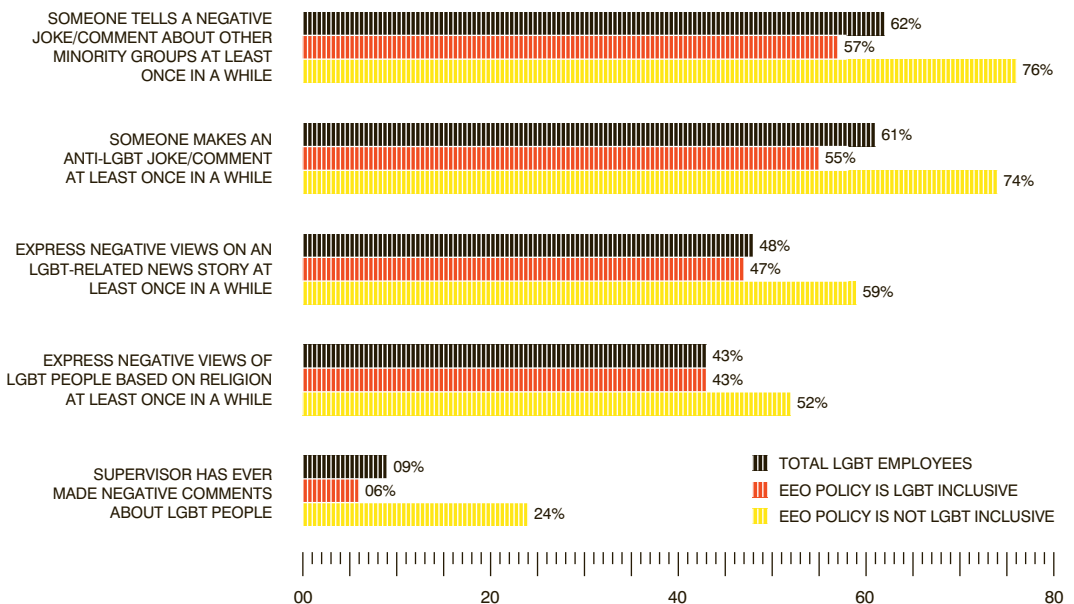
OVERT EXPRESSIONS OF BIAS

LGBT workers say derogatory comments and jokes still happen at work and are a major indicator that it is unsafe to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity at work. A majority of LGBT employees in organizations with an inclusive Equal Employment Opportunity policy — one that includes both sexual orientation and gender identity — say someone at work makes a joke or derogatory comment about LGBT people at least once in a while (58 percent). One in 10 LGBT employees (9 percent) has heard a direct supervisor make an anti-LGBT comment.

Similarly, jokes and derogatory comments about other minority groups are equally indicative of a negative climate. Focus group participants feel that a co-worker who expresses bigotry toward other minority groups is likely to feel the same about LGBT people. About two-thirds (62 percent) of LGBT employees say negative comments about minority groups are made at least once in a while at work.

FREQUENCY OF JOKES AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS LGBT PEOPLE HEARD AT WORK

How often does the following happen at work? How often do people at work do the following? Has your supervisor ever made negative comments about LGBT people?



LGBT workers also mention break-room conversations that include discussing LGBT people or making specific comments about the sexual orientation of public figures. Significant events like Ellen DeGeneres getting married and the success of the movie *Brokeback Mountain* became water-cooler topics. (In a similar vein, although not a part of this research, Proposition 8 in California became a topic of conversation for many workplaces in the 2008 elections.) These conversations, particularly when closeted LGBT employees are present, can be uncomfortable and sometimes become outright hostile. Half of LGBT employees (48 percent) say at least once in a while they hear people at work expressing negative views of LGBT people as they relate to a news story, such as same-sex marriage. These events occur regardless of inclusive EEO policies.

LANGUAGE IN COMPANY COMMUNICATIONS

Many LGBT workers view their employer’s use of the words “spouse” or “partner” as an indication of whether or not a climate is open and accepting. Additionally, half of LGBT employees (51 percent) say their employer rarely (13 percent) or never (38 percent) uses terms such as “partner” or “significant other” instead of or alongside “spouse” in communications.

When LGBT employees encounter something as simple as “partner” language, they definitely notice it. No survey respondent answered “Don’t Know/Refuse” to this question. LGBT employees not only recognize these gestures — they are loyal because of them. Small gestures have a large impact.

EMPLOYER USE OF “PARTNER” LANGUAGE

How often does your employer use terms like “partner” or “significant other” instead of or alongside “spouse” where appropriate, such as in invitations to work functions?

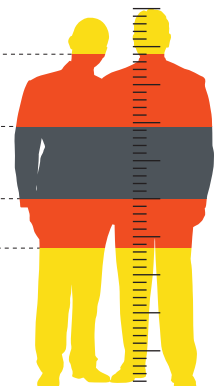
11% ALWAYS

19% FREQUENTLY

19% SOMETIMES

13% RARELY

38% NEVER

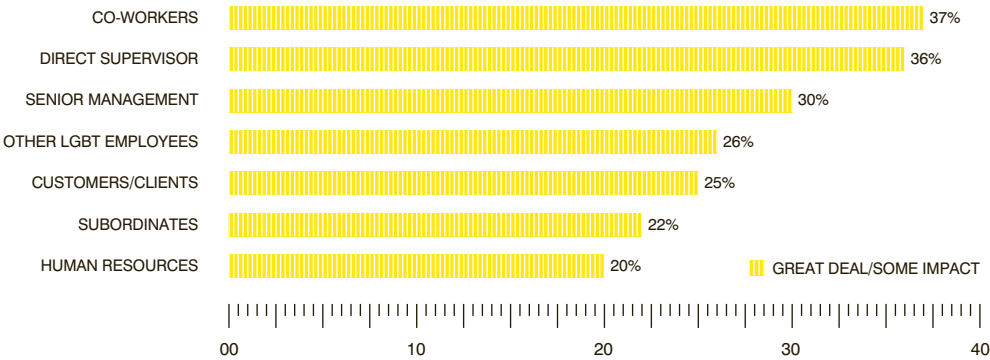


EMPLOYEES WITH INFLUENCE

The three groups of individuals with the greatest impact on workplace climate for LGBT employees include co-workers, direct supervisors and senior management. Only 20 percent of LGBT workers say human resources has a great deal or some impact.

TYPES OF EMPLOYEES WITH GREATEST IMPACT ON WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBT EMPLOYEES

How much impact does the following have on your work environment as an LGBT employee?



I have actually been told when I have come out to people, “Well, you do not look gay” or “I would never know you were gay. You seem so normal.”

LESBIAN, WHITE, 50, CINCINNATI, EXECUTIVE, TEAM LEADER AT SMALL EMPLOYER

One time I took my laptop into the office and one of my managers used my laptop and she went so far as to print out e-mails that were in there. The next day, she showed the e-mails to people in the office. I was let go and they said it was because of cutbacks or whatnot, but I was pretty sure that was what it was. I was outed to my colleagues. Some of them I had gone to college with. It was mortifying. My mother doesn't know. So I am the type of person where I don't feel I have to walk around with my sexuality out. I don't consider myself gay or bi or whatever. So my personal life was brought into work, and it tarnished a lot of things.

MALE, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, 24, ATLANTA, SUPPORT STAFF AT LARGE EMPLOYER



WHERE RUMORS CIRCULATE

Employees of businesses with more than 1,000 workers are more likely to hear rumors at work about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. More than three in five (63 percent) of those in large companies say rumors go around about someone's sexual orientation at least once in a while, compared to 50 percent of those in small companies. LGBT employees in large companies are twice as likely to hear rumors about someone's gender identity (53 percent versus 25 percent).

LGBT employees in the South and Midwest are also more likely to hear rumors about someone's sexual orientation. Six in 10 (62 percent Midwest, 60 percent South) say this happens at least once in a while, compared to 48 percent in the West and 51 percent in the Northeast.



NUANCED SIGNALS

LGBT employees report numerous nuanced signals that play an important role in their perception of the workplace environment.

VISIBLE DISCOMFORT. Among LGBT employees who are open at work, 40 percent say that when they mention their partner or something else related to being LGBT, co-workers appear visibly uncomfortable at least once in a while.

DISASSOCIATION. LGBT employees describe experiences in which co-workers tend to ignore them or even refuse to work in the same space, directly affecting feelings of acceptance, productivity, job satisfaction and team cohesiveness.

STEREOTYPES. Expressions of LGBT stereotypes in appearance, mannerisms and other categories are an important indicator of whether it is safe to be open. Bisexual participants say that they are often not understood and face stereotypes that their sexual orientation is simply a phase or a fad.

RUMORS ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE'S LGBT IDENTITY. More than half of LGBT employees (55 percent) say rumors have spread about someone's sexual orientation at least once in a while at work. In addition, 37 percent say the same is true for rumors about someone's gender identity.

The only way I know I can tell is if I'd say, by the way, ... my boyfriend the other day, and if the person gets wide-eyed or looks away or, you know, starts to make, like, really uncomfortable gestures like they're trying to get away, that's my indication of whether or not they're uncomfortable or not with, you know, my sexuality.

GAY, LATINO, 25, FAIRFAX, VA.,
PROFESSIONAL STAFF AT
LARGE EMPLOYER



I know that basically this is a woman that since she had discovered I was gay had stopped talking directly to me. I would say "good morning" to her every morning and she would just look the other direction.

GAY, WHITE, 51 GA., OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
WORKER AT LARGE EMPLOYER



I was in a position that had a lot to do with the public. I have a tendency to dress very plainly. I have short hair. I wear comfortable shoes. That was a round-about way to get to the fact that I was looking a little bit too butch for this particular event. They told me I needed to accessorize better. Find some jewelry. Add a scarf or earrings. ... I just said that I did not really own accessories. It got left at that.

LESBIAN, WHITE, 44, EMERADO, N.D.,
SENIOR MANAGER AT LARGE EMPLOYER

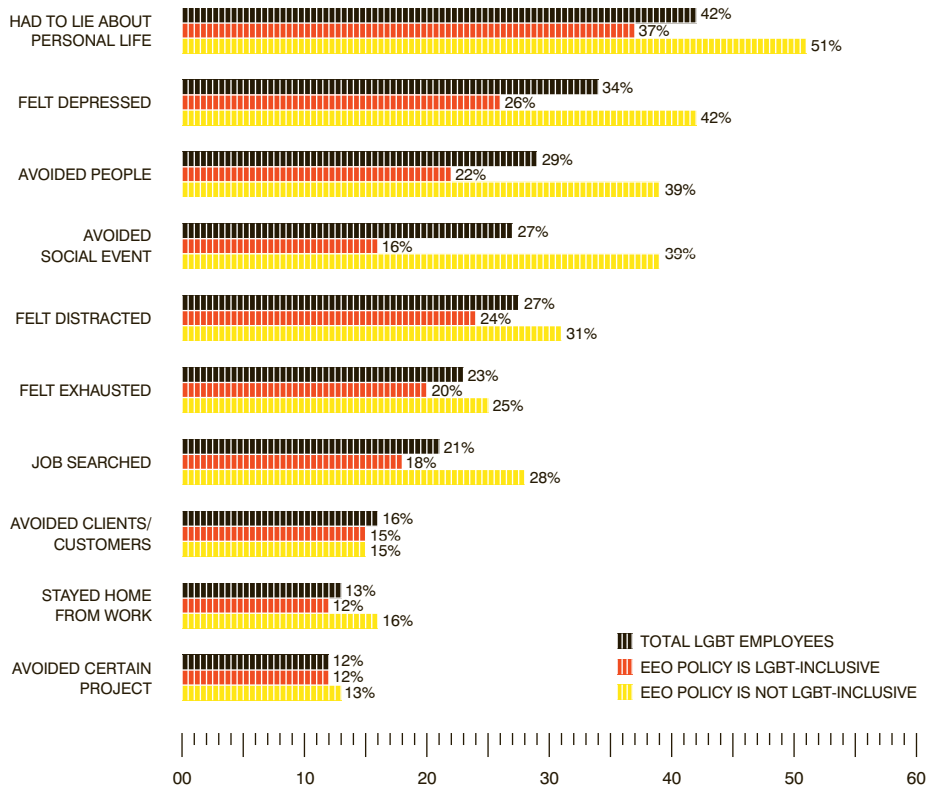
LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT PRACTICES

EXISTING POLICIES HAVE LIMITED REACH

While non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental to establishing a productive workplace climate, their presence alone is not an indicator of employee experience. Even with inclusive employment policies, significant numbers of LGBT employees report negative consequences of an unwelcoming environment. In particular, the presence of EEO policies does not significantly diminish the incidence of the most severe impacts of negative climate, such as staying home from work or feeling exhausted or distracted.

EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE CLIMATE THAT IS NOT ALWAYS ACCEPTING OF LGBT PEOPLE OVERLAID BY PRESENCE OF INCLUSIVE EEO POLICY

Thinking about the past 12 months, about how many times have the following happened as a result of working in an environment that is not always accepting of LGBT people? Does your employer have an Equal Employment Opportunity or non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation? Gender identity? (Percentage reporting occurrence at least once in the last year.)



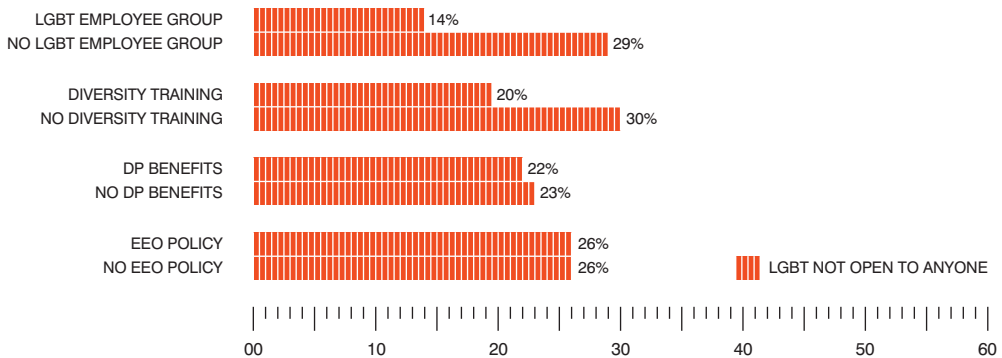
PERCEPTIONS OF WHETHER POLICIES ARE FOLLOWED

Latinos/as are more likely to say employees follow their organization's non-discrimination policy. Ninety-three percent of Latinos/as whose employer has an inclusive EEO policy agree that employees follow the policy (57 percent strongly agree) — compared to 79 percent of African Americans (10 percent strongly) and 87 percent of whites (47 percent strongly). However, more than half of Latinos/as (59 percent) agree that enforcement of these policies depends on supervisors' personal views of LGBT people. Slightly less than half of African Americans and whites agree (47 percent and 43 percent, respectively).

The existence of inclusive employment policies, benefits and other practices affect the degree to which LGBT employees are open at work, though their individual impact varies significantly. Among common LGBT diversity initiatives, the existence of an LGBT employee resource group makes the biggest difference in whether or not employees are open about their identity. The presence of an employee group reduces in half the percentage of employees who are not open to anyone from 29 percent to 14 percent. Similarly, when a company has LGBT-inclusive diversity training, only 20 percent of its employees are not open to anyone, compared to 30 percent at companies that do not.

On the other hand, domestic partner benefits have little effect on the number of employees who remain closeted. A total of 23 percent of employees at companies without equal benefits are not open to anyone, compared to 22 percent of employees at companies with the benefits. And whether a company has an EEO policy inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity does not change the number of employees who are not open to anyone (26 percent in both cases).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICY AND BEING OPEN



STANDARD ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS FAIL TO CAPTURE LGBT EXPERIENCE

Standard survey questions used by Fortune 1000 companies to measure employee attitudes toward workplace environment may not accurately capture LGBT perceptions and effects of climate or even consider sexual orientation and gender identity at all.

Prior to any questions about sexual orientation or gender identity, our national survey included two attitudinal questions common to employee engagement surveys. Survey participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- “We have a work environment that is open and accepts individual differences.”
- “This organization values differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and race or ethnicity.”

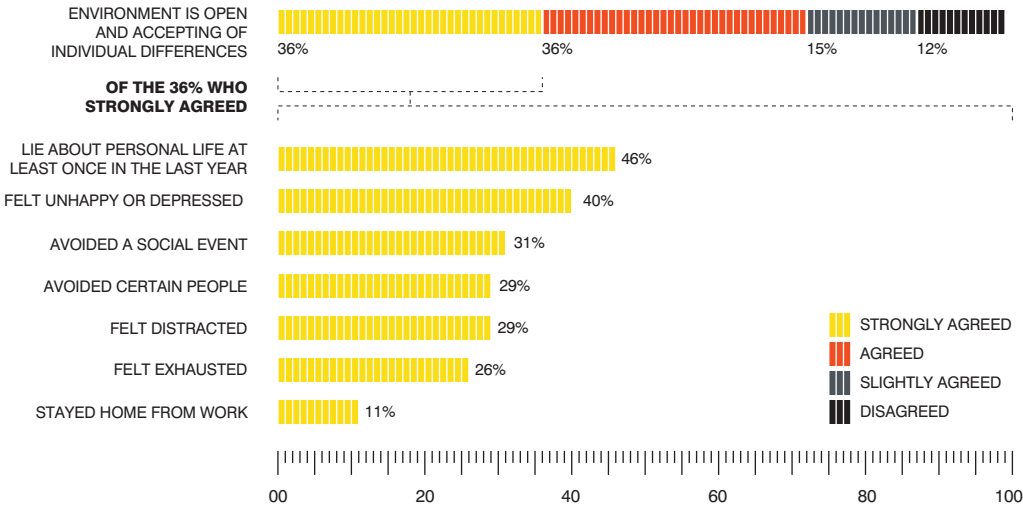
Most LGBT employees (88 percent) agree that their work environment is open and accepting of individual differences. A similar proportion (84 percent) agrees that their organization values differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and race or ethnicity.

However, further analysis suggests that these broad attitudinal measures may neither fully nor accurately assess climate as it relates to LGBT employees or their own perception of climate. Neither of these measures strongly correlates with specific experiences related to climate for LGBT employees nor the negative outcomes of climate (on productivity, retention and relationships).

For example, LGBT respondents who strongly agreed with the initial statement that their environment is open and accepting of individual differences (36 percent) nonetheless report negative effects from working in an environment not always accepting of LGBT people.

LGBT AGREEMENT WITH STANDARD EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Thinking about your workplace and employer, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



One in four (24 percent) of those who agree with the initial statement that their environment is open and accepting of individual differences experiences one or more of these outcomes frequently.

The qualitative research sheds some insight into why these measures may not fully assess climate for LGBT employees. When focus group moderators first raised the issue of climate in the discussions, the initial reaction among many was positive. However, it was clear that some participants did not initially grasp what the moderator meant by “climate,” “environment” or “culture” (the terms were used interchangeably). The topic required the moderator to ask specific experience-based questions to probe beneath the initial responses. The most valuable qualitative data emerged as discussions evolved into sharing specific experiences and perceptions at work relating to climate for LGBT employees.

Finally, the topic of “workplace climate” may not be one that workers have spent a great deal of time considering, defining or otherwise analyzing. Attitudes on issues that have not been part of the public dialogue — issues about which respondents have not spent time thinking or forming opinions — may vary a great deal when respondents engage more on the topic. The same phenomenon may be occurring with these measures.

I think what [management] assumes is if you have a problem you will bring it up to them, but I don't think they will come to you and say, “Are you being harassed? Are you doing OK? How do you feel working here?” That might be nice. Maybe there are a few people who are feeling harassed and, like, they can't bring it up.

BISEXUAL, WHITE, FEMALE, 31, FOOD PREP FRONTLINE WORKER AT LARGE EMPLOYER



In our situation, the local managers handle a lot of things with guidance from human resources and labor relations, and just so far, I guess, we've been extremely fortunate in that if anybody does want to let people know what their lifestyle is or is wanting to change something about how they are perceived, they just really haven't had any problems.

NON-LGBT, WHITE, FEMALE, 57, LITTLE ROCK, ARK., HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONAL AT LARGE EMPLOYER



LGBT WORKERS DO NOT REPORT ANTI-LGBT COMMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

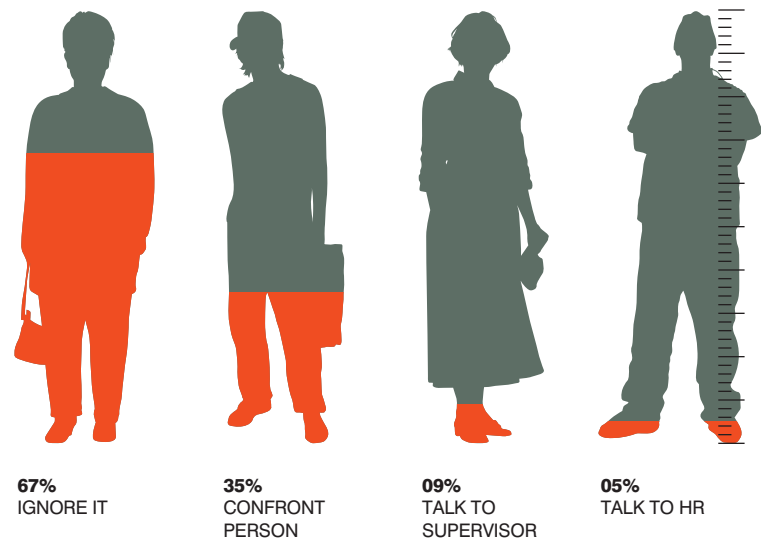
The vast majority of LGBT workers do not report instances when they hear an anti-LGBT remark to human resources or management. Most LGBT participants of the focus groups handle issues that come up at work on their own, tending to approach a supervisor or human resources representative only in the most extreme cases that threaten their job. In most other cases, such as hearing derogatory comments or jokes and being confronted by co-workers' sexual innuendos, LGBT employees deal with these situations without institutional support.

Employees who have an LGBT employee group available to them are five times as likely than those without an LGBT employee group to bring an issue to human resources (15 percent versus 3 percent). They are also more than twice as likely to report an issue to a supervisor (16 percent versus 7 percent). Yet a majority of these employees still tend not to do so.

Employees who work in non-office environments are less likely to raise LGBT-related climate issues with supervisors or human resources. Most (57 percent) say they typically deal with anti-LGBT jokes or comments by ignoring them, compared to 48 percent of employees in office environments. Of those in non-office workplaces, 6 percent raise the issue with a supervisor and 3 percent turn to human resources. In the qualitative research, human resources seems less accessible or present for union and blue-collar employees who work in the field.

HOW LGBT EMPLOYEES DEAL WITH ANTI-LGBT COMMENTS AT WORK

When you hear someone make an anti-LGBT comment at work, how do you typically deal with it?



IMPROVING WORKPLACE CLIMATE

BISEXUAL INVISIBILITY

Bisexuals are less likely to self-report their sexual orientation in an anonymous, confidential human resource survey than their gay and lesbian peers — 59 percent versus 79 percent of gay men and 77 percent of lesbians. The primary reason they offer is that it is none of their employer’s business. They are also less comfortable providing feedback on LGBT climate issues in an exit interview — 53 percent of bisexuals say they are comfortable, compared to eight in 10 gay men (83 percent) and lesbians (80 percent).

Bisexuals are also less likely to have someone at work acknowledge their orientation in a positive way. Only 7 percent says this happens frequently, compared to 27 percent of gay men and 31 percent of lesbians.

SELF-DISCLOSING SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Anecdotal evidence supports that LGBT inclusion efforts improve recruitment, development and retention tools; however, little empirical data exists to support this. Evaluating the success of policies and practices that promote inclusion is difficult because most employers do not have a sense of how many LGBT employees they have or where in their businesses LGBT employees actually work. Having business metrics of LGBT employees to quantitatively evaluate these programs is critical to a viable, fully inclusive diversity program.

Some employers use LGBT employee group membership numbers to generate estimates, but this method is limited by the scope of such self-selected groups over a highly dispersed work force. More recently, employers have gathered statistics through anonymous employee engagement or satisfaction surveys and confidential and secure employee records. In both cases, whether employees disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation is optional and voluntary and any reporting or direct access to the data is designed to ensure confidentiality of employee information.

Seven in 10 (72 percent) LGBT employees say they would self-disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity along with other demographic information in an anonymous human resources survey, while 18 percent say they would not self-disclose and 10 percent say they are not sure whether they would or not. Of the combined 28 percent that would either not self-disclose or are unsure, 59 percent indicate they “don’t trust that the survey is confidential” and 40 percent indicate they are “not sure how the information would be used.” LGBT employees not open to anyone at work are least likely to answer a human resources survey honestly (49 percent would do so).

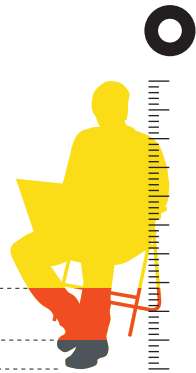
Employers need to proactively communicate the purpose for the questions and the confidentiality of survey answers to address these concerns and maximize the response rate among LGBT employees over time — particularly since those who may experience the most negative outcomes at work (those who are completely closeted) are most likely not to self-disclose.

Additionally, seven in 10 (72 percent) LGBT employees say they would feel very or somewhat comfortable talking about their work environment in an exit interview (44 percent very, 28 percent somewhat). One in four (26 percent) LGBT employees say they would be uncomfortable.

COMFORT WITH SELF-DISCLOSING SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY IN A HUMAN RESOURCES SURVEY

If human resources sent an anonymous survey to all employees and included a question that asked about your sexual orientation or gender identity along with other demographic questions, would you feel comfortable answering honestly?

72% YES
18% NO
10% DON'T KNOW/REFUSE



THE HRC CLIMATE ASSESSMENT TOOL AND CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT TOOLKIT

In conjunction with Hewitt Associates, the HRC Foundation has devised and piloted the first-ever LGBT workplace climate assessment tool to assist organizations in identifying LGBT employees and improving their work environments. Designed to be adapted by organizations or working groups within an organization, the tool measures the perception of climate from both an LGBT and non-LGBT perspective. This is critical, because organizational change rests on assessing differences in perceptions between these two groups of workers, not just on understanding the perceptions of one group.

Fundamentally, the assessment tool addresses three core questions for a businesses or work group:

- Is our organization an LGBT-friendly and inclusive workplace?
- How does our current environment have an impact on our business?
- Where should we focus to improve and/or maintain our current environment?

The assessment tool covers three key aspects of workplace climate:

- Organizational and Leadership Support
- Manager/Supervisor Support
- Work Team Support

The assessment tool also highlights salient data by providing indices on:

- Awareness of LGBT Policy
- Degree of Openness
- Business Impact of a Negative Climate

Some of the issues the assessment tool considers include:

- Level of acceptance from supervisors and co-workers
- Frequency of jokes or derogatory comments about LGBT people or other minority groups
- Extent to which “partner” language is used in company communications
- Presence of openly LGBT management
- The extent that enforcement of EEO policy depends on supervisors’ personal feelings toward LGBT people
- The extent that people at work acknowledge sexual orientation or gender identity in a positive way
- Degree to which LGBT employees are open at work
- Frequency of expressing negative views of LGBT people based on stories in the news, pop culture or religion
- Experiences of negative outcomes on productivity, satisfaction and relationships due to a climate not always accepting of LGBT people

The final results and analysis will provide focal areas for the company or work group to improve elements of their climate; for example, around senior leadership communications or the prevalence of jokes and other negative behavior that can have an impact on LGBT workers.

In conjunction with Hewitt Associates, the HRC Foundation is also developing toolkits and training modules aimed at the three tiers of organizational change agents identified in the research: senior leadership, human resources and diversity professionals; midlevel managers and supervisors; and individual employees. The assessment tool will point to specific components of the toolkit for concentration. For each of the following groups, toolkits will provide guidance to:

SENIOR LEADERSHIP, HUMAN RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY PROFESSIONALS

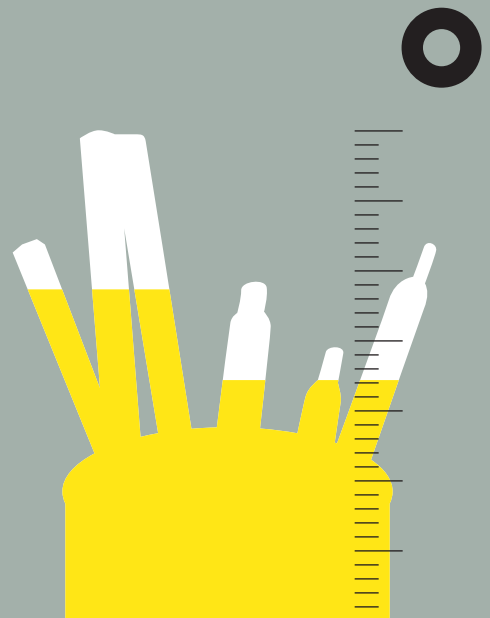
- Gain a more complete understanding of climate through the use of the workplace climate assessment tool. The tool contains a set of core integration-ready questions for existing engagement work force surveys, along with a more robust, extended set of questions. Both can be administered organization-wide or among targeted intact working groups (e.g., specific departments, geographic locations, etc.).
- Integrate optional LGBT self-identification questions in existing engagement work force surveys and forms (e.g., alongside questions on race, age, sex, etc.).
- Assess C-Suite and other organizational communications (e.g., inclusive language in invitations, LGBT recruitment strategies and communiqués, etc).

MIDLEVEL MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

- Recognize opportunities to promote LGBT inclusion — from formal leadership in communications to everyday leadership that more subtly gives cues that the workplace is welcoming of LGBT employees.
- Utilize diversity training modules and other proactive steps to assess working groups and their needs around LGBT inclusion.

INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES

- Assess their own workplace climate and evaluate avenues for reaching out to allies and human resources and diversity departments for help.
- Be open at work, by utilizing step-by-step individual-level self-empowerment tips and addressing uncomfortable situations at work.



POSITIVE ACTIONS ORGANIZATIONS CAN TAKE

Through the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research, numerous ideas were shared for ways to improve workplace climate. What follows is a review of common themes and options put forth by LGBT employees to help their employers address LGBT climate effectively. They are grouped according to which key influencer of climate — organizational leaders, direct supervisors or co-workers — might have the primary role in implementing or understanding each issue.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

Openly LGBT employees in senior and top-tier management.

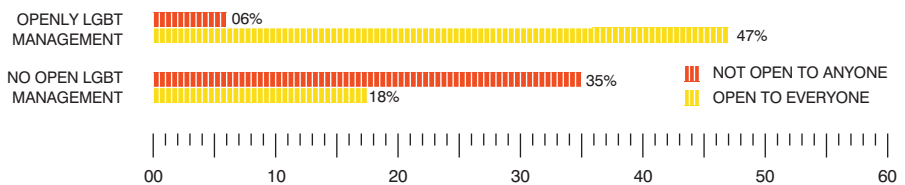
The presence of visible LGBT employees in management communicates to LGBT employees that their company is open and accepting and enables LGBT employees to be open at work. Those with visibly open LGBT management are more than twice as likely as those without to be open to everyone at work (47 percent versus 18 percent).

LGBT employee groups. Employee groups are important resources for LGBT employees and a cue of an accepting environment. However, only 11 percent of all LGBT employees say their organization has an employee group. About one in five (22 percent) is not sure. In organizations with more than 1,000 employees, 20 percent report having an employee group and 31 percent do not know whether one exists. Diverse groups that function across operational sectors are most effective.

Acknowledging LGBT partners and families. The simple act of acknowledging an LGBT employee’s partner and family — in the same ways non-LGBT families are acknowledged — has a significant impact. Participants in the qualitative research repeatedly stress the importance of these gestures. LGBT employees who say their environment is open and accepting are twice as likely as others to be acknowledged as LGBT frequently at work (24 percent versus 12 percent).

Recognizing LGBT partners and families can happen through a number of vehicles, such as including “partner” or “significant other” in written communications in which “spouse” is mentioned.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENCE OF OUT SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND BEING OPEN



Supporting LGBT client base. Several participants in the qualitative research say that their company has expanded its market base to LGBT clients or customers. Vocal support of these clients communicates acceptance of LGBT people generally and has a positive impact both on LGBT employees and climate. It is one cue that an LGBT employee can safely be open at work. Additionally, working on projects that include LGBT clients and marketing is a way in which LGBT employees feel they can contribute unique insights and expertise.

DIRECT SUPERVISORS

Setting the tone for workplace climate. One of the most profound ways to affect workplace climate for LGBT employees is for management and supervisors to clearly set the tone. Supervisors have a great deal of impact — in more direct ways than policies, company communications and co-workers. They can positively influence climate by:

- **Communicating zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate jokes and comments.** Jokes and comments — both anti-LGBT and derogatory remarks about other minority groups — are primary and frequent influences on workplace climate. Participants' supervisors who have set clear expectations that these types of comments will not be tolerated have a direct impact on the frequency of these comments. It is also a signal to LGBT applicants and new LGBT employees that their work environment will be open and accepting.
- **Consistent enforcement of EEO policy.** While communicating that a zero-tolerance policy is important, even more critical is enforcing the policy. Half of LGBT employees (49 percent) feel that the enforcement of an EEO policy depends on a supervisor's own personal feelings toward LGBT people. Additionally, many participants in the qualitative research describe the critical importance of "walking the walk" and following through on violations of policy. How a supervisor responds to a situation determines for LGBT employees how supported, respected, accepted and valued they are in the workplace. Non-LGBT participants who describe an accepting workplace climate for LGBT employees also quickly point to enforcement of strict policies.
- **Anticipating and proactively dealing with situations that may negatively affect LGBT employees.** When a supervisor proactively handles a situation that could be uncomfortable for an LGBT employee, research participants say this is a major sign that they are supported and accepted and work in a positive environment. An example is when a supervisor anticipates a client or project that may be uncomfortable for an LGBT employee and provides an option for switching projects. This was rare in the research, because most LGBT employees negotiate these situations on their own. The effect for those who had supervisors proactively step in is profound — increasing loyalty, trust and job satisfaction.

[My boss] got a call from a client who had made some sort of a comment about the — forgive my cursing— the f*ing faggot at the front desk. And she not only told them off over the phone, she pulled me into her office later and she told me, "If someone ever treats you badly or makes sort of an off comment, I give you permission and authority to put them in their place because I never want to have any sort of dealings with any sort of people like that in my office." I just felt so good about that and I was so proud and, I just, I gave her my life after that and here I am 11 years later and I haven't left.**

LESBIAN, LATINO, 33, FLORIDA,
MIDLEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
MANAGER AT SMALL EMPLOYER



- **Clearly stating criteria for advancement and development.**

Several participants in the qualitative research say one sign of a positive climate is explicit, verbal reassurance that advancement and development opportunities are based strictly on performance.

- **Asking about partner or family.** Direct supervisors who mention or ask about an LGBT employee's partner — just as they would of a non-LGBT married employee — clearly communicates inclusion and acceptance.

CO-WORKERS

Asking open LGBT employees about their partner, dating and family.

In these ubiquitous conversations about personal lives at work, co-workers who proactively ask about an LGBT employee's partner or social life or acknowledges sexual orientation or gender identity in another positive way also facilitates inclusion and feelings of acceptance.

Reacting positively when an LGBT employee first discloses his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT workers are very aware of verbal and nonverbal reactions, and many say the most positive reaction is a “non-reaction.” That is, the conversation continues uninterrupted, without pause or signs of discomfort. In a few cases, participants say a co-worker has thanked the LGBT employee for trusting him or her and for sharing the information. Transgender participants in the research are particularly likely to say that this kind of response has a tremendous effect on feelings of acceptance and being valued.

Sharing individual comfort with LGBT people. Another strong cue of potential acceptance is the degree and type of exposure to LGBT people. Co-workers who talk about friends or family members who are LGBT— either neutrally (i.e., just matter-of-factly mention them) or positively — signal to LGBT employees that they are accepting of LGBT people. Other neutral or positive mentions that suggest exposure to LGBT people, such as going to an LGBT community event or activity, are included in these cues of acceptance.

Supporting climate advocates. A segment of LGBT employees are very proactive at work and naturally act as educators and sometimes enforcers of policy. When hearing an anti-LGBT comment or joke, these employees directly confront the offending person, explaining why the comment is not appropriate.

I have a new manager. I'm very much out at work. Pretty much everybody in my department is aware that [partner's name redacted] and I have been together for a number of years, but my new manager hasn't really broached that subject yet. Neither have I. I probably should, but we have very much a business relationship. We talk strictly about work. We don't really talk about personal lives. It just hasn't come up. I'd like to see him ask, "How was your weekend?" You know, "What did you guys do?"

GAY, WHITE, 45, CHARLOTTE, N.C., SENIOR/
EXECUTIVE LEADER AT LARGE EMPLOYER



CONCLUSION



The state of workplace climate for LGBT workers across the nation varies greatly. The good news is that our research shows that simple efforts can profoundly improve climate and mitigate microinequities.

The central issues faced by LGBT workers revolve around misunderstandings and a lack of leadership or skills for managers and executives to proactively address climate issues. While these issues can have a costly impact on LGBT employees, most workplaces can improve with targeted assessments and teachings around everyday opportunities to signal an inclusive workplace — from the morning chat at the coffee machine to simply starting a conversation within a work team about LGBT issues.

While equality in the workplace is improving and more LGBT employees are feeling safe to be open at work, this research suggests that organizations still seem to be reactive rather than proactive when it comes to LGBT-related climate issues. There are few proactive organizational-based signs of understanding and acceptance in the workplace. By engaging more deliberately with the three core tiers of influence in an organization — senior leadership, human resources and diversity professionals; middle managers and supervisors; and individual employees — workplace climate for LGBT employees can be effectively improved.

METHODOLOGY

The HRC Foundation contracted with Lake Research Partners to understand the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in large U.S. workplaces. The research, conducted from March through August of 2008, consisted of online and in-person focus groups and a series of one-on-one telephone interviews, followed by a national survey of LGBT employees.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

FOCUS GROUPS

The qualitative research explored issues, experiences and attitudes toward workplace climate among more than 70 diverse employees recruited from YouGov/Polimetrix's panel of people in the United States. A total of 14 focus groups — 11 online and three in-person — were conducted from March through May 2008. To recruit hard-to-reach LGBT employees with varied professional experience, geographic location and economic sector, 11 of the 14 groups were conducted online.

Focus group participants were screened to meet the specifications of each group and to ensure diversity of participants within each group with respect to sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race/ethnicity, region, industry, union membership and employer size. While the focus of this research is on large employers with 1,000 or more employees, the findings include participants from businesses of all sizes.

Non-LGBT workers were also screened using an additional metric of “temperatures” to gauge attitudes on social groups and hot button political subjects in order to better understand their varying perspectives on working with LGBT people; workers were rated on a continuum from hostile (0) to strong (100), and those rated within 30 to 70 were selected to participate.

All 14 focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes and were facilitated by professionally trained moderators. In-person focus group participants received financial stipends, and online focus group participants received YouGov/Polimetrix points redeemable for rewards for their time. Some attributions to the quotes selected from focus group participants that appear in this report lack certain identifying information because it was not provided to the HRC Foundation.

COMPOSITION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Male	54%
Female	46%
Gay	40%
Lesbian	26%
Bisexual	33%
Transgender	03%
18-24	11%
25-34	23%
35-44	31%
45-54	23%
55 & over	12%
White	63%
African American	12%
Latino	16%
Other	09%
High school or less	23%
Some college	35%
Bachelor's degree or higher	37%
<\$25K	11%
\$25K-\$49K	28%
\$50K-\$74K	26%
\$75K+	34%
<1000 employees	55%
1000+ employees	44%
Northeast	24%
Midwest	21%
South	31%
West	24%

- Online Focus Groups** Online focus groups were conducted for each of the following segments of LGBT employees: lesbian and gay executives; lesbian and bisexual women; LGBT workers under 30; transgender workers; client-based LGBT workers; LGBT union workers; mixed LGBT and non-LGBT workers, human resources and diversity professionals, non-LGBT workers, LGBT pink- and blue-collar² workers and service-sector employees; and bisexual workers.

Separate online focus groups were also conducted for each of the following groups of non-LGBT employees: workers with favorable, moderate or slightly unfavorable views on LGBT people³; and human resources and diversity professionals.

- In-Person Focus Groups** Three in-person focus groups were conducted: LGB people of color in Atlanta, LGBT workers in Dallas and non-LGBT pink- and blue-collar workers in Las Vegas.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The final phase of the qualitative research included three informal one-on-one interviews conducted by telephone that provided more detailed insight into individual experiences among transgender, client-based and Asian-American LGBT workers. These interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes each.

FOCUS GROUP MEDIUM AND COMPOSITION

DATE	FORMAT	PARTICIPANTS
March 3	Online	Lesbian & Gay Executives
March 4	Online	Lesbian & Bisexual Women
March 4	Online	LGBT Workers Under Age 30
March 5	Online	Client-Based LGBT Workers
April 17	Online	LGBT Union Employees
April 17	Online	LGBT Pink & Blue Collar
April 23	Online	Mixed, LGBT and non-LGBT
April 23	Online	HR & Diversity Professionals
April 24	Online	Non-LGBT Workers
April 24	Online	Bisexual Workers
April 28	Online	Transgender Workers
April 30	In-Person	LGB People of Color in Atlanta
April 30	In-Person	LGBT Workers in Dallas
May 1	In-Person	Non-LGBT Pink & Blue Collar in Las Vegas

² “Pink collar” refers to occupations traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, administration, child care and clerical and secretarial work. “Blue collar” refers to occupations requiring physical labor and traditionally held by men, such as manufacturing, building and construction trades, mechanical work, repair and operations maintenance or technical installations.

³ Screening questions were used to ascertain the level of favorability toward non-LGBT people.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Lake Research Partners conducted a nationally representative survey of 761 LGBT employees from July 25 through August 11, 2008, administered by Knowledge Networks, an Internet-based survey research company featuring a unique probability-based panel of Americans recruited through random digit dialing telephone sampling. Knowledge Networks provides hardware similar to WebTV and Internet access for those who do not have a computer at home.

Because the panel is probability-based and not volunteer-based or opt-in, results can be reliably projected to the LGBT workers in the United States.

Because transgender people have not traditionally been a focus of national surveys, no national panel adequately represented and accounted for this community. Knowledge Networks screened its lesbian, gay and bisexual panel members, excluding all unemployed or self-employed members, and then rescreened for sexual orientation or gender identity. The final sample included only 23 transgender employees who also identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. No transgender employees identified as straight. While the sample is not statistically significant to be representative of transgender employees, the qualitative aspect of the research helps to provide a more complete picture of this population. Through continued work with some of the nation's major polling firms, the HRC Foundation hopes to build awareness of the need and demand for data on the entire LGBT community through more standardized questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

To augment a total of 440 completed interviews among Knowledge Networks' LGBT panel, a total of 321 LGBT interviews were conducted using an online panel maintained by Survey Sampling Inc.; data from these interviews were weighted to Knowledge Networks benchmarks for the LGBT employed population. The margin of error is +/- 4.9 percentage points.

ANALYSIS

Lake Research Partners observed and/or moderated the 14 focus groups and analyzed data from each transcript. For the survey analyses, Lake Research Partners conducted a number of statistical analyses, including cross-tabulation analysis, bivariate correlations, regression and factor analysis.

APPENDIX
WORKPLACE
CLIMATE
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Thinking about your workplace and employer, do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)**
 - I would not hesitate to recommend this company to a friend seeking employment.
 - This organization values differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and race or ethnicity.
 - We have a work environment that is open and accepts individual differences.
2. **Do you consider yourself to be:**
 - Heterosexual or straight
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Bisexual
 - Other (*SPECIFY*)
3. **IF BISEXUAL IN Q2: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation:**
 - Bisexual, mostly attracted to the same sex
 - Bisexual, equally attracted to men and women
 - Bisexual, mostly attracted to the opposite sex
4. **What gender do you identify with:**
 - Male
 - Female
5. **Do you consider yourself to be transgender:**
 - Yes [*DROP DOWN MENU IF SELECTED - Do you identify as: Male-to-Female Transgender, Female-to-Male Transgender, Genderqueer, Transgender, Other (SPECIFY)*]
 - No [*TERMINATE IF HETEROSEXUAL IN Q2*]
6. **What is your current relationship status?**
 - Single
 - Legally married, in a civil union or registered domestic partnership
 - Dating someone
 - Divorced or separated
 - In a committed relationship
 - Other (*SPECIFY*)
7. **IF MARRIED, IN RELATIONSHIP OR DATING IN Q6: Is your current relationship with someone of:**
 - the same gender
 - another gender
8. **Which of the following best describes how open you are about being LGBT at work:**
 - Not open to anyone I work with
 - Open to a few people I work with
 - Open to about half of the people I work with
 - Open to most people I work with
 - Open to everyone I work with
9. **As an LGBT person, how accepted do you feel by the following? (very accepted, somewhat accepted, not too accepted, not at all accepted, not applicable)**
 - Customers or clients
 - Subordinates
 - Co-workers
 - Your direct supervisor
 - Top-tier or senior management
 - Human resources
 - Other LGBT employees
10. **EXCLUDE "OPEN TO EVERYONE" IN Q8: Here are reasons why some LGBT employees choose not to be open with everyone at work about their sexual orientation [IF YES IN Q5: and/or gender identity]. Are any of the following reasons why you personally are not out to anyone at work? Check all that apply.**
 - Possibility of being stereotyped
 - Possibility of losing connections or relationships with coworkers
 - Coworkers or management will think talking about my sexual orientation [IF YES IN Q5: and/or gender identity] is not professional
 - Lack of policies to protect LGBT workers
 - I or someone I know has been humiliated at work for being LGBT
 - Possibly making people feel uncomfortable
 - Fear for my personal safety
 - May not be considered for advancement or development opportunities
 - Fear of getting fired
 - Because it is nobody's business
 - Other (*SPECIFY*)
 - None of the above

11. Thinking about the past 12 months, about how many times have the following happened as a result of working in an environment that is not always accepting of LGBT people? (almost every day, at least once a week, once or twice a month, at least once in the past year, never in the past year) (RANDOMIZE)

- Stayed home from work
- Searched for a different job
- Felt distracted from work
- Avoided working on a certain project, team or client
- Avoided a social event at work such as lunch, happy hour or a holiday party
- Had to lie about my personal life
- Felt exhausted from spending time and energy hiding my sexual orientation
- Felt unhappy or depressed at work
- Avoided certain people at work

12. Have you ever left a job because the environment was not very accepting of LGBT people? (Yes, No)

13. In some workplaces, conversations come up that are not work-related. How often do you hear the following topics come up at your workplace: (almost every day, at least once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, never).

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ○ Children | ○ Politics |
| ○ Spouses, relationships or dating | ○ Religion |
| ○ Social life, such as what you did over the weekend | ○ Sex |
| | ○ Workplace gossip |

14. Thinking about these topics, how comfortable are you talking with coworkers about: (very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not too comfortable, not at all comfortable, not applicable) (RANDOMIZE)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ Your children | ○ Your political views |
| ○ Your spouse, partner or dating | ○ Your religious beliefs |
| ○ Your social life, such as what you did over the weekend | ○ Sex |
| | ○ Workplace gossip |

15. How often does the following happen at work? (frequently, sometimes, only once in a while, never) (RANDOMIZE)

- Someone tells an anti-LGBT joke or makes a negative comment about LGBT people
- Rumors go around about your own or someone else's sexual orientation
[IF YES IN Q5: and/or gender identity]
- Someone tells a joke or makes a negative comment about African Americans, Latinos/as, women, people with disabilities or other minorities

16. How many people at work have you heard: (a lot, some, few, none)

- Mention a LGBT person close to them, such as a friend or family member, in a positive way?

17. How often do people at work do the following? (frequently, sometimes, only once in a while, never) (RANDOMIZE)

- Express negative views of LGBT people based on their religious beliefs
- Express positive views of LGBT people based on their religious beliefs
- Acknowledge that you are LGBT in a positive way, like asking about your spouse, partner or dating
- Express negative views about a news story that relates to LGBT issues
- Express positive views about a news story that relates to LGBT issues
- Appear visibly uncomfortable when you mention something about your partner, spouse or something else related to your sexual orientation

18. When you hear someone make an anti-LGBT comment at work, how do you typically deal with it? (ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

- Just ignore it or let it go
- Confront the person who made the comment
- Talk to a supervisor about it
- Talk to human resources about it
- Other (SPECIFY)
- Not applicable – No one makes anti-LGBT comments at work

19. Has your supervisor ever made negative comments about LGBT people? (yes, no, DN/DK)

- 20. How often does your employer use terms like “partner” or “significant other” instead of, or alongside “spouse” where appropriate, such as in invitations to work functions? (Always, frequently, sometimes, rarely, never)**
- 21. Are the following present in your workplace? (yes, no, don't know)**
- Diversity trainings and communications that address sexual orientation and gender identity?
 - An Employee Resource Group for LGBT employees?
 - Openly LGBT employees in top-tier or senior management?
- 22. Does your employer have an Equal Employment Opportunity or Non-discrimination policy that includes: (yes, no, don't know)**
- sexual orientation
 - gender identity
- 23. IF YES TO Q22A: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree):**
- Employees at my workplace follow the non-discrimination policy.
 - Enforcement of the non-discrimination policy depends on the supervisor's own feelings toward LGBT people.
- 24. Does your employer offer health insurance to same-sex partners of employees? (yes, no, don't know)**
- 25. How comfortable would you feel enrolling a partner in health benefits [IF NO/DK IN Q24: if your employer had them]? (very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not too comfortable, not at all comfortable)**
- 26. Do you feel your employer has done enough to create an environment where LGBT people are comfortable being open about their sexual orientation [IF YES IN Q5: and gender identity]? (yes, no)**
- 27. How much impact does the following have on your work environment as an LGBT employee? (a great deal of impact, some impact, not much impact, no impact, not applicable)**
- Customers or clients
 - Subordinates
 - Coworkers
 - Your direct supervisor
 - Top-tier or senior management
 - Human resources
 - Other LGBT employees
- 28. If human resources sent an anonymous survey to all employees and included a question that asked about your sexual orientation [IF YES IN Q5: and gender identity] along with other demographic questions, would you feel comfortable answering honestly? (yes, no, don't know)**
- 29. IF NO OR DON'T KNOW IN Q28: What would concern you about answering honestly? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)**
- Don't trust that survey is confidential
 - None of their business
 - Not sure how the information would be used
 - Other (SPECIFY)
- 30. If you left your job and had an exit interview, how comfortable would you feel talking about anything in your work environment that was difficult for you as a LGBT employee? (very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not too comfortable, not at all comfortable)**
- 31. Which category best describes your role at work:**
- Executive (CEO, president or managing director & his/her direct reports)
 - Senior Management (VPs, directors who report to execs)
 - Middle Management (includes general manager, division, branch or plant manager)
 - Team Leader/Supervisor (manages the work of team members)
 - Professional Employee (not on frontline and no management responsibilities)
 - Team Member/Front-line Employee (contributor with no management responsibilities)

32. How long have you been employed at your current workplace?

- Less than 6 months
- More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- 26 years or longer

33. Are there any other comments you would like to add about how workplaces can be improved for LGBT employees?**34. Which statement best describes your current employment status?**

- Working – as a paid employee
- Working – self-employed
- Not working – on temporary layoff from a job
- Not working – looking for work
- Not working – retired
- Not working – disabled
- Not working – other

35. IF WORKING – AS A PAID EMPLOYEE, SELF-EMPLOYED, OR NA: Altogether, how many jobs do you have?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four or more

36. IF ONE OR NA: How many hours per week do you USUALLY work at your job? IF TWO, THREE OR FOUR OR MORE CHECKED IN Q36, USE ALTERNATIVE WORDING: How many hours per week do you USUALLY work at your main job? By main job we mean the one at which you usually work the most hours.

- 35 hours a week or more
- Less than 35 hours a week

37. In your current job, what kind of work do you do?

- Administrative support such as clerk, secretary, stenography
- Mechanic, repairer
- Tradesperson - baker, butcher, machinist, printer, tailor
- Other craft and repair
- Executive and Managerial
- Laborer – Handler, equipment cleaner, helper, machine ops
- Medical doctor – Surgeon, physician, dentist, ophthalmologist
- Other healthcare professional – Nurse, chiropractor, optometrist
- Health service worker – Dental assistant, health aide, nurse
- Health technician – X-ray technician, lab technician
- Engineer, architect, surveyor
- Lawyer, judge
- Scientist, researcher, analyst, statistician
- Social, recreation, religious worker
- Teacher, except college and university
- Teacher, college and university
- Other professional
- Sales representative in finance and business services
- Retail and personal services sales worker
- Other sales
- Food service – bartender, waiter, cook, food preparation
- Cleaning and building service – maid, houseman, janitor
- Personal service – hairdresser, cosmetologist, guide, usher
- Other service
- Engineering and science technician
- Other technician
- Transportation and material moving such as bus driver, truck driver
- Other

38. Counting all locations where your employer operates, what is the total number of persons who work for your employer?

- Under 10
- 10-24
- 25-99
- 100-499
- 500-999
- 1000+

39. What is the total number of employees at your primary work location?

- Under 10
- 10-24
- 25-99
- 100-499
- 500-999
- 1000+

40. Which of the following best describes your primary work location?

- Office environment (outside the home)
- Non-office environment (e.g., classroom, hospital, sales floor, manufacturing plant, outdoor location)
- Mobile (e.g., on the road, client sites)
- Home office
- Other (Please specify)

The following demographic information was provided by Knowledge Networks for all poll participants:

- Age
- Education
- Race
- Income
- Household number
- Children
- Party ID
- Political affiliation

ABOUT THE HRC FOUNDATION'S WORKPLACE PROJECT

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Workplace Project is a nationally recognized source of expert information and advice on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workplace issues. It provides decision makers with cutting-edge research, expert counsel, online resources, best practices information and on-site training and education. Project staff serves as trusted consultants to diversity professionals and other executives seeking to position their business as welcoming workplaces that respect all employees, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. The Project also makes available the expertise of the HRC Business Council for invaluable peer-to-peer advice.

PROJECT STAFF

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Since 1998, Daryl Herrschaft has overseen the Workplace Project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. In this capacity, he monitors and evaluates corporate policies surrounding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees, consumers and investors. He is the editor of the HRC Foundation's annual Corporate Equality Index and The State of the Workplace for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans.

Herrschaft has consulted with dozens of major corporations on the full range of LGBT-related workplace policies. He has presented HRC findings to diverse audiences, including Fortune company executives, the Society for Human Resource Management and the New York City Council. He is frequently called upon by national and local media, including *Time* and *The Wall Street Journal* as well as CNN, National Public Radio and Voice of America. Before joining HRC, Herrschaft was a research associate at the Urban Institute. He holds a bachelor's degree from the George Washington University.

Eric Bloem Deputy Director, HRC Workplace Project

Eric Bloem has directly consulted with dozens of major corporations on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender-related workplace policies. Before joining the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Workplace Project in 2005, he spent six years as a manager with Accenture, where he provided change management consulting services to many Fortune 500 companies, including Best Buy, Fidelity, Walgreens and Citigroup. Bloem brings with him notable experience helping companies adapt to strategic change. Bloem developed the HRC Foundation Corporate Equality Series, a group of workshops designed to help human resources and diversity professionals better understand LGBT workplace issues. He conducts these workshops in strategic locations across the country. Bloem holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Bucknell University.

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Samir Luther is a trusted expert on employment non-discrimination policies and benefits for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers in the United States. In his capacity with the Workplace Project, he works with employers to develop and implement model practices as well as set standards and benchmarks for the project's annual Corporate Equality Index report. In addition, he authors several of the project's reports including *The State of the Workplace for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans* and *Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace*, 2nd Edition.

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Deena Fidas works with employers to implement inclusive policies and benefits related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees. She works one-on-one with company representatives to help them identify areas of potential improvement and how to work with their key stakeholders to effect change within their organization. Fidas manages the Corporate Equality Index survey administration and is co-author of the 2009 and 2010 Corporate Equality Index reports. In addition, Fidas has been one of the leaders of this multi-year research project on defining and assessing an organization's workplace climate with respect to LGBT inclusion, overseeing the development of the research. Formerly working in political fundraising, she joined the Workplace Project staff in 2007. Fidas holds a master's degree in sociology from American University in Washington, D.C.

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Alison Delpercio works with employers and healthcare institutions to address workplace and healthcare concerns for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. Delpercio authors the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's annual Healthcare Equality Index report. She also supports two other HRC Family Project initiatives, All Children – All Families and Welcoming Schools. Before joining the HRC Foundation in 2007, she advocated for LGBT issues in healthcare and higher education at and around the University of Rochester. She holds a bachelor's degree in health and society as well as a Certificate of Management Studies from the university.

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HRC BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Human Rights Campaign Business Council was founded in 1997. Members provide expert advice and counsel to the HRC Workplace Project on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workplace issues based on their business experience and knowledge.

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