



THE BUSINESS OF BELONGING™

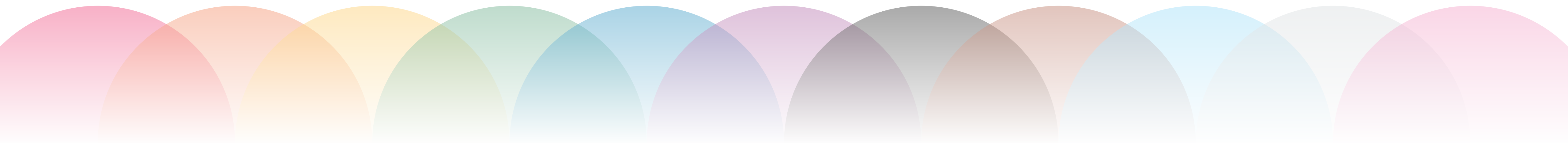
# Necessary Change

## Achieving Full LGBTQI+ Workplace Inclusion in Argentina

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A Project of the LGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce of Argentina (CCGLAR) and Out & Equal

[outandequal.org](http://outandequal.org)



# Necessary Change: Achieving Full LGBTQI+ Workplace Inclusion in Argentina

Argentina has been a notable leader in advancing equal rights and protections for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community. This includes:

- being the [first country in the hemisphere](#) to have marriage equality in 2010;
- passing one of the world's most [comprehensive transgender rights laws](#) in 2012; and,
- establishing a [1% quota for transgender workers](#) in civil service jobs.

While Argentina is a pioneer in favorable legislation for the LGBTQI+ community, laws and policies, by themselves, do not guarantee full social inclusion and opportunity. In addition, changing political winds can impact public policy related to the LGBTQI+ community. In fact, this report comes on the heels of the first round of votes (10/22/23) in Argentina's 2023 presidential election. The political rhetoric alone has had a chilling effect on the LGBTQI+ community, among others. While the country prepares for next month's run-off election and battles record inflation (138%)<sup>1</sup>, the movement to advance economic and business inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community is more important than ever.

Established in 2010, Argentina's LGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce (CCGLAR) is one of LATAM's longest-running organizations designed to promote the economic benefits of LGBTQI+-owned businesses by providing the type of cross-industry support that makes all businesses more inclusive. The CCGLAR has been a driving force in promoting tourism through public and private sector collaborations, including at its GNetwork360, the largest LGBTQI+ business conference in South America, running for over 15 years. The organization has built out the business case for welcoming the LGBTQI+ consumer market through research and convenings that support the development of businesses and products that cater to South America's diverse LGBTQI+ community.



In its 25-year history, Out & Equal has advanced LGBTQI+ workplace inclusion among hundreds of multinational, regional, and national employers supporting employees and businesses alike across Latin America, with deep roots in Brazil and Argentina, reaching businesses through convenings, expert resources, and analysis of the business climate for LGBTQI+ advancement. Out & Equal works in direct partnership with local companies, civil society organizations, and individual changemakers to develop and nurture best practices, set the tone for inclusion and belonging, and operationalize “glocal” (characterized by both local and global considerations and context) solutions and best practices.

In nearly five years of partnership, CCGLAR and Out & Equal have heard from numerous businesses and individual employees seeking benchmarking of best practices and tools to understand and support their own cultures of inclusion.

Together, CCGLAR and Out & Equal launched a first-of-its-kind resource and survey in March 2023 to:

- Understand the norms of small, mid-sized, and large national and multinational businesses in Argentina concerning LGBTQI+-aimed policies and practices;
- Assess the day-to-day experiences of LGBTQI+ and ally employees at work with particular attention paid to gaps between policies and practices and day-to-day culture; and
- Provide employers with a practical guide to both assess their levels of LGBTQI+ inclusion and make tangible change.

The principle that LGBTQI+ people are worthy of equal rights and desired members of the workforce and broader social inclusion is fair, just, and core to sustaining strong, innovative businesses. Many multinationals and an increasing number of regional businesses in Latin America have fully integrated LGBTQI+ inclusion initiatives into their strategic business models and vocally support the attraction and retention of talent with LGBTQI+ inclusion initiatives. In addition, businesses are growing their voice in the marketplace, with specialized marketing for the LGBTQI+ segment and signaling more broadly that they are forward-looking, inclusive businesses.

# DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS:

## Employer Size and Type

- **70%** at companies or organizations comprised of less than 1,000 people
- **70%** employed by multinational corporations\*, with the remaining 30% at local or small businesses or government entities

\*In Argentina, multinational companies can have “less than 1,000” employees

## By Gender and LGBTQI+ Identity

- **55%** identified as men, 32% as women, and 8% as nonbinary
- **66%** identified as members of the LGBTQI+ community, **15%** as transgender and **1%** as intersex

**Total**

**164**

respondents

This report surfaces tangible areas of challenge for the LGBTQI+ working community and areas of opportunity for businesses to be more inclusive across institutional policies, practices, and in how they sustain a daily culture of inclusion, resulting in greater profitability and innovation overall.

# 1. EQUITY AS A MATTER OF POLICY

The most foundational components of LGBTQI+ workplace inclusion are those enshrined into policy and often times associated with employee benefits. Even if a workplace “feels” welcoming, without concrete policies, these trends can change with management and be interpreted inconsistently. An inclusive culture alone cannot provide clear, tangible expectations of nondiscrimination, diversity, equity, and inclusion. For workspaces to be truly inclusive, effective policy must be put in place. For instance, 93% of Fortune 500 companies, many of which operate across South America, include sexual orientation protections and an impressive 91% include gender identity.<sup>2</sup>

Participants were asked about the presence of the following core policies in their workplace:

- Nondiscrimination policies that explicitly recognize protections for LGBTQI+ workers
- Name change protocols
- Inclusive bathrooms and/or changing rooms
- Benefits for LGBTQI+ couples and family members
- Inclusion of LGBTQI+ suppliers in existing supplier diversity programs

Among this diverse group of businesses across Argentina—from multinationals to local, two glaring gaps are evident: the complete lack of formalized LGBTQI+-inclusive policies or conversely, workplaces have established policies; however, these policies are inadequately communicated. These gaps can lead to various challenges, including decreased productivity and loss of talent.

## Lack of Policies

- 57% of survey participants say that their company does not have explicit policies that prohibit the discrimination of LGBTQI+ people in the workplace.
- 38%, which accounts for nearly four-in-ten workers, state that their company **does not have** any of the LGBTQI+ inclusive policies mentioned in the survey.
- With respect to transgender and nonbinary-focused support, fewer than 20% of participants’ companies have name change protocols or gender-inclusive facilities.

In some instances, advocacy for change is actively rebuffed by these companies.

*"In more than two reviews of our internal policies, I asked to modify the men/women identifier to include other genders. I also asked to utilize gender neutral language when applicable. I was told that these suggestions could not be sent for approval."*

-Survey participant



## Inadequate Communication and Lack of Policy Awareness

Policies living on paper but not communicated or infused into the company culture, starting first with basic awareness of LGBTQI+-related policies cannot be operationalized. If people leaders or hiring managers are unaware of the company's support and expectations around equal treatment in the workplace, then inclusion gaps become pervasive. Responses on awareness paint such a picture:

- 13% of participants do not know whether their workplace has LGBTQI+ inclusive policies.
- Only 30% are at workplaces where most other coworkers are aware of the existence of LGBTQI+ anti-discrimination policies.
- 41% of participants say that most, if not all, job applicants don't know if their company or organization is LGBTQI+ inclusive.

While the country's legislation recognizes protections for LGBTQI+ workers, as well as marriage equality, adoption rights for LGBTQI+ people, a gender identity law that allows trans and nonbinary people to self-identify in official documents, and a trans labor quota in the public sector, these results point to the need for each company to not only implement policies supporting equity in the workplace for LGBTQI+ people, but to intentionally communicate those policies across the workforce.

Not having a set institutionalized structure or clear signals of welcome and belonging in the workplace sends a message of ambivalence and a lack of commitment to the LGBTQI+ community, which can adversely affect productivity, recruitment, and retention.

## Decreased productivity:

*"My ID says that I am a woman, but I am a trans man. My boss and my colleagues are conservative. Needless to say, I hide who I am out of fear for my life, and fear of losing my job."*

-Survey participant

Working in fear of showing your authentic self for fear of consequences and potential retaliation not only affects the mental health of LGBTQI+ people but also impedes their professional growth and can affect the organizational climate of the entire company.<sup>3</sup> As economist Lee Badgett points out, "Discrimination is estimated to cost economies up to one percent of total economic output measured as annual gross domestic product."<sup>4</sup>

## Recruitment and Retention Issues:

*"I am transmasculine and for some time I have not been assigned any projects that allow me to advance. For any project in which I offer myself they give me an excuse. I'm pretty much just going to work to show up and I don't feel entirely included by my cis\* male peers. I am currently awaiting a transfer to another agency where I feel that I will have more opportunities."*

-Survey participant

When managers are not working within the parameters of a nondiscrimination policy and employees are made to feel judged on their identity versus work product, they may leave or seek reassignment, which can result in loss of talent to other companies or leaders within a business unit to another in which their full potential is leveraged.

Fourteen percent of respondents would not recommend that people from the LGBTQI+ community or allies join their company and 40% said they would recommend it, but it depends largely on their position or which team they would potentially join. Companies need to ensure that their policies are uniform and communicated across the board to ensure that equal treatment does not change based on who your manager is.

\*The term "CIS" describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth.



## 2. BUILDING AND SUSTAINING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

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Within workplaces, supportive policies and the intent behind them—to attract and retain a diverse and innovative talent pool—must be extended by practices to help ensure LGBTQI+ talent can thrive.

Having effective practices of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is an indicator of innovation and progress.<sup>5</sup>

From the option to self-identify in company surveys as LGBTQI+ to trainings to external partnerships, leading global businesses have forged a path of inclusion with core internal and external practices designed to nurture LGBTQI+ talent.

These practices are not yet the norm in the average workplace in Argentina, but their presence is growing. Among respondents, roughly two-thirds have some supportive LGBTQI+ practices in place with great variation though:

- 34% report their company has LGBTQI+ inclusive trainings;
- 21% work for a company with External partnerships with LGBTQI+ groups;
- 20% have inclusive marketing campaigns;
- 19% have inclusive hiring efforts;
- 17% have self-identification and pronoun socialization; and
- 5% report their company has mentoring programs aimed at LGBTQI+ people in the company.

**Over 40% of participants work at companies that don't have any of these practices in place.**

*"I am actively part of a team that implements diversity and inclusion actions in the company. Although we have made progress, especially in training on issues such as the elimination of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, it is a half-hearted commitment."*

-Survey participant

Companies that have yet to establish comprehensive internal structures or concrete initiatives that support lasting inclusion for LGBTQI+ people in the workplace have a great opportunity to invest in their current talent and become a sought-after employer for new talent.



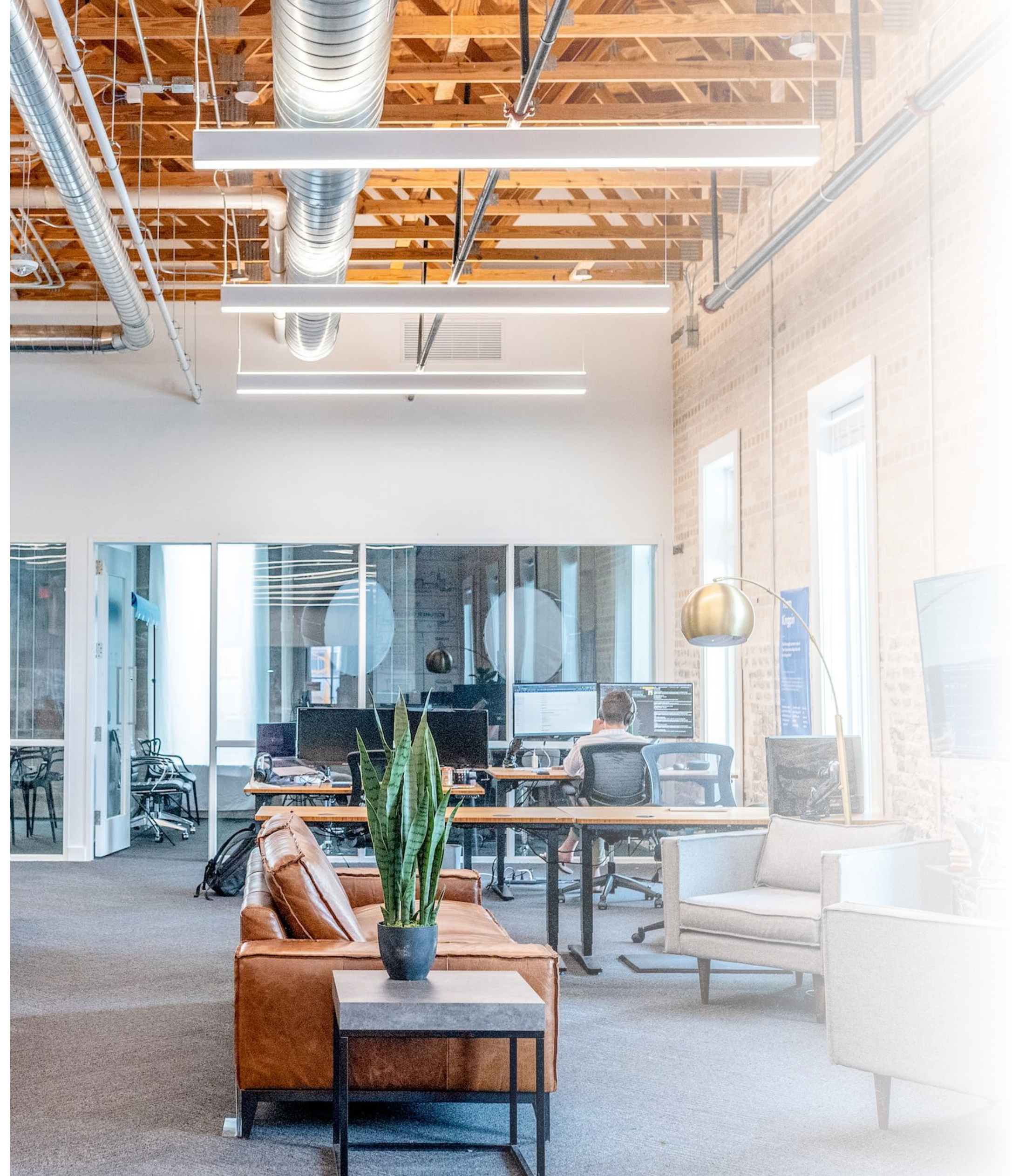
## Representation Matters

**Nearly four-in-ten (37%) of respondents report** that they never or rarely feel represented in the public profile and brand of their company. According to a Harvard Business Review study, lack of representation may lead to feelings of isolation and a reduced sense of belonging.<sup>6</sup> Engaging employees so they feel both represented and connected to the work is necessary for long-term innovation, growth, and profitability. Exclusion costs companies.

*"This is supposed to be an inclusive company but even managers misgender trans people on purpose and subtly oppress employees from the LGBTQI+ community."*

-Survey participant

Another important element of representation is ensuring proper recognition of people at work regarding correct pronoun usage and sharing in the workplace. This is a major concern among trans and nonbinary employees, yet **60% of participants** in this survey indicate that their colleagues rarely share their gender pronouns. Companies should be especially intentional in setting up and supporting practices for trans and nonbinary employees, as they often report the highest rates of disrespect in the workplace and beyond. Using correct gender pronouns matters—not only for trans and nonbinary people, but to guarantee everyone is recognized for who they are.



### 3. EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSION EFFORTS

The final section of the study assesses the day-to-day experiences of LGBTQI+ people and allies in the workplace. Everyday interactions—from conversations over coffee and scheduled weekly Zooms to customer greetings, in large part define workplace culture. Understanding these daily realities informs future initiatives and helps organizations truly comprehend where policies and practices can be strengthened.

#### Being Out, But Made Fun Of

While three-in-four LGBTQI+ respondents do not hide who they are at work, over half report regularly hearing anti-LGBTQI+ jokes and comments. Simply being out is not enough. Businesses need to cultivate environments in which being openly LGBTQI+ is met with respect, not insult. By not addressing pervasive anti-LGBTQI+ expressions, businesses lose talent and diminish their cultures overall.

- 76% do not feel as though they need to hide who they are at work.
- Over 50% of those surveyed reported hearing jokes or negative comments about the LGBTQI+ community at work.

*"Trans employees still have to deal with hostile environments. Even something as basic as a greeting is avoided."*

-Survey participant

#### Lagging Representation and Acknowledgment

LGBTQI+ diversity is not readily apparent without concerted visibility and communication. One of the most significant gaps in the daily experience of workers across Argentina is the persistent lack of visible openly LGBTQI+ leaders and employees. Furthermore, over half of respondents don't hear their leaders speak to their own LGBTQI+ efforts.

- 72% of respondents reported that they sometimes or rarely see LGBTQI+ people across all levels of the company.
- 53% rarely or never hear their leaders speak about the company's LGBTQI+ efforts.

More than half (53%) of participants don't believe that their employers would properly address concerns related to anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in the workplace.

If a majority of employees, such as those represented in this study, don't believe their employers would properly address anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination concerns, the policy most likely needs to be reworked and better communicated to staff.

*"The trans labor quota is a huge step, but you still have to deal with hostile environments, even something as basic as a greeting is avoided."*

-Survey participant

Business leaders in Argentina have a rich opportunity in front of them, to maximize the potential of the LGBTQI+ talent pool and grow their businesses overall by meaningfully investing in a diverse and committed workforce. A recent global survey found that 9% of adults identify as LGBTQI+ and that number is on a steady rise.<sup>7</sup> Beyond that, we know that younger generations are more likely to identify as LGBTQI+. And because the global workforce is on track to be 58% Gen Z and millennial by 2030, demonstrating a business' commitment to inclusion now is both necessary and strategic.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning with absolute clarity in word and action that LGBTQI+ inclusion is an important company value; companies should put practices in place that support LGBTQI+ inclusion and ultimately allow employees to be their full selves—unencumbered by bias or fear and relating to their jobs with utmost creativity and engagement.



# BELONGING AT EVERY LEVEL: STEPS TO CREATING A TRULY INCLUSIVE WORKSPACE

This research shows that while there are notable inclusion efforts in Argentinian companies supporting the LGBTQI+ community, much work remains to be done to bridge the gaps across policies, practices, and the day-to-day experiences of LGBTQI+ workers, especially trans and nonbinary talent.

Every day, talented individuals decide whether to join or leave companies. Savvy consumers are equally weighing whether to start or stop buying certain products. The fact that Argentina's LGBTQI+ community contributes \$23,000,000, 000 to Argentina's GDP annually is a big incentive for organizations intent on boosting profits, employee retention, and their brand reputation.<sup>9</sup> Companies can improve their chances of scoring high ranks among pro LGBTQI+ consumers and potential employees by leaning into their LGBTQI+ inclusion efforts, starting with these key takeaways:

1. Companies in Argentina must strengthen their policies, and initiatives, and benefits focused on the trans and nonbinary community. Of those reflected in this research, trans and nonbinary people face the most persistent bias as well as lagging policies and practices at work, leaving many, too fearful to be open at work. There is a clear need and resounding benefit to businesses creating trans and nonbinary-inclusive cultures, for the current and future workforce.
2. Inclusive policies are necessary but not sufficient to creating and sustaining inclusive workplaces. They must be consistently communicated and supported explicitly by affirming LGBTQI+ policies and practices. Too few LGBTQI+ employees perceive that their leaders speak loud and open about their company's inclusion and diversity efforts. Over time, these gaps lead to talent loss and ineffective recruiting efforts writ large.

3. External partners take much of the burden off of individual companies and can support them through inclusion implementation tools and assessments as well as regularly scheduled convenings. Participating in LGBTQI+ conferences, such the Out & Equal Workplace Summit or our LatAm Forum helps regional leaders have conversations with peers, learn best practices, and gain more visibility as inclusive leaders.

*"In my company we promote diversity and inclusion as the main value of our services and our code of conduct. Trans people have joined our team and we are proud to continue adding LGBTQI+ talent."*

-Survey participant

[The Global Toolkit for Change: Assessing LGBTQI+ Inclusion in Your Workplace](#) is an assessment tool designed to measure an organization's positive policies as well as measure gaps and potential areas for improvement.

CCGLAR and Out & Equal can serve as the main allies in your journey towards full inclusion and belonging.

Only when all LGBTQI+ employees can bring their authentic selves to work without fear of discrimination or social isolation, will workplaces be able to be their most innovative and competitive.

This report was developed as part of the partnership between CCGLAR and Out & Equal.

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