

TEN STEPS TO A TRANSGENDER INCLUSIVE COMPANY

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HR departments are generally responsible for ensuring that all transgender employees follow certain procedures through any type of gender transition. The following ten steps should help ensure that the transition takes place in a positive manner for transgender employees, coworkers and management.

1. AN INCLUSIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The most important step in becoming a transgender inclusive company is to include language in the EEO policy stating the company prohibits discrimination and harassment of individuals because of their gender identity, gender expression or gender characteristics.

2. TRANSGENDER RELATED POLICIES

The company will need to address company policies in several areas as the transgender employee goes through transition.

- Bathrooms
- Dressing Rooms
- Dress Codes
- Employee Records and Identification

3. TRANSGENDER TRANSITION POLICY

The company will need to create a new policy addressing gender transition in the workplace. The policy should address the following issues:

- Purpose of the policy
- Statement of corporate intention to be supportive of transgender transition
- Basic transgender / corporate definitions and terminology
- Responsibilities and Steps by HR or Diversity Leadership
- Responsibilities and Steps to be taken by the Employee
- Resources

4. TRANSGENDER EMPLOYEE TRANSITION PLAN

For each employee that transitions, the company should have a personalized written plan describing the roles of the employee and company during the time period. The plan can be a form that is filled out with specific details pertinent to each employee.

- Name of employee
- Listing the approximate date transition is to begin (living as new gender role) and end
- Dress codes expected
- List of individual names / contact for support
 - HR transition lead
 - EAP contact
 - Diversity and/or Employee Resource Group contacts
 - Health benefits contact
 - PTO/leave benefits contact
- New name, pronouns and records changes
- Security clearance issues
- Bathroom / Dressing room / Offsite Facility usage

5. TRANSGENDER HEALTH BENEFITS

Health benefits regarding licensed professional counseling, medical doctor treatments and potential surgeries should be addressed. As of 2008, the American Medical Association now regards gender reassignment surgery a medical necessity for transgender men and women. Personal time off or leave of absence will also need to be addressed. Here is a list of items to consider.

- Licensed Professional Counseling
 - Sexuality
 - Gender Identity Disorder
- Medical Treatments
 - Hormone Replacement Therapy
 - Hair Removal (Laser, Electrolysis)
- Potential Surgeries for Male to Female Transsexual Women
 - Genital Reconstruction Surgery (Orchiectomy, Penile Inversion)
 - Facial Feminization Surgery
 - Tracheal Shave
 - Body Feminization Surgery (Breast Augmentation, Liposuction, Abdominoplasty, Buttock Augmentation)
 - Voice Box Surgery
- Potential Surgeries for Female to Male Transsexual Men
 - Genital Reconstruction Surgery (Hysterectomy, Metoidioplasty, Pedicle Flap)
 - Facial Masculinization Surgery
 - Body Masculinization Surgery (Chest Reconstruction, Calf Implants, Thigh Lifts, Liposuction)

6. COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

Communications during an employee transition is very important and also can be very challenging. Some companies tend to ignore the matter which can be seen as an invitation by some coworkers to harass the transgender employee. Communication helps to keep people informed so that anxiety is reduced. There are several items to keep in mind:

- Have an HR meeting w/ employee when they announce their transition
- Meet with the employee's supervisor
- Meet with the employee's coworkers, usually without the employee so they may feel free to ask questions
- Hold a Transgender Sensitivity Training

7. TRANSGENDER SENSITIVITY TRAINING

The best thing a company can do in providing transgender diversity training is to bring a mature transgender voice into the workplace. Often, employers will depend upon the transgender employee to be that voice, but that is not fair to the employee as they are in the midst of the complex and generally emotional transition itself. Training can include a number of topics such as:

- Sharing of a personal journey
- Causation of Transgenderism
- Workplace Experiences
- Terminology
- History
- Etiquette
- Equality and Equal Rights
- Current Events

Transition Experiences
Participatory Exercises / Testing
Q&A

8. AN EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

In addition to any formal company policies and guidelines, the President or CEO of an organization should regularly address that the company is LGBT friendly and supports the creation of employee resource groups and safe zones. Leadership should be clear that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

9. BE AWARE OF TRANSGENDER ISSUES

The local, state and national laws are in a constant state of flux, but the trend is moving towards providing protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Similarly, transgender transitions are being viewed as medically necessary and hence discriminatory to deny coverage.

ENDA – Employment Non Discrimination Act will impact sexuality and gender variance (not passed)

OSHA – Impacts bathroom usage, distance to bathrooms, etc.

WPATH – Impacts how the transition needs to take place for the employee (was HBGIDA)

Title VII – 1964 Civil rights act ruling prohibiting discrimination. *Diane Schroer v. Library of Congress*

Case ruled you can't discriminate against trans in employment (i.e., overturns previous ruling that trans are neither men nor women, hence not covered under Title VII)

Local statutes, court rulings, administrative regulations and administrative tribunals -

Local rulings dictate discriminatory practices, which are still legal in some jurisdictions

DSM – The American Psychiatric Association defines criteria for gender identity disorder (controversial terminology)

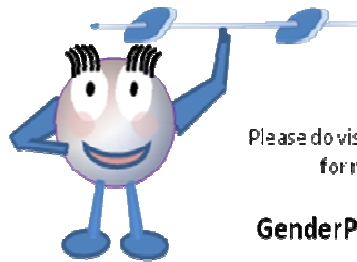
10. HELPFUL RESOURCES

Jillian Weiss, 2007. *Transgender Workplace Diversity*, Booksurge Publishing.

Vanessa Sheridan, 2009. *Transgender in the Workplace*, ABC-CLIO.

Bob Powers and Alan Ellis, 1995. *A Manager's Guide to Sexual Orientation in the Workplace*, Routledge.

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