

Top Employers Report

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INTRODUCTION

India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) celebrates 5 years of providing India with a benchmarking tool for assessing company-wide progress on LGBT+ inclusion. This collaborative effort by the Keshav Suri Foundation (KSF), Pride Circle, and Stonewall, offers a comprehensive framework tailored specifically for the Indian context.

As we mark the sixth anniversary of the Section 377 verdict—decriminalisation of homosexuality in India, we recognize that significant challenges still persist for the LGBT+ community. The 2023 verdict on marriage equality serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for LGBT+ rights and inclusion in the country. Social stigma continues to be a key factor driving non-disclosure, leaving many LGBT+ employees hesitant to share their identities at work and highlighting the urgent need to foster psychological safety in the workplace.

The **IWEI Top Employers** featured in this report exemplify leadership in advancing workplace equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) individuals. This year, we also recognized exceptional contributions to LGBT+ inclusion with **Special Awards** for Ally Trailblazer of the Year, LGBT+ Trailblazer of the Year, Pride

Employee Resource Group (ERG) of the Year, DEI Champion of the Year, Pride ERG Executive Sponsor of the Year, and our newest category - Supplier Diversity Champion of the Year.

Our deserving winners have gone above and beyond their roles to create LGBT+ inclusive environments in their workplaces, and we are proud to highlight their successes!

Through the IWEI's **Employee Feedback Survey (EFS)**, we provided companies with a confidential platform for their staff to share their experiences of LGBT+ inclusion. This valuable data equips companies with ground-level insights, informing targeted improvements and strategies.

The growing adoption of the IWEI across corporate India is incredibly encouraging, as it facilitates **peer benchmarking, disseminates regional best practices, and provides a structured roadmap for progress.**

As we continue this journey, we remain committed to supporting companies in building inclusive and equitable workplaces for all!

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FOREWORD FROM PARTNERS

As partners, we are incredibly proud to be celebrating the milestone of 5 years of this impactful partnership and the results of the fifth annual India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI), recognizing the great strides that employers have made across India to improve the professional lives of LGBT+ people.

This year, as we invite employers to join us in person to celebrate the efforts of companies, LGBT+ people, and allies driving change, we also acknowledge those who have yet to experience such progress. Many LGBT+ employees remain in workplaces that have not fully embraced the value of creating spaces where they can be open, authentic, and proud of who they are. With **150 companies** participating in IWEI 2024, we hope this marks a turning point for corporate India, and we look forward to welcoming even more companies to join the movement in the years ahead.

We continue to be hugely inspired by the outstanding commitment of the **IWEI Top Employers in 2024** and thank every single one of them for their participation. A heartfelt congratulations must go to our **Top 10, Gold, Silver, and Bronze employers** – some of which are now familiar faces in our IWEI celebrations and some are new to the LGBT+ inclusion journey.

We are also delighted to recognize the achievements of our **Special Award winners**: Ally Trailblazer of the Year, LGBT+ Trailblazer of the Year, Pride Employee Resource Group (ERG) of the Year, DEI Champion of the Year, Pride ERG Executive Sponsor of the Year, and our newest category — Supplier Diversity Champion of the Year. We fully recognize and appreciate the incredible work you do to drive change in your workplaces, and we are deeply thankful for your unwavering commitment. Together, as collectives

and individuals, you are reshaping the landscape of LGBT+ inclusion across India.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our sponsors, whose support has been instrumental in helping us grow and elevate IWEI into the revered workplace benchmarking tool it is today. The support of JP Morgan Chase as Vision Sponsor, IBM & NTT Data as Headline Sponsors, and Deloitte, Fiserv, Intuit, Macquarie, Moody's, Morningstar, Northern Trust, Randstad, Standard Chartered GBS, and ZS Associates as Associate Sponsors has been invaluable in enabling LGBT+ inclusion across India. A kind thanks also to our other sponsors Diageo, HSBC, Mastercard, Marsh McLennan, Nagarro, Dow India, Alvarez & Marsal, and Acuity Knowledge Partners, for their indispensable support in making the IWEI Summit & Awards 2024 a reality.

We're eager to see what our Top Employers and Award Winners will achieve in **2025** and look forward to celebrating those achievements with you all next year!

With thanks,



Keshav Suri



Ram Sinha



Simon Blake



WE STAND PROUD

With our loved ones, our coworkers
and our entire community – today
and every day.

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HOW IWEI WORKS

The India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) is the definitive benchmarking tool for LGBT+ workplace inclusion in India. The IWEI tackles the challenges of LGBT+ inclusion by offering in-depth assessments to measure your company's current state, providing a clear, tailored roadmap with planning structures, best practices, and actionable guidelines.

EMPLOYER SURVEY

The Index studies **9 parameters** across different areas of employment policy and practice. Each participating company compiles a submission, accompanied by supporting evidence, which demonstrates their performance against a set of best-practice criteria. The IWEI team then thoroughly reviews each submission to give companies a holistic picture of where they stand on inclusion.

Section 1: Policies and Benefits determine if the company has policies ensuring equal treatment of LGBT+ employees, and benefits to support the needs of the community.

Section 2: Employee Lifecycle assesses how the company engages with all employees to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues and looks at the entire employee lifecycles with a lens of inclusion.

Section 3: Employee Resource Group evaluates the company's facilities for LGBT+ employees to network, consult, and offer feedback.

Section 4: Allies And Role Models examines the company's support for developing LGBT+ and ally role models.

Section 5: Senior Leadership inspects the initiatives and the leadership's efforts to promote LGBT+ equality.

Section 6: Monitoring assesses how the company enables its LGBT+ staff to self-ID.

Section 7: Procurement studies how the company engages with LGBT+ suppliers and sensitises their supply chain.

Section 8: Community Engagement evaluates the company's support for LGBT+ community groups and public promotion of LGBT+ equality outside the workplace.

Section 9: Additional Work seeks out examples in addition to any work that the Index previous sections haven't already covered.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK SURVEY (EFS)

The IWEI offers a voluntary opportunity for companies to receive feedback about their employees' individual journeys with LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace. This survey is completely anonymous and allows companies to gain invaluable insight from LGBT+ and ally employees. IWEI 2024 also rewards an additional 2 marks to their final IWEI score for participation in EFS.

TOP EMPLOYER AWARDS

Once submissions are received and evaluated, the companies are given a score and celebrated as Top 10, Gold, Silver, or Bronze IWEI Top Employers. Not all submissions qualify for the Top Employer Award. Overall scores are kept confidential between the company and the IWEI partnership, as is the general participation of any companies that wish to remain anonymous.

Following the release of the IWEI Top Employers results, companies have the option of receiving a detailed report and a feedback meeting for a small fee. During this meeting, they receive tailored feedback on their submission and action-planning tips for the year ahead. Participation in the IWEI is otherwise free of charge.

SPECIAL AWARDS

The IWEI program offers prestigious awards beyond the main benchmarking process. Companies participating in the IWEI study can nominate exceptional individuals and their Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for these special recognitions. This year, we celebrated winners across 6 categories: Ally Trailblazer of the Year, LGBT+ Trailblazer of the Year, Pride ERG of the Year, DEI Champion of the Year, Pride Executive Sponsor of the Year, and our newest category - Supplier Diversity Champion of the Year.

These awards celebrate individuals, initiatives, and ERGs that have gone above and beyond to create inclusive workplaces for LGBT+ colleagues in India and support their companies on their LGBT+ inclusion journey. It is free to participate, completely optional for companies to nominate, and does not affect the company's final IWEI score.



Be Proud Be Equal

IBM is committed to providing an environment for LGBTQ+ individuals. Our success in creating an open and welcoming atmosphere—regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression—has allowed us to attract and retain valuable new talents.

IBM is proud to be the Headline Sponsor for India Workplace Equality Index 2024.

beequal.com



KEY STATISTICS

150

Companies Registered

10

Top 10 winners

27

Gold Award winners

34

Silver Award winners

33

Bronze Award winners

This year, IWEI participants collectively represented **20 sectors**

The highest performing sector is Professional Services, closely followed by BFSI. The Manufacturing & Production sector has done better than IT & ITes sector in the Index this year.

Highest Performing Section
Policies & Benefits

84%

Average score

57.65%
Average score

Least Performing Section
Procurement

46%

Average score

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

Employee Feedback Survey (EFS), provides valuable insights that enable companies to measure the impact of their initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and use this feedback to build a more inclusive and welcoming workplace for everyone.

In 2024, **3160** employees completed the questionnaire, **354** were from the LGBT+ community.



KEY FINDINGS

INDUSTRY TRENDS

- **92.31%** of organisations offer same-sex partner healthcare insurance to their employees.
- **91.35%** of organisations are compliant with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- **81.73%** of organisations have an LGBT+ Employee Resource Group.
- **71.15%** of organisations provide an opportunity to self-ID to their LGBT+ employees.

It's encouraging to see both legislation and corporate policies advancing employee wellbeing. With more companies embracing data-driven approaches like self-ID, there's an increasing focus on understanding and meeting community needs. In a context where same-sex couples lack official recognition, it's notable that companies are stepping up to offer essential support and benefits.

PICKING UP MOMENTUM

- **69.23%** of organisations provide insurance coverage for gender transition (Sex Reassignment Surgery /Gender Affirmation Surgery) to their employees.
- **57.59%** of organisations proactively recognise contributions to the LGBT+ employee resource group(s) during employee performance appraisals.
- **54.81%** of organisations offer training to those with recruitment responsibilities on reducing bias and discrimination towards LGBT+ people in the recruitment cycle.

Companies are making notable strides in areas that are essential for fostering a genuinely inclusive workplace. Insurance coverage for gender transition and recognition of contributions to LGBT+ employee resource groups reflect meaningful support for employees' unique journeys. Additionally, with over half of organisations now training recruitment teams on reducing bias, there's a clear shift towards inclusive hiring practices.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- **41.35%** of organisations support LGBT+ employees at all levels to become visible role models through training, programs and/or resources.
- **39.42%** of organisations train or give guidance to the person/team responsible for procurement around diversity and inclusion outcomes, which are inclusive of LGBT+.
- **31.73%** of organisations have a Supplier Diversity program that encourages engagement with LGBT+ owned businesses.

While there is positive momentum, these figures highlight key areas for growth. Supporting LGBT+ employees as visible role models and guiding procurement teams on inclusive practices are crucial steps for fostering a genuinely inclusive culture. Expanding supplier diversity programs to engage with LGBT+ owned businesses remains a significant opportunity for companies to drive broader impact and strengthen community connections.

JPMorganChase

“

At JPMorganChase, we are working to implement an inclusive approach in how we help the communities in which we operate. We believe that lifting up the communities and countries in which we do business enhances our business, the general economic well-being of these communities and countries and long-term shareholder value. We will thrive when our communities thrive.

We also believe that having an inclusive workforce — that is reflective of diverse backgrounds and perspectives — and creating more equitable access to opportunities in our business pursuits, makes our company stronger and more profitable, as well as a better global corporate citizen. This starts, first and foremost, with taking a broad lens when sourcing talent and building and fostering an inclusive work environment where our employees are respected, trusted and encouraged to bring their authentic and most productive selves to work. We would like to provide a fair chance for everyone to succeed — regardless of their background.

The firm's PRIDE Business Resource Group (BRG) engages and supports LGBTQ+ employees and allies in promoting an inclusive environment. BRGS are one way we engage and support our employees to help build an inclusive workplace culture in which everyone feels welcome. We have 10 BRGs across with over 600 chapters and sites, and over half of our employees are a member of at least one BRG.

”



BEST PRACTICES

In a country where traditional norms often prevail, these unique and best practices are redefining LGBT+ inclusion in India. These examples demonstrate that creating an inclusive work culture is not only possible but is already yielding transformative results across diverse sectors.



ALVAREZ & MARSAL

Alvarez & Marsal's Out for Business Program offers pro-bono consulting to LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, focusing on business planning, operational due diligence, and financial optimization. Currently supporting two LGBTQ+ businesses, the program equips entrepreneurs with essential tools to grow and sustain their ventures. Through this initiative, Alvarez & Marsal enables these businesses to overcome challenges related to scaling and profitability. By providing expert consulting at no cost, the program creates a direct, positive impact on the entrepreneurial journeys of LGBTQ+ business owners, helping them achieve financial independence and long-term success.



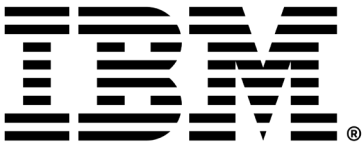
BCG has developed several tools to track and enhance workplace inclusion for LGBT+ employees. The Diversity & Inclusion Assessment for Leadership (DIAL) evaluates current diversity efforts and highlights areas for improvement, allowing leaders to see the effectiveness of their strategies. Workplace Inclusion Scorecard & Evaluation (WISE) tracks diversity metrics, enabling organisations to measure their progress against inclusion goals. Building on DIAL, Thrive uses demand-centric growth models to offer deeper insights into workforce needs and BLISS (Bias-Free, Leadership, Inclusion, Safety, and Support) Index offers a comprehensive, statistically rigorous view into the factors that influence feelings of inclusion in the workplace.



At Cummins, the Pride India ERG has organised its initiatives into six pillars to efficiently distribute and expedite work across different domains. Each pillar follows an annual work plan derived from a five-year strategy to fulfil the mission and vision commitments. This framework allows the Cummins ERG to delve into the nuances of various facets and areas for improvement and to create a significant impact to build a safe and inclusive environment. Cummins India has reaffirmed its commitment to all employees in India by supporting Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) for all Cummins India Region employees.



Godrej Properties Limited launched the Make Your Mark - Pride Internship program to enhance LGBTQIA+ representation in the real estate sector. Through a combination of mentorship and on-the-job training over nine months, this initiative introduces LGBTQIA+ talent to the industry while building a diverse talent pipeline. The program has demonstrated significant success, with 77% of Pride Interns transitioning to job opportunities—47% becoming full-time employees and 30% joining on a contractual basis. Now in its ninth batch, the program highlights sustainable efforts to create lasting change within the organisation.



At IBM, the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are deeply embedded in its culture, driving initiatives that empower LGBTQ+ employees to thrive at every stage of their career journey. A cornerstone of IBM's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion is the 'Out Role Model (ORM) Development Program'. Out Role Models (ORMs) at IBM are visible champions of LGBTQ+ inclusion, driving positive change both locally and globally. As ORM, IBMers gain increased visibility with executives, leadership opportunities in key diversity initiatives, access to exclusive career development events, and a global network. The ORM program was launched in 2016 to deepen the LGBTQ+ inclusive culture by offering leadership sessions, mentoring, and stretch assignments to the ORMs. IBM equips LGBTQ+ employees to take on leadership roles. And it includes training managers who are responsible to take decisions that can make a difference. The program has become a vital platform for sharing experiences, creating a ripple effect that fosters an environment of mutual support and empowerment.

IBM also supports LGBTQ+ employees through key initiatives like the 'Voluntary Self-Identification process', allowing employees to confidentially disclose their identities, the provision to update pronouns and preferred names on their profiles. For transgender employees, IBM offers a comprehensive transition framework, ensuring offering personalized guidance and resources at individual, team, and managerial levels. Programs such as the 'Self-Inclusion series', 'Intentional Career Development', 'Leaders Connect' & 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Programs' help employees explore their identities and build essential career skills in a psychologically safe environment. With a focus on leadership development, visibility, and holistic support, IBM is paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.



Merck's Rainbow Mentorship Program, in collaboration with Pride Circle, pairs company leaders with LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs to foster mutual growth. Leaders engage directly with entrepreneurs, gaining firsthand insight into the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community. This mentorship provides valuable guidance for entrepreneurs, supporting their professional development and helping them navigate the complexities of running a business. The program also broadens leaders' understanding of the LGBTQ+ experience, creating a bridge between corporate leadership and community empowerment, directly contributing to the success and growth of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs.

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your true self:



Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley's Pride and Allies Network has developed a guidebook featuring role models from the LGBTQ+ community and their allies. This resource captures the experiences of 14 leaders across various levels, sharing insights on their journeys and advice on being effective role models and allies. Distributed to network members, the guidebook serves as a valuable tool for fostering understanding and inspiration, encouraging both LGBTQ+ individuals and allies to aspire toward impactful leadership and support within the firm.



Nasdaq's innovative Rule 5605 mandates that most Nasdaq-listed companies have at least two diverse directors, including one self-identified female member and one self-identified underrepresented minority or LGBTQ+ member. This groundbreaking regulation requires companies to publicly disclose diversity statistics about their boards annually. By holding organisations accountable for board diversity, Nasdaq fosters an inclusive environment that champions diverse voices and perspectives at the highest levels of corporate governance, thus promoting representation and visibility for LGBTQ+ leaders in the business community.



ServiceNow implemented an extensive plan for Pride Month that engaged LGBT+ employees and allies through various initiatives. The Pride Walk fostered a sense of community, while a fireside chat with Sophia David raised awareness and promoted psychological safety for LGBT+ individuals. For the first time, the company gamified LGBT+ sensitization by partnering with Pride Circle for the Pride Bingo activity. In addition, ServiceNow supported local LGBT-owned businesses by hosting them on their Hyderabad campus, creating a platform for community engagement. Employees celebrated love in all its forms by reviewing Rumi - The Book of Love, and Pride-themed Zoom backgrounds adorned internal meetings throughout June.



Tata Steel recognizes the unique challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals and addresses these through comprehensive support and skill development. The company offers a year-long program that equips LGBTQIA+ recruits with the necessary skills to navigate occupational, social, and emotional challenges. They prioritise LGBTQIA+ employees for accommodation and work to sensitise the existing employees of the organisations; the touch points e.g. hospitals, sports department etc as well the communities where

these employees reside. Along with the existing medical benefits Tata Steel provides dedicated medical support tailored to LGBTQIA+ employees' needs. The company has also introduced a honeymoon package for same-sex partners, providing an inclusive experience with 12 room nights at top hotels worldwide, complete with meals and transportation.



The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group champions inclusivity and support for the LGBTQIA+ community through visible symbols and thoughtful gestures woven into their hospitality experience. Team Members proudly wear Pure Love badge, signifying allyship and solidarity, while the Progressive Pride Flag flies permanently at each property, reinforcing their unwavering commitment to diversity.

Elphie, the group's vibrant and gender-neutral mascot, serves as an ambassador for inclusion, adding a touch of warmth to guest interactions. Each guest room features a colourful soft toy of Elphie accompanied by a curated collection of books that reflect the diversity and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community. Books like *Queeristan*, *Equally*, and *Sex and the Supreme Court* are thoughtfully placed to enrich the stay for LGBTQIA+ guests and foster awareness and understanding for all. This immersive experience affirms The Lalit's dedication to making every guest feel respected, and celebrated.

zomato

Zomato's Period Leave Policy allows women and transgender employees to take up to 10 days of leave annually for menstrual health needs. This initiative addresses the biological realities of menstruation, providing necessary time off to ensure employees can manage their health without stigma. By recognizing and supporting the unique challenges faced by women and transgender individuals, Zomato fosters a more inclusive workplace that prioritises employee well-being.

TOP EMPLOYER AWARDS

In recognition of their leading work in LGBT+ inclusion, IWEI congratulates the following Top Employers:





Top 10 employers have integrated LGBT+ inclusion comprehensively and serve as industry thought leaders, setting the standard with transformative initiatives to lead the change.

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BCG

citi

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SURAJ AGARWAL

Senior Analyst - Career Development & The OPEN Lead India

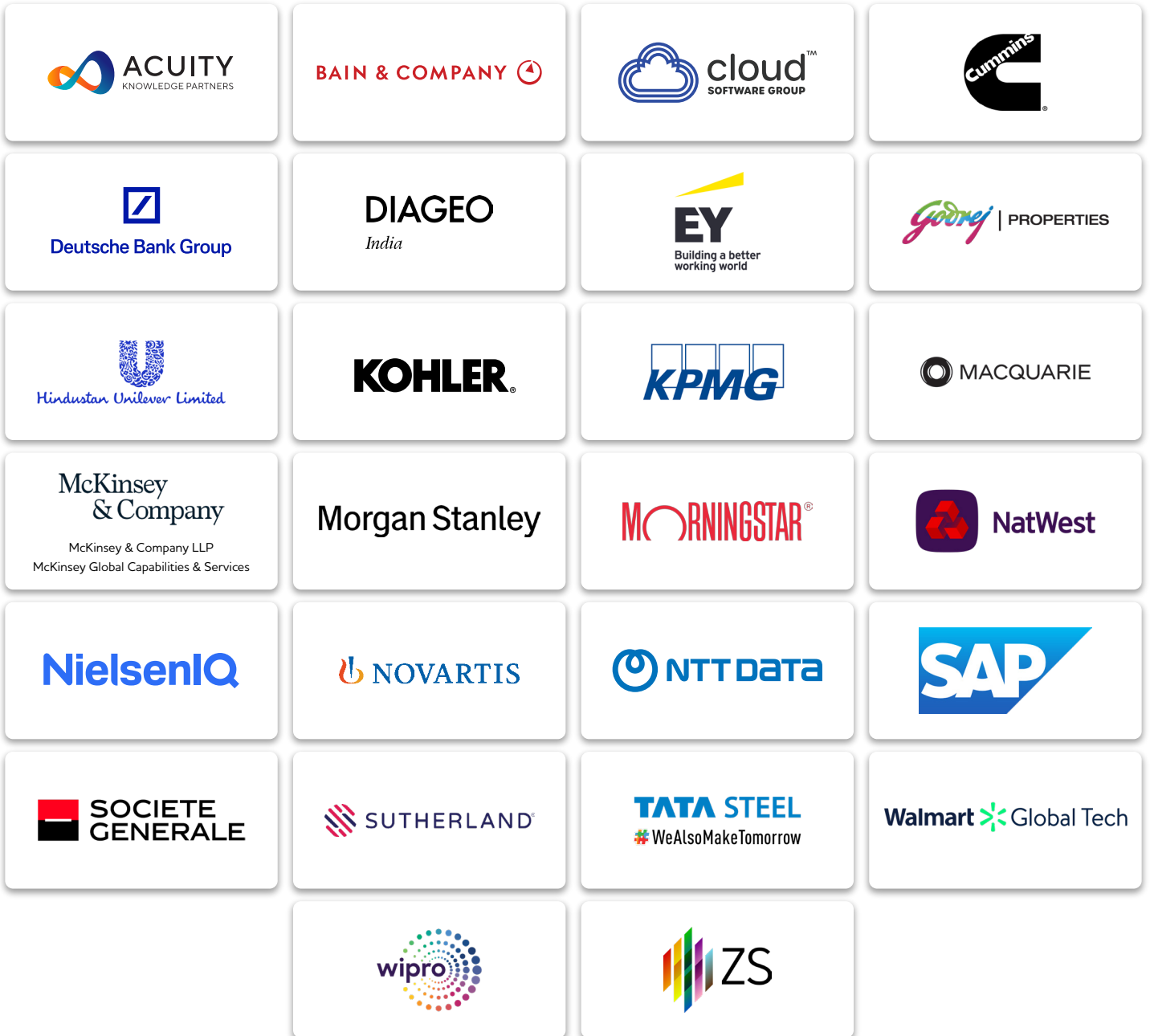
"Nasdaq is committed to create safe space for LGBTQ+ professionals through various awareness initiatives, networking mixers and most importantly - leadership's commitment for inclusion. **The OPEN (Out & Proud Employees at Nasdaq)** acts as a collective for the LGBTQ+ employees to connect, mobilize and create a culture of solidarity"

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Gold employers have successfully embedded LGBT+ inclusion in their core policies, hiring practices, and external communication, demonstrating a long-term & in-depth commitment towards LGBT+ inclusion.





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Silver employers have made significant achievements in promoting LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace, demonstrating progress and impact over time.

1 company remains anonymous

It's a rainbow in the sky!

Deloitte has set a world record for unfurling the largest Pride Flag on a building!

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Bronze employers have started their journey to better LGBT+ inclusion at work by developing inclusive policies and initiating activities that promote LGBT+ inclusion for employees.

1 company remains anonymous

ALLY TRAILBLAZER OF THE YEAR

Powered By



nagarro



Anuradha Bhati (she/her)

*Assistant Vice President, HR Business
Partner Infrastructure*

Deutsche Bank



Anuradha Bhati has been a transformative force in fostering a diverse and inclusive culture at Deutsche Bank, especially for the LGBT+ community, over the past six years. A passionate advocate for inclusion, Anuradha has been instrumental in breaking biases and creating a mindset shift across the organisation. She has driven the creation of a safe space for the LGBT+ community by building a network of over 500 active Allies in India, and evolving key people policies to be more inclusive, including extending dependent benefits, medical insurance, and gender reassignment surgery coverage to same-sex partners.

Anuradha led the introduction of gender-neutral policies around corporate attire, relocation, adoption, surrogacy, and paid leave for gender transition. She has also played a key role in launching initiatives like the Safe Zone and

Inclusive Sphere trainings, which foster allyship and encourage employees to bring their whole selves to work. Her leadership has resulted in key infrastructure changes, such as setting up all-gender restrooms across Deutsche Bank's India offices and introducing the Gender Transition at Workplace Guide to support transitioning staff and their managers.

In addition, she has also overseen several awareness and engagement initiatives, including Deutsche Bank's participation in Pride Month, the celebration of IDAHOT, and Pride Walks to visibly demonstrate solidarity.

Anuradha's relentless dedication to advancing LGBT+ inclusion is an inspiration to all, and her impact resonates across the bank and beyond. Congratulations, Anuradha!



SPECIAL AWARDS

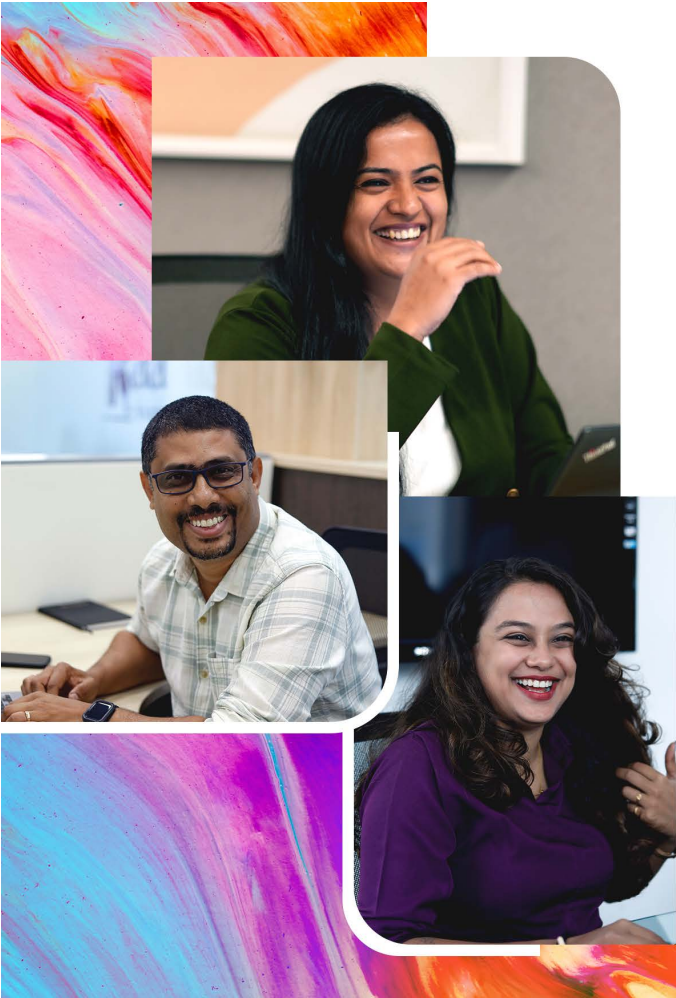
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LGBT+ TRAILBLAZER OF THE YEAR

Powered By



Amita Karadkhedkar (she/her)

*Senior Vice President, Citi Global Wealth
Technology and Co-Chair, Citi India
Pride Inclusion Network*

Citi



Amita Karadkhedkar, is a trailblazing leader in the realm of diversity and inclusion. As a woman of transgender experience, Amita has used her unique perspective to drive transformative change within her organisation and beyond. Serving as the Co-Chair of the Citi India Pride Inclusion Network, she has been instrumental in shaping policies and initiatives that foster an inclusive work environment, especially for the LGBT+ community.

In her role, Amita championed Citi's self-ID campaign, allowing employees to confidentially identify themselves as male, female, or third gender. She also played a pivotal role in expanding gender-affirmative surgery coverage and creating employment opportunities for the LGBT+ community, with a focus on transgender individuals.

Amita's influence extends beyond her desk. She has actively engaged with over 120 premier educational institutions and multinational organisations, including through her TEDx and

NASSCOM talks, challenging stereotypes and fostering a deeper understanding of LGBT+ issues. As an advocate for workplace inclusivity, she co-launched the 'Accelerating Trans Inclusion in the Workplace in India' research with Community Business and contributed to the creation of the 'Trans Inclusion Manifesto' in partnership with Godrej.

Amita's vision of building an ecosystem of allyship led to mandatory ally training for senior managers at Citi, ensuring leaders are equipped to support diverse teams. Her external partnerships demonstrate Citi's commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly through initiatives like supporting 200 transgender entrepreneurs in establishing their businesses and creating market linkages.

Amita's leadership and activism serve as a beacon of hope for LGBT+ individuals across India, and her accomplishments continue to inspire generations. Congratulations, Amita!



SPECIAL AWARDS

PRIDE EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG) OF THE YEAR



NatWest Group India's ERG LGBTQ+ Innovative Workstream



The LGBTQ+ Innovative Workstream has been instrumental in fostering an inclusive workplace where everyone feels empowered to bring their best selves. Driven by their four key pillars—"Enable through Policies," "Empower through Training & Awareness," "Encourage through Leadership Advocacy & Allyship," and "Embed through Recruitment and Self-Identification"—the ERG has launched several impactful initiatives this year to support LGBTQ+ employees and allies.

Notable achievements include the TRANSpire program, a six-month work placement initiative designed to upskill and integrate LGBTQ+ community members into the workplace, hiring 13 LGBTQ+ candidates as part of the 2024 cohort. The ERG also launched the All Inclusive Mentoring (AIM) Program, a reverse mentoring initiative where LGBTQ+ employees share their experiences with senior leaders, fostering understanding and allyship.

The ERG's work extends beyond the workplace, with members actively supporting the community at Bangalore, Gurgaon, and Chennai Pride Parades, participating in industry roundtable discussions on DEI best practices, and hosting events like the "Rainbow Mixer" and "Pride Connections." These initiatives not only celebrate LGBTQ+ talent but also provide safe spaces and career growth opportunities.

NatWest has truly embedded LGBTQ+ inclusion into their organisational culture, creating safe spaces, driving awareness, and offering LGBTQ+ professionals opportunities to grow and thrive, and the ERG has played a crucial role in achieving this.

Congratulations to NatWest Group India's ERG - LGBTQ+ Innovative Workstream for their impactful progress to equality!



SPECIAL AWARDS



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At FIS®, we prioritize fostering an inclusive and diverse workforce that mirrors the financial sector we serve. We are honored to be recognized by the India Workplace Equality Index for our commitment and support to driving LGBT+ equality.

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DEI CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

Powered By



Anupama G. Kothapalli (she/her)

Senior Vice President

Deloitte in India



Anupama G. Kothapalli has been a fierce advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at Deloitte, leveraging her leadership to drive policy-level interventions and spearhead numerous programs centred around true inclusion. Under her leadership, Anupama established DEI goals for the leadership team, pushing a percentage of Partners and Managing Directors in India to undergo 'Reverse Mentoring' sessions on LGBTQIA+ inclusion by the end of the fiscal year.

She also led the rollout of the 'Demystifying LGBTQIA+ Inclusion' e-Learning course in India, enabling thousands of staff members to get sensitized at their own speed and convenience. Anupama was the visionary behind the 'TRANSform' program, which promotes conscious recruitment and assimilation of transgender professionals into the workforce. This initiative also provides financial sponsorships for trans children disowned by their families, with numerous students across urban and rural regions

supported last year with a target of doubling this reach in the current year. Anupama's DEI efforts extend to Supplier Diversity initiatives, encouraging that a percentage Deloitte's Procurement is routed through minority-owned, diverse vendors. This effort has generated livelihood and income for many marginalized and under-represented businesses in the past year. She also played a pivotal role in integrating LGBTQIA+ components in Deloitte's Infrastructure Accessibility Audit, ensuring gender-neutral restrooms in all offices across all cities.

Her leadership is exemplified by her role in unfurling India's largest Pride Flag on Deloitte Towers. Anupama remains an inspiring force, using her power and privilege to enact meaningful change, driving progress, and empowering both the queer community and allies. Congratulations Anupama, for your unparalleled dedication to building a safe and inclusive workplace!



SPECIAL AWARDS

DEI CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

Powered By



Parul Dhir (she/her)

Head of DEI

Acuity Knowledge Partners



As the Head of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Acuity, Parul has been a pivotal force in creating a culture of intentional inclusion across the organisation. With a clear strategic vision, Parul has cultivated a culture where senior leaders are active DEI sponsors. Her initiatives involve organising targeted workshops and roundtable discussions that not only highlight DEI's importance but also equip leaders with tools to model inclusive behaviour and support underrepresented groups.

Parul's impact resonates throughout the employee community, fostering a culture of allyship and inclusivity at every level. Through innovative training on inclusion, she has empowered employees to champion DEI, sparking meaningful change and inclusivity throughout the organisation. This culture of allyship is further reinforced by programs like the Ally Reverse Mentoring Program, which she launched in 2024 with Pride Circle, enabling senior leaders to gain insights directly from

LGBT+ individuals and allies. This program has enriched leadership perspectives and nurtured a culture of empathy and authentic allyship across Acuity.

Under Parul's guidance, Acuity has introduced gender-neutral policies, parental leave, and healthcare benefits inclusive of same-sex partners and gender-affirmation surgeries. Her work extends to accessibility improvements through the LEAP network, dedicated to employees with disabilities. Parul's global approach to DEI has reached Acuity's international offices, with initiatives like local roundtables and events that foster cultural inclusivity across locations. Under her leadership Acuity had an accelerated adoption of DEI and transformed into an LGBTQ+ Gold Top Employer at IWEI 2023.

Congratulations Parul, for your dedication to building an inclusive workplace!



SPECIAL AWARDS

PRIDE ERG EXECUTIVE SPONSOR OF THE YEAR



Shiv Kumar (he/him)

India HR Head

Merck India – Merck Group



Shiv Kumar, India HR Head at Merck India, has been a transformative force in driving LGBT+ inclusion. Under his leadership, Merck India has achieved significant milestones in fostering a more inclusive and equitable workspace.

His commitment to building a safe and supportive environment is evident through the formation of a dedicated LGBT+ ERG team, where Shiv actively serves as both mentor and executive sponsor. In collaboration with Pride Circle, he played a key role in auditing Merck's practices and implementing a strategy that not only guided internal policies but also inspired cultural shifts within the organisation.

Shiv's leadership has been pivotal in the rise of self-identification at Merck India, with 73 employees identifying as part of the LGBT+ community within two years. Additionally, Merck India has launched impactful initiatives such as the Rainbow Bazaar Mentorship Program, gender-neutral fertility benefits, and a series of panels and workshops that

celebrate LGBT+ stories and foster inclusivity year-round. Through these initiatives, Merck has created spaces for meaningful mentorship, provided supportive benefits, and enabled continuous learning on LGBT+ inclusion for all employees. These transformative initiatives were key steps that led to welcoming the organisation's first openly LGBT+ hire, marking a significant milestone in their diversity efforts.

Shiv's unwavering support for LGBT+ inclusion has cemented him as a leading advocate both internally and externally. His efforts have transformed intent into action, making him a driving force behind Merck India's journey toward becoming a truly inclusive workplace.

Shiv's efforts continue to inspire meaningful change within the organisation and beyond. Congratulations, Shiv!



SPECIAL AWARDS

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

Powered By



ZS Associates India



ZS Associates has set a remarkable standard in supporting and empowering LGBT+ suppliers through their innovative and inclusive initiatives. Their commitment to supplier diversity is rooted in their compliance with SA 8000 (Social Accountability) and ISO 26000 standards, which guide their programs and ensure the highest levels of social responsibility and ethical business practices. Going above and beyond, ZS Associates engages in key initiatives like LGBT+ Inclusion Training for their procurement team, equipping them to recognize and support diverse suppliers meaningfully. They further promote inclusivity by extending best practices, training, and events to their suppliers, fostering a culture of continuous learning and support.

Through collaborations with organizations such as the MIST LGBTQ Foundation, BeUnic, and Pride Circle, ZS Associates has made significant strides

in promoting LGBT+ supplier growth. Their impactful efforts include pro-bono projects, community engagement, and sponsorships, all aimed at fostering an inclusive business environment. In 2023, 14% of ZS Associates' spend was allocated to certified diverse suppliers, demonstrating their dedication to underrepresented groups. Additionally, their active engagement includes mentorship programs designed to accelerate LGBT+ businesses, offering essential resources like business development, networking, and strategic guidance.

By driving inclusivity across their procurement processes and beyond, ZS Associates continues to lead by example.

Congratulations, ZS Associates, on this well-deserved recognition!



SPECIAL AWARDS

▶ Standing together with pride, for pride ◀



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IWEI 2025 CALENDAR



JAN-MAR
2025

Customised Feedback Report & Consultation

APR
2025

Announcement of 6th Edition & Launch Webinars

MAY
2025

Submission Opens for Employer, Employee Survey & Awards Nomination

JUL
2025

Submission Closes for Employer Survey & Awards Nomination

AUG
2025

Submission Closes for Employee Feedback Survey

NOV
2025

Summit and Awards (in-person)

To become a sponsor for IWEI 2025, please write to nikita@thepridecircle.com

IWEI PARTNERS



The Keshav Suri Foundation has made strides with its various initiatives and programs, focusing on the marginal intersections of society, including the LGBTQAI+ communities, people with disabilities, and acid attack survivors. The foundation is working towards queer livelihood building, access to education through scholarships and fellowships, making mental health services available for the communities, and creating workspaces diverse & inclusive. The foundation is on a mission to Embrace, Empower, and Mainstream various communities across the country.



Pride Circle is a Diversity & Inclusion company with a mission to enable & empower the LGBTQ+ community, Allies, Educational Institutions, organisations, & Society in fostering a culture of belonging for all. Founded in India, now operating in the UK & US. We partner with over 500 companies worldwide offering a comprehensive, best-in-class consulting & advocacy programs that enables them to foster safe, inclusive and welcoming work environments. With our experience & growing roster of national & international companies, governments & non-profit organisations, we're leading the LGBTQ+ inclusion revolution in India & transforming workplaces across the globe.



Founded in London in 1989, Stonewall now works in each nation of the UK and has established partnerships across the globe. We help create transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people through our campaigns, research and change and empowerment programmes. We continue to fight for a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live their lives to the fullest.

CONTACT US

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