

Navigating Transgender Inclusion at Work

A Quick Guide for HR + Diversity Managers



Event Summary

On October 29, 2009, the **LGBT Center of New York City** hosted a panel discussion on successful workplace transitions for transgender employees. The panelists discussed their personal experiences transitioning, how their transitions were handled, and what they did to facilitate their transitions at their respective places of business.

Based on the dynamic panel discussion, the JBC team developed this worksheet – 10 tips to help HR/Diversity managers navigate Transgender inclusion in the workplace.

10 Trans Tips

- 1. Transitioning is a Group Effort** – When a Transgender employee decides to transition at work, they are not the only one transitioning--everyone in the office is, too. There will be questions, challenges and sometimes frustration, both for the Transgender employee as well as for their co-workers. The Transgender employee doesn't have all the answers, but working together can help everyone involved.
- 2. Applying for Jobs** - Disclosing a transgender identity when applying for jobs is a personal decision. Many Transgender people may not want to share this information because hiring managers often feel that being transgender might distract employees from their jobs – show them that it will not! Let them know all that matters is that they be a strong and productive employee.
- 3. Transitioning Takes Time** – Not all transitions are the same. The speed of a Transgender employee's transition is based on many factors: family, children, medical needs, etc. Be respectful of this and show support where possible.
- 4. Communication** – Many transgender employees choose to come out individually, in person to their managers, and/or write a mass email to co-workers about their transition. This is an important part of the process. Assist and support the Transgender employee in finding their own way to communicate this information to others
- 5. Gossip!** – Like it or not, rumors and gossip are an inherent part of business. Don't be surprised that people are talking about a transgender employee-- it's going to happen. Make sure that employees have accurate information and manage the transition with respect.
- 6. Boycotting**– The biggest fear of a company is often reactions from customers and clients regarding a Transgender employee. Although there might be some threat of business withdrawal, boycotting businesses has a minimal impact on business overall.
- 7. Money Talks** – At the end of the day, employees are hired for one primary reason – to do great work. Provide a Transgender employee with the space to work hard and excel at their job and everyone wins!
- 8. New Research** – The National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force recently released primary findings on the largest ever Transgender employment study, and found that:
 - 97% of Transgender people have reported discrimination on the job
 - 26% lost their job because of being transgender
 - 47% did not get a job, was denied a promotion or fired for being transgender
 - 50% were harassed by someone at work
- 9. Resources** – There are a few high profile US Conferences for Transgender professionals that may be of interest to transgender employees:
 - Southern Comfort
 - Out & Equal
- 10. HRC's Corporate Equality Index** is a survey of US corporations and professional service firms and their LGBT affirming policies and practices. Find out what the high ranking corporations are doing to make themselves trans inclusive and adopt those policies and practices for your own company.