

New Study on How Businesses Can Promote LGBT+ Rights Globally

Open For Business, UN Free & Equal and Deutsche Bank release new report that identifies five channels of influence that businesses can leverage to advance LGBT+ inclusion in sensitive markets



Washington, D.C. (March 7, 2019) — Open For Business, a coalition of global companies making the case that inclusive and diverse societies are better for business and essential for economic growth, launched a new report titled “Channels of Influence: How can business promote LGBT+ inclusive societies?” which will provide companies with a clear framework on how to act in the public sphere to promote LGBT+ inclusion in the countries where they operate.

Sponsored by Deutsche Bank and created in partnership with the UN Free and Equal Campaign, the report identified five channels of influence that companies can leverage. Sharing case studies, best practices and guidance on which channels are most effective in which environments, the goal is to provide companies with a practical toolkit that answers the critical question of how they can engage on LGBT+ inclusion in sensitive markets.

“This Open For Business report focuses on perhaps the most challenging aspect of the UN standards: how best to promote the human rights of LGBTI people in countries where companies do business - and avoid inadvertently fuelling backlash against local LGBTI communities in the process,” said **Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

Karl Von Rohr, President, Management Board Member, Deutsche Bank AG, added: “LGBT+ inclusion is essential to creating a competitive and dynamic company. Taking an inclusive approach to all perspectives

and identities allows us to become more meritocratic, attract and retain top talent, and make better decisions.”

“There is an appetite among large corporations to help alleviate some of the human rights abuses that the LGBT+ community faces around the world,” said **Jon Miller, Founder of Open for Business and Partner at Brunswick Group**. “However, there has been a gap in the knowledge when it comes to operating within countries where advancement for LGBT+ rights is needed most. Our hope is that this report can serve as a catalyst for real action and change.”

The Framework: Channels of Influence

The report expands on the UN Standards of Conduct for Business, specifically building on the fifth Standard which states that companies should act in the public sphere to advance LGBT+ inclusion.

Drawing on examples of how Open For Business’ coalition partners are already taking action in the public sphere to promote LGBT+ inclusion as well as the lessons learnt from corporates tackling other social and environmental issues, the report broadens the strategies and range of options that companies can employ.

This framework will empower businesses and civil society organizations to effectively launch a renewed dialogue on how companies can advance LGBT+ rights worldwide, especially in sensitive markets. The conversation will continue this month through events which will bring business leaders together at SXSW in Austin, Texas from March 9th to 11th.

- NOTES FOR EDITORS -

About Open For Business

Open For Business is a coalition of global companies making the case that inclusive, diverse societies are better for business and essential for economic growth. The purpose of the coalition is to advance LGBT+ inclusion globally, by presenting and promoting a positive economic and business case for equality of opportunity for everyone, across the world.

For more information on Open For Business, please visit <https://open-for-business.org/>.

About the report

Open For Business published this report with the aim of providing a clear framework for companies seeking to act in the public sphere to promote LGBT+ inclusion in the countries where they operate. Previous Open For Business reports have focused on why companies should promote LGBT+ inclusion; this report focuses on how. For companies considering how to act in the public sphere, this report will outline ways to take action that are impactful and also appropriate for them. For civil society organizations seeking to work with businesses, this report will identify opportunities to unlock effective business advocacy. For individuals working in companies that aren’t yet acting in the public sphere, this report will provide tactical guidance on how to move to action. Also, for any individuals working in anti-LGBT+ environments, this report provides some advice on how they can find support and become part of a movement for change.

The Open For Business team undertook the final analysis and writing of the report, led by **Drew Keller** in Washington D.C., alongside **Yvonne Muthoni** in Nairobi, Kenya, and **CJ Lin** in Washington D.C. Contributing authors include **Logan Smith, Master’s Candidate at Georgetown University**, and **Ann-Kathrin Richter** and **Ruairidh Macintosh** of the Brunswick Group.

Jon Miller is the Founder and Executive Editor of Open For Business. Companies supporting Open For Business contributed their perspectives and experience on advocating for the business case for LGBT+ inclusion around the world.

The work of Open For Business is supported by a Research Advisory Board, which provides ongoing guidance and feedback, and helps to ensure the economic case for LGBT+ inclusion is comprehensive and up to date. The Research Advisory Board consists of the following members:

- M.V. Lee Badgett, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Suen Yiu Tung, Founding Director of Sexualities Research Program, Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Felicity Daly, Honorary Research Fellow, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society at LaTrobe University, Australia
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