

# Executive Diversity

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Featuring the Top 50  
OUTstanding in Business List

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## Executive Diversity

# Gay or straight, talented people will shine if they can be themselves

**Discrimination** Organisations from Goldman Sachs to the Church of England are waking up to the need to challenge outdated prejudices, writes *Elaine Moore*

**E**normous changes have taken place in the workplace over recent decades, but there are still many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees around the world who feel under pressure to keep their sexual orientation hidden.

Last year, a US survey of nearly 1,000 LGBT employees by the Center for Talent Innovation found that almost half had chosen not to come out at work.

In the UK, the campaign group Stonewall surveyed employees at some of the country's companies most active in promoting diversity. It discovered that more than a third had opted not to come out and a further 28 per cent had revealed their sexuality to only a small number of colleagues.

Progress is being made, but the consensus seems to be that it is not being made quickly enough. Campaign groups say they still receive calls every day from employees who hear homophobic language or are harassed, and research in 2010 by the Human Rights Campaign found that more than half of all LGBT employees regularly heard jokes or derogatory comments about gay people when they were at work.

Selisse Berry of Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, a global non-profit organisation trying to make workplaces equitable for LGBT people, says everyone should be judged on the work they do, not their sexual orientation or gender identity, and that it should be up to employers to ensure that it is clear that no discrimination is tolerated.

But around the world, LGBT employees are still facing a confusing array of messages. In the US, almost all of the country's largest employers have put in place non-discrimination policies to protect gay and



transgender employees, but there is no federal law to protect LGBT individuals. Only last month did legally married same-sex couples begin to enjoy the same federal rights as other married couples regarding pensions and other employee benefits.

In Japan, the organisers of the Tokyo Pride rally say that, although the country has no laws against homosexuality, being openly gay is still taboo and coming out in the workplace nearly impossible. In India, a workplace survey by Mingle (Mission for Indian Gay and Lesbian Empowerment) found that eight out of 10 LGBT employees surveyed had not come out for fear of name-calling and harassment.

The way that public figures around the world address the issue also remains confusing. In June this year, Justin Welby, the head of the Church of England, told the House of Lords that marriage equality laws would undermine family life. Two months later, he announced that the church had to respond to changing cultural attitudes and be "repentant" about its past treatment of gay and lesbian people.

"We have to face the fact that the vast majority of people under 35 not only think that what we're saying is incomprehensible but also think that we're plain wrong and wicked and equate it to racism and other forms of gross and atrocious injustice," the archbishop said.

In the face of possible discrimination it is understandable that so many LGBT employees choose to stay quiet, and being open about your sexuality at work is a personal choice. But advocates of openness say that job satisfaction and performance at work tend to improve once people feel they can be relaxed about their personal life and know that they are accepted and valued by their employer.

The former tennis champion Martina Navratilova has repeatedly told campaign

'A lot of things tend to change if there are high-profile gay role models in the company'

groups that silence equals consent to discrimination, saying that when she came out she found that other aspects of her life, including her tennis, came together.

However, before this can happen, more companies need to ensure they have taken action to make certain they are not wilfully or unknowingly discriminating against part of their workforce.

James Lawrence, spokesman for campaign group Stonewall, says many companies believe they do not have a discrimination problem because they do not think they have gay employees or think it is none of their business if they do.

"If they say there are none, then that's indicative of an issue – either that employees feel they have to hide their sexuality or that the company's recruitment policies put them off," he says. "We find that a lot of things tend to change if there are high-profile gay role models in the company."

The good news is that many of the world's largest companies are stepping up to take a prominent role in supporting LGBT rights and working to make sure that all their employees feel supported and comfortable.

Last year, Lloyd Blankfein, chief executive of Goldman Sachs, became one of the first global business leaders to take a public stance in support of same-sex marriage when he took part in a commercial for the Human Rights Campaign.

Mr Blankfein told one reporter that same-sex marriage was a business as well as a civil rights issue.

Unless gay people felt confident that their family would be treated in the same way as the family of a straight employee, then they would be unhappy and unwilling to move around the world for roles, he said. That meant the company would fail to attract a set of very talented people.

Pride rallies around the world are now sponsored by international organisations such as EY (formerly Ernst & Young) and Citigroup, and companies vie for the top spots on lists of actively diversity-friendly organisations.

The best practices require a co-ordinated web of schemes, say campaigners. While declaring that discrimination will not be

Only last month did same-sex couples begin to enjoy the same federal rights in the US as other couples

Getty

tolerated is a good start, it should be followed up with actions such as creating and supporting employee networks.

Deutsche Bank, for example, runs successful mentoring schemes for LGBT employees and HSBC has set up team training sessions focusing on values and unconscious bias.

Employees of Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank established Vibrant, an LGBT network, five years ago, and members of the Co-operative Group's Respect employee network recently celebrated its third birthday.

Tech companies such as Google, which have a reputation for progressive LGBT-friendly policies, have acted to ensure they cover health costs that gay and lesbian employees incur for their partners.

The repercussions for companies that do engage with diversity – and make it their business to ensure that all employees feel that they can be open and honest about themselves at work – can go beyond the personal.

At the Global LGBT Workplace Summit, held in London this year, HR directors took to the stage to entreat executives to make inclusion a priority. The benefits, they said, were not limited to the individuals concerned but would ripple out throughout the organisation, making the company somewhere that the best and brightest wanted to work.

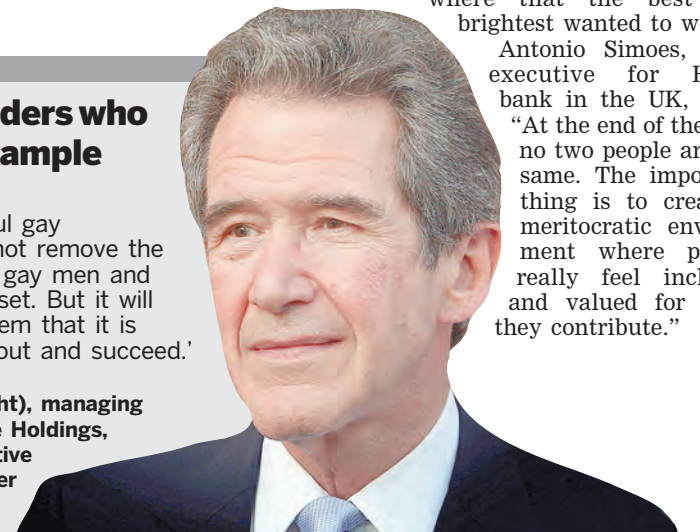
Antonio Simoes, chief executive for HSBC bank in the UK, adds:

"At the end of the day, no two people are the same. The important thing is to create a meritocratic environment where people really feel included and valued for what they contribute."

## Business leaders who inspire by example

'A list of successful gay businessmen will not remove the barriers that keep gay men and lesbians in the closet. But it will demonstrate to them that it is possible to come out and succeed.'

– Lord Browne (right), managing director, Riverstone Holdings, former chief executive of BP, and supporter of LGBT rights



Sarah, Senior Leader, BP



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## Executive Diversity



## Executive Diversity

# In an open culture, no one need fear the 'wife' question

**Authenticity** A gay-friendly organisation starts at the top, writes *Tim Smedley*

It is a simple and innocent question: "Does your wife work?" Antonio Simoes, HSBC's UK chief executive, has been asked it a lot – despite being one of the highest-profile openly gay executives in banking and finance.

"Like so many other things in life, being out or being different requires courage," says Mr Simoes.

Not being out, however, is no happy alternative. Liz Bingham, managing partner for talent in the UK and Ireland for EY, the professional services firm, knows peers who choose not to be open about their sexuality at work.

"You can see the amount of energy they expend pretending to be somebody and something they're not," she says. "I think

people are fearful that it will affect their job prospects, that people will treat them differently. It becomes quite self-destructive because the longer it goes on, the stronger the relationships you build within the workplace, so the more people you are having to hide that part of yourself from."

For Ms Bingham it is a story that could all too easily have been hers. She was already a senior manager at Ernst & Young when she came out in the mid-1990s. Her manager called her back after a meeting to ask whether the "flatmate" she had taken to a recent social event was actually her partner.

"He explained the concept of authentic leadership and that I was only ever going to excel and deliver my best to my team

and my clients if I was able to be my authentic self," says Ms Bingham.

"He strongly encouraged me to come out, and be open and honest with my colleagues and clients, and in fact everyone in my life – because at that point I hadn't even had the conversation with my parents. I didn't exactly come bursting out of the closet, but took it a step at a time, and realised that the sky wasn't going to fall in."

While she was helped out of the closet by a well-meaning manager, she is not an advocate of "outing" people". Instead, she says the best way an organisation can help people to be open about their sexuality is to create an inclusive environment that is actively and visibly gay-friendly.

Mr Simoes agrees: "We need to encourage



**Sponsoring Pride marches is one way for companies to help create LGBT-friendly workplaces**

AFP

people to overcome their fears and feel comfortable about simply being honest. Any diversity campaign has to be a core part of the business and led directly by senior leaders – it can't be seen as an HR initiative or a box-ticking exercise.

"The more an organisation creates and maintains an open culture without barriers, the easier it is for people to be open in return."

Michiel Kolman, senior vice-president of global academic relations at Elsevier and head of the scientific publisher's Pride network, says a positive approach should include senior leaders "signalling clearly they are in full support of diversity programmes, including LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] activities" and should involve LGBT managers teaming up with a senior executive as a mentor.

When Mr Simoes began his career at McKinsey, working in culturally conservative countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, he found it reassuring that the business had a global LGBT group.

Suki Sandhu, founder and chief executive of Audeliss, an executive recruiter, set up OUTstanding in Business – the first LGBT network exclusively for executives – after attending LGBT events and never seeing any of the senior executives he knew from his headhunting business.

"When I asked them why they never went, they'd say, 'Because I never get to meet anyone else senior – I just end up walking away with five or six CVs,'" he says. After slowly building up OUTstand-

ing, Mr Sandhu was surprised to find executives could work within the same organisation and not know others were gay.

He found the forums for discussion that might be open to more junior staff were not there at senior levels. It is this gap that groups such as OUTstanding aim to fill, in the belief that executives, as with all levels of the organisation, need role models.

Robert Kerse, executive director of finance for Circle, a housing services company, believes that when it comes to role-modelling, "the day-to-day stuff" is more powerful than standing up at events.

"If you see somebody who is comfortably out but not screaming it from the rafters, I think that actually helps people a lot more and gives people the confidence that they

**'You can see the energy people expend pretending to be somebody they're not'**

can build their career," he says. "There are many more people who just want to go about their lives quietly than want to make any great point."

Ms Bingham agrees, saying: "The best thing that can be done is for those of us who are out, and comfortably and successfully so, to role-model those behaviours to help others by way of gentle observation that it may not be as life-threatening as they might think."

Role models do not even have to be gay, they say. The presence of "straight allies" within an organisation's LGBT network is

critical to embedding a gay-friendly culture, says Mr Kerse.

"Having straight ally champions can sometimes send a stronger message throughout an organisation than the 'chief gay'. These are well-respected senior people in the organisation who are saying, 'Being around and working with gay people is not an issue for me. I'm a successful and strong leader in this organisation, so follow me and take this approach'."

Another clear statement an employer can make is to seek external validation. For example, the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index creates what is seen as a league table of gay-friendly employers. Simply taking part in the exercise sends a positive message. Mr Kerse says businesses are less fearful of getting a low ranking because "even coming 345th shows they have made the effort to submit to the index".

Participating in the OUTstanding in Business list will add to this by showing current and prospective employees that a business is LGBT-friendly right to the very top.

"You have to push on many doors consistently and persistently to get the message out," says Ms Bingham. "And there is an element of hope – that one day the penny will drop for people that actually it is a safe environment to be gay and to be out in the workplace."

When Mr Simoes was at Columbia Business School, banks and consulting firms came to recruit at LGBT student events, a positive message he appreciated. "When I started working at Goldman [Sachs] it gave me confidence that it was OK to bring my partner to corporate events."

Today, he says: "I've made enough references to 'my husband' in casual conversation that I rarely get the 'wife' question."

## Executive Diversity

## Five ways to nurture an LGBT-friendly workplace

### Start a high-profile communication campaign internally about being a diversity-friendly employer

As a starting point, anti-gay rhetoric should be visibly and vocally punished. "If you say you have a culture of equality and integrity, then you need to lay out what kind of behaviours you expect as a result of those values," advises Suki Sandhu, founder and chief executive of OUTstanding in Business. "Be clear that diversity is not just about gender, ethnic minorities and disabilities, but that lesbian and gay issues are included in the organisation's definition of diversity."

### Make a clear statement of support from the chief executive

"It's really important that the

message comes from the top," says Mr Sandhu. "It can't just come from the head of diversity or the HR director – it has to come from the chief executive, and it has to come across as authentic and genuine."

### Create an LGBT network

Internal networks are an essential part of being LGBT friendly. Give the group high visibility, offer the time and premises for it to meet regularly – ideally with IT support for an online presence. Try to get senior engagement too, both from gay executives and "straight allies" who help to champion the group and LGBT issues among the wider workforce. For executives in particular, encourage membership of external networks either regionally or within a sector,

or specific groups such as OUTstanding in Business, so that senior managers also receive peer-to-peer support.

### Sponsor external LGBT groups

Corporate sponsorship of Stonewall events, taking part in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, sponsoring Pride marches: all of this can demonstrate being a diversity champion and being serious about the lesbian and gay agenda, says Mr Sandhu.

### Review employee policies and benefits

For example, do you offer the same parental leave to gay couples adopting as you do for straight parents? "Also make sure there is no benefit discrimination for transgender employees and dependants," adds Mr Sandhu.

## Contributors >>

**Peter Whitehead**  
Editor of FT Executive Appointments and the FT Non-Executive Directors' Club

**Elaine Moore**  
Financial Times staff writer

**Tim Smedley, Dina Medland and Sharmila Devi**  
Freelance writers

**Andy Mears**  
Picture editor

**Steven Bird**  
Designer

For advertising details, contact: **FT Career Management**, +44 (0)20 7873 4909 and fiona.sneller@ft.com, or your usual FT representative.

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## Executive Diversity

# 'LGBT leaders are making a huge difference'

## The OUTstanding list Suki Sandhu

### Campaign's founder explains the need to champion diversity

It has been a fantastic four months since the launch of OUTstanding in Business.

During this time, we have gained support from companies such as Google, BP, Barclays and EY; organised an incredible launch event with Lord Browne; Stephen Fry has tweeted positively about us to his 6.2m followers; and we won Innovator of the Year at the European Diversity Awards.

If this is what we can achieve in just four months, think how much more can we achieve in the future.

But how did this all begin? I remember reading the Pink List published in another newspaper a few years ago and I was shocked by how few business leaders appeared on it. At the time, I knew dozens of senior LGBT business leaders who I believed deserved to share the same limelight as their counterparts in the arts and entertainment industry.

To challenge these stereotypes is one of the reasons I founded OUTstanding in Business. But more importantly, I was inspired by individuals who were brave enough to be themselves, to stand up and be counted, demonstrating the power of authentic leadership.

I thought something needed to be done, so I took the idea to Lord Browne two and a half years ago. He was supportive

from the beginning and has become one of our strongest advocates.

We aim to increase visibility, inspire, inform, connect, and be the voice of LGBT executives in the world of business. We want to shine a light on those executives who are not only LGBT, but who are willing to act as champions of diversity in their companies and in business.

Through demonstrating that LGBT executives are already succeeding, we will inspire the next generation of LGBT leaders by creating an environment in which they are not held back by their sexuality.

The Top 50 OUTstanding in Business List is proof that LGBT executives are making a huge difference and contribution to the economy. It demonstrates that you can come out and succeed professionally.

My hope is that publishing and promoting this list will encourage others to embrace who they are, in both their private and professional lives, and become more authentic leaders.

Organisations that encourage people to be proud of who they are and explore the ways in which they can contribute to success will be harnessing the talent of all their employees. This is hugely powerful, not only for the company, but also for the economy, society, and vitally, the individuals themselves.

My ambition next year is that the list will double to be the Top 100 LGBT Business Leaders globally.

By supporting OUTstanding in Business, companies send the positive message to their employees, customers and stakeholders that they appreciate diversity and the value it unleashes. We are here to welcome organisations to join us on our journey and help with our drive for change.

*Suki Sandhu is founder and chief executive of OUTstanding in Business and founder and chief executive of Audeliss, an executive recruitment firm*

**Suki Sandhu: inspired by individuals' bravery**



A panel debate at the OUTstanding in Business launch. Taking part: Paul Reed, Antonio Simoes, Kirsty Bashforth of BP, Ashok Vaswani of Barclays, Liz Bingham, and Suki Sandhu, founder of the organisation

# Top 50 OUTstanding in Business List

**Who's who** Leaders from across the corporate world who stood up to be counted and act as inspirational role models

**1. Antonio Simoes**  
Head of banking for the UK and head of retail banking and wealth management for Europe (pictured right)  
HSBC Bank

**2. Beth Brooke**  
Global vice-chair, public policy (pictured)  
EY, professional services firm

**3. Paul Reed**  
Chief executive (pictured)  
BP Integrated Supply and Trading, energy company

**4. Joseph Evangelisti**  
Chief communications officer (pictured)  
JPMorgan Chase, financial services

**5. Lord Allen of Kensington**



2.

Chairman and non-executive director (pictured)  
2 Sisters Food Group, ISS, Global Radio, Endemol

**6. Claudia Brind-Woody**  
Vice-president and managing director, global intellectual property licensing (pictured)  
IBM, IT services company

**7. Colin Walsh**  
Executive vice-president, proprietary card services (pictured)  
American Express, financial services

**8. Robert Hanson**  
Chief executive (pictured)  
American Eagle Outfitters, clothing and accessories

**9. Anthony Watson**  
Managing director and chief information officer.



3.

Europe Middle East retail and business banking (pictured)  
Barclays Bank

**10. Mary Jo Abler**  
President (pictured)  
3M Unitek, dentistry and orthodontics business

**11. Robert (Bob) Greenblatt**  
Chairman  
NBC Entertainment, broadcasting network

**12. Sara Geater**  
Chief executive  
FremantleMedia UK, media production

**13. Patrick Rowe**  
Associate general counsel  
Accenture, management consultancy

**14. Pierre Landy**



4.

Deputy general counsel  
Yahoo, internet company

**15. Angela Darlington**  
Chief risk officer  
Aviva UK Life, insurance company

**16. Richard Beaven**  
Operations director, insurance division  
Lloyds Banking Group

**17. Dave Bradley**  
Group HR director  
Qinetiq, defence and security technology business

**18. Liz Bingham**  
Managing partner, people, UK and Ireland  
EY, global professional services firm



5.

**19. Robert Kerse**  
Executive director, finance  
Circle Housing, UK provider of affordable housing

**20. Marianne Roling**  
Managing director, consumer telco  
Microsoft Corporation, global IT company

**21. Jan Gooding**  
Group brand director  
Aviva, insurance

**22. Alison McFadyen**  
Programme director, sustainability  
Standard Chartered Bank

**23. Steven Tallman**  
Partner and vice-president of global operations  
Bain & Company, management consulting firm

**24. Andrew Park**  
Senior vice-president, people support and excellence  
Tate & Lyle, agribusiness

**25. Rachel Harper**  
Director of internal audit  
BP, energy company



7.

**26. Vincent Francois**  
Regional head of audit  
Société Générale, banking and financial services company

**27. Charles Myers**  
Senior managing director  
Evercore Partners, investment banking advisory firm

**28. Susie Scher**  
Managing director, Americas financing group  
Goldman Sachs, investment bank

**29. Michael Brunt**  
Senior vice-president, head of circulation, Americas, and global head of marketing, Economist Digital  
The Economist, publisher

**30. Lord Black of Brentwood**  
Executive director  
Telegraph Media Group, publisher

**31. Ken Mehlman**  
Head of global public affairs  
KKR, private equity firm

**32. Neil Bentley**  
Deputy director-general and chief operating officer  
CBI, the UK employers' organisation

**33. Margaret Stump**  
Senior adviser  
Quantitative Management Associates, investment management

**34. Jacqueline Davies**  
HR director  
Financial Conduct Authority, UK regulator

**35. Justin D'Agostino**  
Managing partner, head of Greater China office  
Herbert Smith Freehills, law firm

**36. Daniel Winterfeldt**  
Head of international capital markets  
CMS Cameron McKenna, law firm

**37. Scott McGregor**  
Chief executive  
Camco Clean Energy, sustainability specialist



6.

**38. Ronnie West**  
HR director  
Barclaycard, financial services

**39. Mark Palmer-Edgcombe**  
Head of diversity, EMEA region  
Google, internet services provider

**40. Matthew Flood**  
General counsel and divisional manager, services division  
Balfour Beatty, infrastructure group

**41. Julia Hoggett**  
Head of short-term fixed income origination, covered bonds and Fig (financial institutions group) flow financing, EMEA region  
Bank of America Merrill Lynch

**42. Emma Goodford**  
Proprietary partner and head of national offices  
Knight Frank, estate agents

**43. Tim Baxter**  
Group head of corporate communications  
Standard Chartered Bank

**44. Russell Martin**  
HR director, retail and insurance  
Lloyds Banking Group

**45. Harry Rich**  
Chief executive  
Royal Institute of British Architects, professional body

**46. Jeffrey Krogh**  
Managing director, media and telecom finance, corporate and investment banking  
BNP Paribas, bank and financial services company

**47. Darren Towers**  
Head of sustainability  
EDF Energy, energy supplier

**48. Barnaby Dawe**  
Chief marketing officer  
HarperCollins Publishers

**49. Svetlana Omelchenko**  
Vice-president, global marketing insights  
Coty, beauty products manufacturer

**50. Gerwin Janssen**  
Vice-president of marketing, L'Oréal Paris. Skin Care at L'Oréal USA  
L'Oréal, cosmetics and beauty company



9.



10.



**1. Antonio Simoes: challenges stereotypes**

## How the list was created

Nominations were sought via a social media campaign by OUTstanding in Business, supported by celebrities such as Stephen Fry, and mentions in the Financial Times Executive Appointments section.

OUTstanding in Business also conducted research to identify LGBT business leaders and asked individuals whether they would agree to be nominated for the list – everyone on it has to be a willing participant.

All nominees were asked to provide information based on the five criteria below, and from this, the top 50 were chosen.

Suki Sandhu, founder of OUTstanding, admits the selection process was "more instinctive than formal scoring".

He says: "We can easily justify why Antonio Simoes is number one and Gerwin Janssen [of L'Oréal] is number 50. Antonio scores very highly in every criteria – he's a chief executive, out in financial services, has driven the diversity agenda in HSBC,

challenges stereotypes, and won diversity leader of the year at the European Diversity Awards.

"Gerwin is a great nomination but he's in marketing in the cosmetics industry, which is more inclusive of the LGBT population. This doesn't take away from the fact that Gerwin is a fantastic executive but does explain why Antonio is higher."

Mr Sandhu, as founder of the list, and LGBT members of the judging panel – who included Lord Browne, former chief executive of BP and currently managing director of Riverstone Holdings – were excluded from nomination.

**The five criteria on which nominees were judged:**

1. Leadership – looking at seniority and influence. Where does the leader sit within their organisation's structure? How far away are they from the group or divisional chief executive? How many employees do they manage?
2. Being a role model – how open and out are they inside and outside of work?
3. Contribution – how much they have contributed to the LGBT cause both professionally and personally?
4. Success – what are their significant and recent achievements in business?
5. Making a difference – how far do they go in challenging stereotypes in business?

## Executive Diversity



## Executive Diversity

# Wherever they may be, the challenge is to find the best

**The business case** Statistics suggest gay people are better educated and more likely to be in managerial roles than the general population, writes *Dina Medland*

The business case for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender diversity at work is simple: it's all about productivity.

"Gay people in the workplace are more efficient and motivated when they can be themselves and are relaxed with colleagues and their employers," says Neil Bentley, deputy director-general and chief operating officer at the CBI, the UK employers' organisation.

"It's very important that people don't hold themselves back, thinking, 'I can't succeed because I'm gay'," he says.

Figures from the UK Office for National Statistics suggest about 750,000 adults in Britain say they are gay or bisexual – roughly 1.5 per cent of the adult

population. But the figure might be much higher, with the government using figures between 5 per cent and 7 per cent when introducing civil partnership legislation.

The ONS also recorded gay people as being better educated, with 38 per cent holding a degree, and more likely to be in managerial or professional occupations – 49 per cent compared with 30 per cent for straight workers.

Mr Bentley believes that the recent national debate on equal marriage has demonstrated an important social shift in the UK. "It's no longer just about acceptance of sexual diversity but about actively saying that you cannot discriminate in this way," he says.

"If we don't have an inclusive

environment we won't attract the best. We need to understand the needs of a globally segmented marketplace to drive market share," says Mark McLane, head of global diversity and inclusion at Barclays. The retail bank recently launched a television advertisement around personalised debit cards that included a gay couple.

"Only by understanding the needs of any customer segment can we become the 'go-to' bank for the community," adds Mr McLane.

While consumer-facing businesses must reflect their markets, having visible diversity at the top of an organisation also sends a clear message on inclusion. This can give rise to benefits: supportive employers earn employee loyalty, which

can help with recruitment and retention.

At BP, Paul Reed is chief executive of the energy company's integrated supply and trading division, which operates large trading floors around the globe. "We are BP's face to the outside world," he says. "The reputation of trading floors is that it's a very macho environment – but that is different from the reality. Even so, a number of people coming on to a trading floor choose to hide their sexuality."

As an openly gay man, his leadership



**Neil Bentley, chief operating officer at the CBI, sees passive acceptance of diversity giving way to positive action to end discrimination**

round", he often finds that "a lot of people don't believe it". He welcomes efforts by organisations such as Out on the Street and OUTstanding in Business to promote a much more diverse workforce.

Mr Bentley at the CBI adds: "There is a huge debate going on now about being authentic in the workplace. From a customer relationship management point of view, relationships matter. Who you are, and the use of social media to reflect that – all these things are playing into the workplace."

Businesses coming to terms with how best to reflect LGBT diversity need to keep up with rapid social change and demands for transparency. However, global organisations working to enhance their image also have to be aware of the limitations to their power and influence.

"International business has to accept that we must always respect the laws of the land where we operate but companies have global programmes that are important to employees," says Mr Bentley.

Mr McLane at Barclays adds: "You can't dictate any aspect of diversity. But we have an obligation as an organisation to partner with suppliers so they understand our position and voice. In terms of the supply chain, we listen to their challenges in order to come up with a solution together."

Barclays has so far concentrated its LGBT initiative in Europe, the US and Asia. Working with the charity Community Business, it sponsored the Hong Kong LGBT Climate Study 2011-2012, described as

"the first study of its kind initiated by a non-government organisation and focusing on the subject of sexual orientation and gender identity as it relates to the business sector".

By providing a picture of the current climate in Hong Kong for LGBT individuals, it points to both the challenges and opportunities for employers.

The bank is now in the early stages of building an LGBT diversity initiative in Africa. Through the use of a smartphone app, it is also developing an internal LGBT employee network with global reach.

Leading LGBT business figures tend to be male, which might be partly because women can be victims of discrimination on the grounds of both gender and sexuality, according to research by the Center for Talent Innovation, a not-for-profit consultancy.

Its report, *The Power of 'Out' 2.0: LGBT in the Workplace*, suggests women suffer from a "double whammy". It says: "LGBT women are more likely than men to experience discrimination because of the double jeopardy of gender as well as sexual orientation (74 per cent of lesbians compared with 51 per cent of gay men)." The research says coming out is an asset that "can and must be leveraged".

Chris Crespo is an EY director and co-founder of Beyond, a network that supports and promotes the professional services firm's LGBT-inclusive culture. She believes sponsorship, support and transparency for LGBT women is essential to allow them to fulfil their potential within any business.

When the campaign for gender diversity is added to the mix, the already powerful business case for LGBT diversity becomes overwhelming.

## Executive Diversity

Trading floors have a very macho reputation – but that is different from the reality'

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## Executive Diversity

# Corporates take the lead where 29 US states have yet to follow

**Global reach** Multinationals that promote equal opportunity can make a difference around the world but must respect other cultures, says *Sharmila Devi*

**M**ultinational companies have long had to grapple with different cultural expectations and values around the world, such as women's rights or religious expression, and there is increasing evidence they are focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

In Bangalore in January, companies including Intuit, IBM and Dell will hold a round-table discussion on LGBT topics, allowing local employees, gay or straight, to raise questions.

"We want people to feel safe and to talk about the challenges of being gay in India," says Scott Beth, vice-president of finance operations for Intuit, the US software company. "We have 900 individuals working in our Bangalore development unit, so there have got to be at least 20 or 30 gay or lesbian employees whom we've got to reach out to."

Mr Beth is also chair of the company's Pride network of LGBT employees and recalls a young software engineer telling him that only after working at Intuit did he feel safe living openly as a gay man.

"He's very intelligent and, for much of his working life, half of his brain was worrying about safety," says Mr Beth. "I want our employees fully engaged on our customers and shareholders, so this is as much a productivity issue as anything else."

Initiatives such as the Bangalore round table arise from the need to ensure the best and brightest get the right jobs and can work effectively, say company executives and non-governmental organisations that work to advance the LGBT agenda.

"Our customers mirror our make-up in terms of diversity of education, religion and sexual orientation," says Mr Beth. "And we need to attract the most talented people, who can focus on business outcomes."

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, a

non-profit organisation based in San Francisco that is behind the Bangalore debate, brought together executives from around the world for a global summit in London last year and has also held events in Italy and Mexico.

Selisse Berry, founding executive director, says: "People are trying to figure out how to have more of an impact around the world, and company leaders come to us asking how to roll out programmes and policies. Companies can lead change – we've seen that in the US – and they are much more effective when they work in coalition and hand-in-hand with governments, civil society and non-government organisations."

"In the US, there is no federal law to protect LGBT rights, and in 29 states you can be fired for being LGBT. But 98 per cent of Fortune 500 companies have non-discriminatory policies and up to 60 per cent have policies on gender ID affecting transgender individuals."

Stonewall, founded in 1989 in the UK to campaign for LGBT rights, this week launches its Global Diversity Champions programme, a best practice employers' forum for global organisations. Founding partners include IBM, Citibank, Google, BP and Procter & Gamble.

The organisation says that homosexual activity is illegal in almost 80 countries, punishable by death in five and life imprisonment in seven.

Simon Feeke, Stonewall's head of workplace, who is overseeing Global Diversity Champions, says the expectation that international assignments are a crucial part of career development has important implications for multinational companies.

"Generation Y expects international travel but companies need systems in place to ensure that if travel is impossible because of safety issues in particular



countries, then this won't have a detrimental impact on that person's career, and that they get as near as possible an equivalent position," he says. "It's about companies having a consistent approach."

He adds that some companies choose to filter out references to "sexual orientation" when displaying anti-discrimination policies on their websites in certain countries and jurisdictions. The best employers, such as IBM, says Mr Feeke, have "a global vision and don't allow any deviation from that. It's not about breaking the law but ensuring everyone understands that, when on their premises around the world, their code of conduct is in force."

Claudia Brind-Woody, IBM's vice-president and managing director for intellectual property and advanced technology licensing, says 40 senior executives at the company are "out" – bearing testament to its focus on "social justice".

She refers to 1953, when IBM refused to

locate manufacturing plants in North Carolina and Tennessee because of those states' segregation policies. "We were part of the catalyst for a change in laws and we lived our corporate values," she says.

"We were one of the first big companies to insist on equal pay for equal work for women and to have a non-discriminatory LGBT policy, in 1984," she adds.

When it comes to LGBT issues around the world, she says co-operating with other companies – even competitors in business – is vital, so that governments cannot pick one off against another.

"Our next challenge is to create safety in some countries, whether it's for women in the Middle East, or in India, where some kids are growing up gay while their parents are arranging marriages for them," she says. "We need an open dialogue that's respectful of local culture and respectful of us as companies."

Beth Brooke, global vice-chair for public

## Executive Diversity

## 'It was about standing up for LGBT rights, and not just from a safe, corporate platform'

The moment when her personal life and the lofty concept of human rights became connected for Claudia Brind-Woody, IBM vice-president for intellectual property and advanced technology licensing, was at the 2010 Europride event in Warsaw, writes *Sharmila Devi*. IBM was a sponsor of the first Europride event to be held in a former Communist country, and sent representatives.

But before proceedings were under way, Ms Brind-Woody was summoned to a meeting with the company's security chiefs in Poland and warned she might be in personal danger. It was a turning point for her. "There were protesters there and it was the first time my personal safety was at risk for human rights," she says.

"It was a seminal moment and made me understand even more how I couldn't ask someone to do something that I wasn't prepared to do myself."

"It was about making a decision to stand up and be counted for LGBT rights, and not just from a safe, corporate

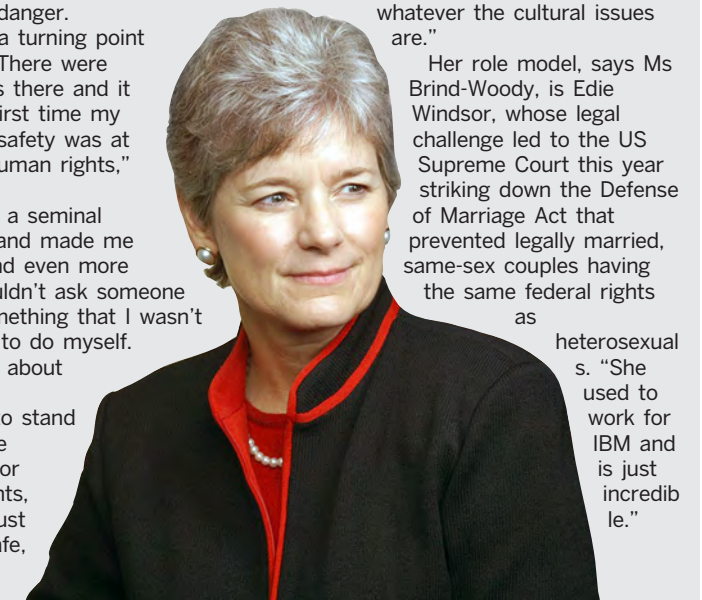
platform." A serious challenge facing multinationals, she believes, is to promote their equality and diversity agendas in the emerging markets where they operate.

"The globalisation of LGBT rights is the next thing. There are still places in Africa and the Middle East where you can be killed for being LGBT, and other places put you in prison just for being yourself," she says.

"The challenge is to go into these emerging markets and help to promote human rights, for women, the disabled and LGBT people, whatever the cultural issues are."

Her role model, says Ms Brind-Woody, is Edie Windsor, whose legal challenge led to the US Supreme Court this year striking down the Defense of Marriage Act that prevented legally married, same-sex couples having the same federal rights

as heterosexual s. "She used to work for IBM and is just incredible."



## 'I don't believe in special pleading. I believe in equal access based on meritocracy'

The oil and gas sector has been viewed as a bastion of traditional and conservative behaviour, but Paul Reed, chief executive of BP's integrated supply and trading arm, is doing all he can to change this, writes *Sharmila Devi*.

"My focus has been on promoting BP as an attractive employer that values and respects diversity, where everyone is encouraged to be themselves at work," he says.

As he has risen up the company's ranks, he has continued to strive for equality in all areas. "I don't believe in special pleading for any particular group. I believe in equal access to careers based on meritocracy for all under-represented groups."

When it comes to the LGBT community, he wants to make sure that BP is viewed favourably by potential recruits as well as by existing employees.

He is the sponsor of the company's LGBT and Ethnic networks and has served on its diversity council. He also formed diversity, inclusion and meritocracy councils in his division's main regional offices around

the world and ensured the top 400 leaders in his division had personal goals.

He spoke at the first London conference of Out on the Street, an organisation promoting LGBT rights, which started on Wall Street.

While he acknowledges that many companies are active in promoting diversity, in the absence of hard statistics it is difficult to state what has been achieved in terms of balance, he says. His main aim is to create an environment in which it is a "non-issue" to be "out" at work.

"I've never had any negative reactions at BP, and the more I talk to people, the more I believe that LGBT people constrain themselves

for fear of a reaction that might never happen," he adds. "Of course, that's not true in all countries."

Mr Reed names Kieran Looney, a leadership coach, as having helped him to understand the importance of being yourself at work.



**Demonstrators in Paris wear masks of Russian president Vladimir Putin as they protest against an 'anti-gay' law**

Getty

'Our challenge is to create safety in some countries. We need an open dialogue'

policy and global sponsor of diversity and inclusiveness at EY in Washington, was praised after coming out and appearing in a video for the It Gets Better project, a campaign to discourage suicide among young people worried or bullied because of their sexuality. She has since received many emails from gay people around the world expressing their gratitude.

"People have said 'Thank you for your courage' and sometimes it's heartbreaking to hear their stories. I've grown to realise that I am one of the best known executives who's out and I have an obligation and responsibility," she says.

"There's so much work to be done on this issue globally and it's often easier to express views and be more credible as an outsider. It can be harder for the local leadership who have to do business in a particular culture and can face a backlash. Companies working together can mitigate the risk."



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