A round the world, once unthinkable inclusive pronouncements about gays and lesbians are being made. Whether it’s President Barack Obama’s declaration that he supports gay marriage, the repeal of the U.S. military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy, or the Indian Supreme Court’s decriminalization of homosexuality, we are entering a new era in how modern societies view lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues. (See the LGBTQ Progress infographic on page 3.)

This culture change is playing out in the workplace and its implications require that we change how we address LGBTQ diversity and inclusion issues. Despite progress, there are myriad workplaces in which talented employees are leaving behind a part of who they are in order to get ahead. It’s no surprise given that it’s still legal in 29 states to fire employees because they identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. In 34 states, it’s legal to fire someone for being transgender.1

Yet, in spite of these laws, LGBTQ progress endures. What used to be taboo has become an outlier. What used to be an outlier has become mainstream. What used to be a big push (domestic partner benefits, for example) has now become a given in FORTUNE 500 companies. What had been a battle cry—to have the President of the United States support marriage equality—has now come to pass. In other words, a change has come and it’s now time to explore the next generation of LGBTQ issues.

What are the new realities in which we should engage in light of the evolution of LGBTQ rights in society? And how do these realities affect contemporary workplace diversity issues? The answers can be gleaned from the following trends:

- The downstreaming implications of the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell
- The mainstreaming of marriage equality
- Same–sex couples and the “gayby” boom
- New dimensions in gender identity
- The unresolved relationship between race and sexual orientation

Our paper will begin with an overview of the far-reaching implications of these trends. We’ll then recommend actions that diversity practitioners can advocate for or enact within their own organizations.
heterosexual soldiers would not feel comfortable serving in close quarters with gay and lesbians and this would lead to disunity in the ranks.

However, in 2010, a survey by the Department of Defense’s Comprehensive Review Working Group found that most members of the armed services either had a positive or neutral outlook when it came to gay rights. In addition, as many as 70 percent of military personnel believed that repealing DADT would have a positive, mixed, or no effect on military social cohesion, while between 70 percent and 80 percent said it would have a positive, mixed, or no effect on unit effectiveness. Likewise, a vast majority agreed that repealing the measure would not lead to service disruptions.

The survey implied a shift in the social outlook of the military from the period when gays and lesbians were banned from serving all together. Using military public opinion as one point of view, it is easy to see the degree to which the American public has evolved on issues of sexuality in the public sector. By 2010, a majority of military servicemen and servicewomen displayed a general acceptance of gay and lesbian rights—seeing equality as a key touch point that should be honored.

A fresh perspective on national security is also evident. Before the repeal of DADT, gays and lesbians were understood as internal threats to national security and inherently at odds with notions of patriotism and state interests as early as 1992. The 2010 survey results find that there has been a reimagining of what it means to be a threat to national security and state interest. The implication is that as gays and lesbians have
MAY 2012
President Barack Obama becomes the first U.S. president to declare his support of marriage equality.

JULY 2011
The U.S. military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy is repealed, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly.

DECEMBER 2011
President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton announce LGBT rights as criteria for whether a country will receive U.S. foreign aid.¹

FEbruary 2011
The Obama Administration declares its opposition to the Defense of Marriage Act, a statute that defines marriage as the legal union of one man and one woman, by no longer defending it in lawsuits.

2010
Latin America, long characterized by its strong Catholic roots and machismo undertones, begins to offer equal rights for LGBT people. Mexico City and Argentina legalize same-sex marriage while Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay all recognize same-sex relationships, such as civil unions.⁴

JULY 2009
The high court in New Delhi, India strikes down the law that made same-sex sexual activity illegal, after finding it violated the constitutional rights to equality, and discriminated against gays and lesbians.⁵

Footnotes
become more included in the fabric of U.S. society; they have also become better integrated into the overall national narrative of acceptance and democracy. And this implication has spilled over into the rest of society.

Mainstreaming Marriage Equality
The story of same-sex marriage in the United States begins chiefly on a federal level, when, in September 1996, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed. The measure legally defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman, but leaves power in the hands of individual states to recognize marriages performed in other states. Prior to 1996, any marriage recognized on the state level was recognized on the federal level. The DOMA makes same-sex couples ineligible for more than 1,100 federal rights and protections that are afforded to heterosexual couples—among them joint-tax filings.

While the act legally excludes gay and lesbian couples from federal marriage benefits, it does not determine what states recognize as legal forms of marriage. Indeed, it is on the state level that progress is being made. In 2004, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriage, after the landmark case of Goodridge v. Department of Public Health successfully challenged the legality of only allowing heterosexual couples to marry in the state.

Even though the decision was challenged in court, the law survived a court challenge and now the state allows LGBT residents and non-residents to marry. This has undoubtedly set the tone for other states that would go on to legalize same-sex marriage. In 2004, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriage, after the landmark case of Goodridge v. Department of Public Health successfully challenged the legality of only allowing heterosexual couples to marry in the state.

In June 2012, Washington attempted to become the seventh state to allow same-sex marriage, placing a provision to legalize it on the state’s ballot for the November 2012 election. Meanwhile, a law to legalize same-sex marriage will go into effect in Maryland in January 2013. As of October 2012, six states and Washington, D.C. now legally recognize same-sex marriage.

At the same time, 30 states have approved state constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. Most recently, voters in North Carolina approved an amendment banning same-sex marriage, domestic partnership, and civil unions. But while marriage equality for all Americans is still largely unsettled when it comes to legislation, President Obama’s recent support is viewed as a game changer. During his 2008 campaign, the president stated that he believed marriage to be between a man and woman. Obama’s move to challenge the DOMA in 2009 and his subsequent publicly stated support of marriage equality marks a critical moment in U.S. politics.

So what does this mean? On the surface, it is clear that public and political sentiment towards gay marriage is evolving at a rapid pace. Usually a heavily polarizing topic, a Public Religion Research Institute poll found that in June 2012, 49 percent of those polled supported gay marriage.
while 44 percent did not. Seven percent were unsure. This is a stark contrast to 2003, when 37 percent polled supported gay marriage and 55 percent did not. Statistics such as these hammer home the growth in an inclusive mindset in the United States, and the degree to which conversations about difference are taking less divisive tones.

The “Gayby Boom”
In addition to evolving attitudes about gay marriage has been the growth in the number of same-sex couples starting families in the United States. Termed the “Gayby Boom,” the rise of same-sex couples raising children together is a notable trend that has implications for American social make-up for generations to come. Through a variety of means such as surrogacy, in vitro fertilization, and most commonly adoption, same-sex couples have diversified the image of the family unit in dynamic ways.

According to the Williams Institute, 20 percent of same-sex couples in the United States had children under the age of 18 in 2007, and about four percent of adoptive parents were same-sex couples. In fact, 65,000 adopted children and 14,000 foster children in the United States live in households headed by gays or lesbians. What’s more, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute has found that more than 80 percent of gay and lesbian adoptive parents voluntarily share their sexual orientation with adoption agencies, with 75 percent reporting positive and supportive responses.

Laws governing adoption by same-sex couples remain relatively amorphous, but in general, the process is governed by the state in which the adoptive parents live. While recorded public opinion on gay and lesbian family building is mixed at best, recent research indicates that 73 percent of birth families responded “strongly positive” to learning that the adoptive parents were gay or lesbian. The percentage that responds positively increases when the adoptive parents are two gay men, as many birthmothers desire to be the child’s only mother.

Growth in the LGBTQ Consumer Market
The LGBTQ consumer market is, by far, one of the fastest growing and largest in the world. The total buying power of the LGBTQ community is estimated to be $790 billion. This surpasses U.S. Asian buying power by more than $180 billion, and is a $100 billion increase from 2007.

Adding to the vast purchasing power of the LGBTQ population is its strong brand loyalty and willingness to support brands that back LGBTQ issues. Eighty-seven percent of LGBTQ adults say they would choose a brand that offers equal benefits for their LGBTQ employees over one that does not, while 47 percent are more likely to support a brand that has LGBTQ-inclusive advertising. Nearly three quarters of gays and lesbians are willing to remain loyal to a brand that shows support of LGBTQ causes even if the product or service is more expensive; and nearly a quarter have switched brands to one that was more supportive of LGBTQ concerns.

Interestingly, gays and lesbians are not the only people concerned about a company’s stance on LGBTQ equality. Research shows that heterosexual adults are invested as well. Seventy-five percent of non-LGBTQ adults say they
would consider equality of employee benefits when making purchasing decisions.20
The implication of these figures is obvious: LGBTQ issues and markets should be taken seriously by organizations looking to maximize their profits. With rapid growth in buying power, strong loyalty to organizations that represent their interests, and a willingness to spend, the LGBTQ demographic is one that can drive business if approached appropriately. This encompasses not only LGBTQ-inclusive marketing, but how organizations treat their LGBTQ employees.

**New Dimensions in Gender Identity**
Next generation diversity and inclusion calls on us all to evaluate nuanced concepts such as gender identity and performance as the roots of homophobia. The more LGBTQ issues become mainstream, the more they challenge our traditional ways of understanding gender. Without a grasp of what this change means, we won’t be able to understand how these societal transitions affect inclusion strategies and programs at organizations. Recent thought leadership has shifted its focus from gays and lesbians as a general sexual

---

**IQ ON ‘Q’**

**QUEER V. QUESTIONING**

There is often confusion about what the Q in LGBTQ stands for. Does it mean queer or questioning? Diversity Best Practices acknowledges this uncertainty.

In our work, Q represents queer, which we believe is an umbrella term that recognizes the fullness of gender and sexuality, while challenging traditional male/female, gay/straight norms. With the emerging discussion about people who identify as polyamorous (having multiple concurrent relationships, sometimes across sexes and genders), pansexual (having attraction to people of all gender expressions and sexes), and even asexual (lacking sexual attraction to others), using the term queer is a way to avoid lumping people under terms that do not necessarily describe their gender or sexual expressions.

Queer has a history of being a derogatory term used to describe gay men with characteristically female gender identities. However, today, it’s being reclaimed by a new generation of academics, allies, queer-identified people, and activists as an identity affirmation. This is not to say that the negative connotation has completely gone away, or that everyone has fully adopted this term.

However, there is a difference between being “a queer” (a noun used as a way of excluding someone by highlighting a difference and making it the prevailing aspect of one’s identity) and “being queer” (an adjective used to acknowledge the elements of one’s identity that make him or her different). Part of the re-appropriation is recognizing that queer is a method of self-identification, and an exercise of self-empowerment.

Some people view the Q as representing questioning. Their explanation is that questioning speaks to those who are coming into their own as adolescents and are attempting to make sense of their sexual urges and identities.50 We find the definition problematic because questioning adds a psychological element to sexual and gender identity difference that can and does undermine the inherent nature of both.

In the area of workplace diversity and inclusion, we are typically discussing adults who, based of the natural maturation process, are past the stage of questioning. Therefore, we advocate for the use of queer as the preferred term, as it addresses the full realm of gender and sexuality, including those who are questioning.
orientation to the implications that same-sex relationships have on our commonly accepted understanding of gender. As such, we need to have a clear understanding of terminology we frequently take for granted.

To that end, sex “refers to our sexual anatomy and chromosomes,” gender “is our biological, social, and legal status as girls and boys, women and men,” and gender identity refers to one’s self-conception as being male or female. In today’s society, even the notions of what it means to be male or female are changing in dramatic ways, and it’s the growing “outness” of the LGBTQ community that is bringing these issues to the forefront.

What does it mean to be male or female? Is gender an either/or identity or is it more of a continuum? What does masculinity and femininity mean? Take this short test: Picture in your mind what masculine and feminine looks like to you. Now think about all the men and women you know. How do they perform their gender?

It is important to discuss these concepts in the context of LGBTQ progression and stagnation. This approach shifts the conversation away from mere tolerance of same-sex relationships to the foundation of difference that separates people, makes people feel uncomfortable, or leaves people without a working lexicon to make sense of individuals operating outside of characteristically male and female attributes.

Gender identity, how it is performed, and how it is interpreted by the general public is often a confirmation of the stereotypes associated with particular sexes. But in the case of many LGBTQ individuals, performance—be it in dress, mannerisms, or same-sex relationships—tends to fall outside of these stereotypes. Indeed, clinical and forensic psychologist Karen Franklin, an expert on motivations for violence and hate crimes, writes:

“[H]eterosexism is not just a personal value system, it is a tool in the maintenance of gender dichotomy. In other words, through heterosexism, any male who refuses to accept the dominant culture’s assignment of appropriate masculine behavior is labeled early on as a “sissy” or “fag” and then subjected to bullying. Similarly, any woman who opposes male dominance and control can be labeled a lesbian and attacked. The potential of being ostracized as homosexual, regardless of actual sexual attractions and behaviors, puts pressure on all people to conform to a narrow standard of appropriate gender behavior, thereby maintaining and reinforcing our society’s hierarchical gender structure.”

To be clear, the implications of gender nonconformity do not just impact LGBTQ individuals. While researchers have found that rates of gender non-conformity are higher amongst LGBTQ people than heterosexual people, “gender non-conformity is not universal among LGB people, nor is it absent among heterosexuals” (emphasis added). But opposition to progress can and does have as much to do with disruptions to commonly agreed upon understandings of gender as it does anything else.

For diversity leaders, the next step in full inclusion is to focus attention on how initiatives account for those who may fall outside of stereotypical gender presentations.

The Intersection of Race and Sexual Orientation
Next generation diversity and inclusion also demands leaders to focus on the role race and ethnicity plays in the discourse on sexual orientation. White men frequently find themselves at the helm of LGBTQ organizations, occupying a privileged position within a marginalized group. But how
closely do people of color identify with mainstream LGBTQ discourse for rights and representation? How does race complicate LGBTQ identity?

Race and ethnicity are markers that usually place people of color into marginalized positions. However, LGBTQ people of color frequently face discrimination both intraracially and interracially. Race and ethnicity add a new level of complexity to the LGBTQ discourse that goes beyond general acceptance of differences in sexual orientation. There is also a willingness to learn about how such differences may play out differently for people of color. One need not look any further than Asian and Pacific Islander (API) gays and lesbians to see such complexity.

APIs frequently find themselves battling against discrimination and stereotypes that undermine their individuality. At the same time, many are portrayed in the media as subservient, impoverished, or otherwise perilous. Today, anti-Chinese sentiments in the United States have reemerged as popular sentiment has begun to blame China for the decline in America’s economical and political productivity—effectively demonizing Chinese, Chinese-Americans, and many other Asians in the process. Similarly, API individuals are confronted with the “bamboo ceiling” phenomenon in which only 2 percent of Fortune 500 chief executives are API. This is despite the fact that APIs are overrepresented in four-year university graduate demographics—usually a marker for success down the line.

At the same time, API LGBTQ individuals face discrimination within the general LGBTQ population.

Asian Pacific Islanders frequently find themselves battling against discrimination and stereotypes that undermine their individuality.
Joseph Erbentraut, a journalist who covers LGBTQ issues, writes, “Anti-Asian sentiment remains one of the last prejudices tacitly if not overtly condoned in the gay community. Even more than anti-fat, anti-aging, or the other ‘anti’s,’ prejudice against Asians seems to be endemic in the wider community, especially American gay urban affluent men.” Derogatory terms such as “potato queen” (an Asian gay man who prefers White men) and “panda hugger” (a non-Asian man who prefers Asian men), and a host of negative associations with Asian men and women still dominate mainstream gay and lesbian discourses.

And like other groups of color, gay and lesbian APIs face discrimination within their respective ethnic communities for identifying as LGBTQ. In a study published in 2009 by Boston University’s School of Social Work, homosexuality was deemed “deviant behavior” amongst the South Korean male subjects interviewed. In addition, male respondents said their sexual orientation brought shame to the family because it kept the men from fulfilling the obligation “to marry and create a traditional notion of family.” The study found similar narratives for many of the 1,000 API gays and lesbians interviewed. Racism—within the LGBTQ community and in mainstream society—and intraracial homophobia and discrimination provide an important underpinning of the experience of many LGBTQs of color. Sexual orientation and gender identity are frequently complicated by race and ethnicity and require a more tailored approach and awareness by company leaders when attempting to meet their needs. Making oneself aware of how discrimination affects different people goes a long way in addressing its impact. (Read more about the intersection of race and sexual orientation at http://www.diversitybestpractices.com/news-articles/being-black-and-gay).

CONCLUSION

At this inflection point of next generation diversity and inclusion we must ask, “What’s at stake?” Nothing less than a future where anyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, will be able to truly be who they are without fear of repercussion. As such, they will be able to rise to the fullness of their potential.

As certain LGBTQ issues become mainstream, we must, as next generation diversity practitioners, keep pushing the boulder of acceptance even higher up the mountain by advancing the overall discourse of diversity and inclusion. The difference between diversity (the mix) and inclusion (making the mix work) is precisely the difference between common conversations about LGBTQ issues and the discussion that we are presenting here.

Issues of equality in marriage and employee benefits have implications for the day-to-day lives of millions of people. Re-conceptualizing the traditional family unit with the growth in same-sex-headed households and family development methods not only challenge mindsets, they have myriad implications for policies, laws, and HR solutions governing families and the rights and benefits afforded to them. The expansive LGBTQ market provides business leaders with new possibilities for growing their consumer base.

In addition, the introduction of “queer” as a re-appropriated term that honors the depth in which we can be different from one another in even more ways, opens up greater avenues of acceptance not just for members of the LGBTQ community but for members of the straight community.

Acknowledging gender identity is our way of pushing the conversation forward. Yes, it’s true: Just when we celebrate the unprecedented number of 100 percent scores on the Human Rights Commission’s Corporate Equality Index (indicating the growing mainstreaming of LGBTQ issues), we ask you to rise from that bed of laurels and push inclusion to the greater depths of LGBTQ.

Finally, we cannot keep ignoring the intersection of race and sexual orientation. When marginalization takes place within a group that itself knows the devastation of marginalization, we must be bold in calling that out. There is simply no excuse for exclusion in the fight.

Walk to the edge of your comfort zone and take the leap across the valley of unease. On the other side lies the liberation to be true to ourselves and, in that, to unleash even greater creativity, productivity, and wellbeing.
New developments in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues have permanently changed the landscape of global diversity and inclusion. The growth in municipalities with marriage equality, the rise in same-sex-headed households, and the new openness of discourse surrounding sexual orientation have created a climate where companies will need to accommodate this thriving demographic through domestic partner benefits, tax equalization, and representation at all levels of the enterprise.

Further, next generation diversity and inclusion goes beyond just accepting people’s sexual orientation. It requires leaders to acknowledge the complexity within the LGBTQ community in terms of race, socioeconomic status, gender expression, and identity.

**Corporate Trends**

This current state calls on organizations of all sizes to meet the basic needs of a growing openly LGBTQ workforce in myriad ways. First, with the growth of domestic partnerships, many gay and lesbian employees are looking to add their partners to their health insurance plans. On a positive note, a growing number of organizations do offer domestic partner health benefits. According to a Diversity Best Practices survey of 30 major organizations, 97 percent of responding organizations offer their employees such benefits.38

This is certainly progress in corporate LGBTQ diversity, but how can companies go further? Here are four things corporations can do right now to truly address the implications of these society and government trends.

1. **Tax-equalize corporate benefits.** For heterosexual married couples and some in a domestic partnership, health benefits are not viewed as part of their financial compensation. However, for most lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees who receive health benefits for their domestic partners, this coverage is considered a part of their financial package and they are taxed on the value of the coverage. As a result, lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees are essentially charged out-of-pocket for at least half of their health insurance cost.39

   A key inclusion opportunity for organizations is to focus on ways to balance the financial playing field by reimbursing lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees who want to include their domestic partner on their health insurance plan. This is referred to as “grossing up” in the benefits arena. Joseph S. Adams and Todd Solomon, lawyers who specialize in employee benefits and executive compensation, explain the premise in *Domestic Partner Benefits: An Employer’s Guide* through the following example:

   Consider an employer that wants to gross up an employee in the 20-percent tax bracket. The fair market value of the employee’s non-dependent domestic partner coverage is determined to be $200 per pay period. The employee will incur $40 of tax ($200 x 20 percent) for that pay period. To gross up the employee, the employer would need to make an additional payment of $48 to this employee—$40 would serve as reimbursement for the tax incurred on the benefits coverage and the other $8 ($40 x 20 percent) would serve as an approximate reimbursement of the tax paid on the gross-up payment itself. Note that this example does not include state tax, Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes.40

   Gay or lesbian employees at organizations that do not gross up pay an additional $1,100 a year in taxes on average.41 With the rising cost of health care, that figure is bound to increase. Diversity Best Practices research has found that just 44 percent of organizations surveyed reimburse gay and lesbian employees receiving domestic partner benefits. A best practice is to add this aspect to compensation and benefits packages for employees in domestic partnerships. Organizations such as Ernst & Young42 and KPMG LLP43 have already begun to focus their inclusion efforts on grossing up, while Barclays has found that the cost of grossing up for their employees is “not material” to their overall bottom line.44

2. **Embed transgender benefits.** Transgender benefits are another topic employers should evaluate. Often a forgotten group of individuals, transgender employee health and wellness needs
can be met by ensuring transgender-inclusive health insurance coverage. A recent survey conducted by Diversity Best Practices found that more than half of responding organizations (56 percent) do not provide such coverage to their employees.\(^{45}\) In 2011, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) found that 40 Fortune 500 organizations offered such benefits—an increase from only one organization in 2004.\(^{46}\) While the HRC’s survey indicates that the vast majority of organizations use health insurance carriers that exclude transgender employees, some progress is being made.

In the *Transgender-Inclusive Health Care Coverage and the Corporate Equality Index*, the HRC states:

“The intent of employer-provided health care coverage is to promote a productive and healthy workforce. For this population of people with Gender Identity Disorder (GID), the consequences of continuing to live in a body that is wrongly sexed may be severe. Persons with untreated GID suffer intense psychological distress that often takes the forms of depression, even suicidality, and stress-related physical illness.”\(^{47}\)

Establishing transgender-inclusive medical benefits as a diversity and inclusion initiative will enable organizations to be at the forefront of the progressive movement toward equality on all fronts.

### 3. Evaluate support offered to non-traditional family planning methods.

The days of a single, traditional family have come to an end. In today’s society, new family structures abound, and they include same-sex couples. As a result, organizations are being challenged to address the needs of their ever-diversifying workforce. This includes providing assistance in offsetting the cost of fertility methods such as in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, and egg and sperm donation.

Diversity Best Practices research has found that while 80 percent of surveyed organizations provide medical insurance that covers alternative fertility methods, nearly 90 percent do not help subsidize any additional fertility treatments or procedures that are not already covered under medical insurance for employees.\(^ {48}\) Such statistics can be troubling given that most insurance plans offer an allowance that can easily be used up without yielding a successful pregnancy. For example, in vitro fertilization can cost $12,000 or more a cycle—and there may be a need for multiple cycles.\(^ {49}\)

Understanding the nuances of LGBTQ family development can illuminate the need for additional support from organizations. As such, another important inclusion opportunity for companies is to offer additional support for in-vitro, surrogacy, and adoption to employees to offset mounting costs. As a proactive measure, organizations can strengthen employee engagement by supporting these family methods.

### 4. Count your LGBTQ employees.

As basic as this sounds, one of the biggest challenges in developing strategies and cultural change around LGBTQ diversity is the lack of data about LGBTQs in one’s organization. Without this information, companies have no way of knowing where to focus sourcing and recruiting efforts, what their employee engagement and/or satisfaction with the organization is, or if employees have unique developmental or inclusion needs and wants. It’s also impossible to know whether the company has the kind of environment in which LGBTQ employees can rise to their full potential.

“If only we could count them” is the frequent lament. As if we couldn’t. But we can. Organizations such as KPMG and Aon Hewitt have found ways to track LGBTQ employees and ensure their views count. Aon Hewitt does so by providing an optional question in its engagement survey that asks about the responder’s sexual orientation. Is it lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or heterosexual? Employees who self-identify as LGBT are then led to a branch of an additional dozen questions asking about their experience at the company. Not only does the company get answers it never had before; executives are able to get grounded and verifiable data on the LGBTQ engagement just as they could for demographic groups identified by gender, race, and age.

KPMG has also added a similar question to each employee’s work profile. Because this is an issue that still creates enough fear for many LGBTQ employees to remain in the closet, companies like KPMG are aware that their numbers aren’t going to be accurate. But such surveying allows each of these companies to say, “we know we have at least these many.” If you don’t think that statement’s powerful, all you need to do is ask one LGBTQ employee who self-identified in his or her company census. They’ll tell you how meaningful it is to them to know it matters to their employer.

Companies that incorporate these four steps will be taking telling, transformative, and practical actions in establishing next generation LGBTQ diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
ENDNOTES


5 Ibid


7 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ199.html/PLAW-104publ199.htm


12 http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_51/Article_1.html


15 http://www.pollingreport.com/civil.htm


19 Ibid

20 National Center for Lesbian Rights, Adoption By Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Parents: An Overview of Current Law, Copyright 2012.


23 Ibid


27 Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs Communications, “LGBT Adults Strongly Prefer Brands That Support Causes Important to Them and That Also Offer Equal Workplace Benefits,” 2011.

28 Ibid

29 Ibid


32 http://kinseyconfidential.org/gender-nonconformity/


34 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0229.pdf


38 Diversity Best Practices, Domestic Partner Benefits and Inclusive Medical Coverage, July 2011.

39 http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/taxation-of-domestic-partner-benefits


45 Diversity Best Practices, Domestic Partner Benefits and Inclusive Medical Coverage, July 2011.

46 http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/transgender-inclusive-benefits-for-employees-and-dependents

47 http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/transgender-inclusive-benefits-for-employees-and-dependents


49 http://www.growingfamilybenefits.com/04_health-insurance

ABOUT

DIVERSITY BEST PRACTICES

Diversity Best Practices is the preeminent membership organization for diversity thought leaders to share practices and develop innovative solutions for culture change. Through research, benchmarking, publications, and events, Diversity Best Practices offers members information and strategies on how to create, implement, grow, and measure first-in-class diversity programs.

Diversity Best Practices helps companies clarify opportunities and implications of their current diversity strategy, identify and enhance critical diversity leadership competencies, create and implement a system-wide focus on diversity and inclusion, and gain the executive-level support needed to ensure the company is successful.

Diversity Best Practices’ team includes an impressive group of relationship managers, researchers, senior practitioners, consultants, council members, and committees from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and professional experience. Our research-based benchmarking content builds the knowledge and offers the tools needed to provide diversity solutions that meet the unique needs of our member companies.

In today’s information-driven economy, diversity leaders need access to the most relevant knowledge available to execute successful diversity initiatives. Diversity Best Practices provides that knowledge. Become a part of the Diversity Best Practices network today. Visit diversitybestpractices.com for more information.