

OPEN FOR BUSINESS FINDS THAT LGBT+ INCLUSION IMPROVES GLOBAL BUSINESS AND COUNTRY COMPETITIVENESS

Global
Firm news

First-of-its-kind report studies the experiences of LGBT+ people working abroad

		
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New data shows that:

- LGBT+ laws and culture are the two most important factors influencing the decision of LGBT+ people to work abroad – even ahead of healthcare and insurance.
- 69% of LGBT+ professionals cited discrimination laws related to LGBT+ people as a reason for rejecting a potential international assignment.
- Despite a desire for ‘local knowledge’, over 90% of LGBT+ professionals working on international assignments did not receive information about laws or culture related to LGBT+ people from their employer.
- LGBT+ people are significantly more likely to accept work assignments to countries with higher levels of social and legal acceptance of LGBT+ people. As a country’s score of social and legal LGBT+ acceptance increases, there is a statistically significant rise in the number of LGBT+ professionals willing to travel there on international assignments.

As the world faces an economic downturn resulting from COVID-19, a new report from [Open For Business](#), in collaboration with Deloitte and Herbert Smith Freehills, makes the case that LGBT+ inclusion can improve the competitiveness of global companies, and the countries in which they are based.

The report 'Working Globally: Why LGBT+ Inclusion is Key to Competitiveness', studies the experiences of LGBT+ people working abroad. The report finds that LGBT+ professionals are very willing to work abroad, with over 70% of respondents willing to travel for short-term assignments, commuter assignments or business trips, and over 50% willing to travel for a long-term assignment.

Despite this willingness, the report finds that laws and culture related to LGBT+ people are the two most important factors influencing the decision to accept assignments overseas - ahead of even healthcare and insurance. It also finds that the vast majority of LGBT+ people (over 90%) who have worked abroad received no information about LGBT+ laws and culture from their employer before or after accepting the assignment.

The report studies the needs and decisions of LGBT+ professionals across geographies, industries, sexual orientation and gender identity. Using [UCLA Williams Institute's Global Acceptance Index](#) and [Franklin & Marshall College's Global Barometers](#) as measures of social and legal LGBT+ acceptance, the report finds that as countries' acceptance scores increase, there is a statistically significant increase in the number of LGBT+ professionals willing to travel there on international assignments.

This new evidence strengthens the case that LGBT+ inclusion is not just better for individuals, but better for companies and the countries in which they operate. The overall economic case for LGBT+ inclusion is laid out in Open For Business' 2018 report '[Strengthening the Economic Case](#)', which identifies LGBT+ inclusive environments as positively supporting economic growth, business performance and individual performance.

[View the report here](#)

Kathryn Dovey, Executive Director of Open For Business, said:

"Recent years have seen a rise in antagonism towards LGBT+ people in some parts of the world, suffering discrimination at the hands of politicians and lawmakers. The global pandemic has only exacerbated this situation. All this leads to real challenges for LGBT+ professionals working and travelling abroad, who often feel unable to be open about their sexuality or gender identity. This new report adds to the growing evidence base that LGBT+ inclusion is a win-win proposition for business, economy and society."

Kalvinder Dhillon, Vice Chair and Tax Partner at Deloitte, said:

"We have seen significant progress made to improve the mobility of the LGBT+ community worldwide. However, there is still a lot more we can do to unlock the economic benefits of LGBT+ inclusion."

“Companies need to make sure they offer their LGBT+ people practical support and information. The research shows that despite 70% of LGBT+ respondents being willing to travel for project work or short-term assignments, over 90% of LGBT+ did not receive information about LGBT+ laws, networks or culture before or after being offered the assignment. This is not acceptable and a clear sign that more needs to be done by organisations to support their people when working abroad.”

Justin D’Agostino, Chief Executive Officer of Herbert Smith Freehills, said:

“As an out, gay, CEO living in Hong Kong, I’m all too familiar with the additional barriers LGBT+ face when working internationally. Mobility can be exciting and daunting in equal measure and employers must ensure LGBT+ employees can live, work and travel feeling supported and with the same sense of belonging, wherever they are located. As businesses, cities and countries plan their recovery from the pandemic, it is more important than ever to work to remove barriers and promote inclusion.”

[View the report here](#)

About Open For Business

Open For Business is a coalition of leading global companies dedicated to LGBT+ inclusion. Open For Business builds the business and economic case for LGBT+ inclusion in challenging countries. We believe that inclusive, diverse societies are better for business and better for economic growth.

Open For Business has dedicated regional programmes in the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and East Africa with a programme in South East Asia planned for 2021. Each of these programmes works with advocates in the local business communities, strengthening local business voices by providing them with evidence and fact-based arguments.

Open For Business also undertakes global research to tackle pressing issues such as [LGBT+ inclusion in emerging markets](#) or [LGBT+ inclusion and the Sustainable Development goals](#). Every two years Open For Business publishes its [City Ratings](#) which ranks cities on both economic competitiveness and LGBT+ inclusiveness.

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

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Operating from 26 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. The firm provides many of the world’s most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including Banks, Consumer products, Energy, Financial buyers, Infrastructure & Transport, Mining, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Real estate, TMT and Manufacturing & Industrials.

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