

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**  
FACT BRIEF

***Sexual Orientation Employee Resource  
Groups***

*September 2000*

**Research Methodology**

**Background Information**

**Report Missions and Imperatives**

**Observations in Brief**

**Research Findings**

- *How are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource groups organized and governed?*
- *How do companies support their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource groups?*
- *What innovative goals are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource groups currently working to obtain?*

This project was researched and written to fulfill the specific research request of a single member of the Corporate Leadership Council and as a result may not satisfy the information needs of other members. In its short answer research, the Corporate Leadership Council refrains from endorsing or recommending a particular product, service or program in any respect. Sources are contacted at random within the parameters set by the requesting member, and the resulting sample is rarely of statistically significant size. That said, it is the goal of the Corporate Leadership Council to provide a balanced review of the study topic within the parameters of this project. The Corporate Leadership Council encourages members who have additional questions about this topic to assign custom research projects of their own design.



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# CORPORATE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## CORPORATE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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### **FACT BRIEF**

#### **Sexual Orientation Employee Resource Groups** **September 2000**

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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The Corporate Leadership Council interviewed four diversity professionals and four employee resource group leaders at six United States corporations. These individuals discussed lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource groups. In addition, Corporate Leadership Council staff reviewed secondary materials and sources concerning this topic.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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	Revenues	Number of Employees	Industry	Locations
<b>Company A</b>	More than \$20 billion	More than 100,000	Telecommunications	United States
<b>Company B</b>				
<b>Company C</b>		More than 100,000	Between 20,000 and 60,000	Natural Resources
<b>Company D</b>	Information Technology			
<b>Company E</b>			Heavy Manufacturing	
<b>Company F</b>	Less than \$2 billion	Between 7,500 and 20,000	Consumer Products	

## **REPORT MISSIONS AND IMPERATIVES**

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### **ORGANIZATION**

- 1) *When did the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employee resource group (ERG) begin? Who was involved in its initial organization?*
- 2) *How do companies' ERGs govern themselves in terms of offices, nominations, non-LGBT governing members and leadership models? (Please discuss leadership structures, roles and responsibilities for location, national and corporate ERGs)*
- 3) *How do LGBT ERGs identify, build and sustain membership? How are membership drives conducted?*
- 4) *What support services do companies' LGBT ERGs offer their members?*
- 5) *Do companies' ERGs have union members? If so, are there any organizational considerations specific to union members?*

### **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

- 6) *How do companies partner to support the existence of LGBT ERGs in terms of leadership involvement, financial contributions, etc.?*
- 7) *What commitments do companies' human resource organizations have to develop and sustain employee resource groups?*
- 8) *How do companies use metrics (whether qualitative or quantitative) to determine the success of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender ERG policies?*
- 9) *Do companies' non-discrimination policies include and identify gender variance or transgenders as a dimension of diversity? How do companies handle the transitioning process where individuals transition from one gender to the other, including sex reassignment surgery?*
- 10) *What communication vehicles prove most effective regarding diversity policies and ERG visibility? Specifically, how are diversity issues and non-discrimination policies communicated nationally and worldwide?*
- 11) *What diversity training related to LGBT concerns is offered for corporate management employees?*

### **INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**

- 12) *What are the most recent, innovative successes made by companies' LGBT ERGs?*
- 13) *What are companies' three- to five-year plans for diversity in general and LGBT diversity specifically?*

## OBSERVATIONS IN BRIEF

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In 1990, only five companies offered domestic partner benefits. By 1998, one in four employers with more than 5,000 employees provided this benefit, illustrating the trend of companies to take action to include the one to ten percent of the labor market that are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).<sup>1</sup> One avenue through which companies promote the inclusion of LGBT employees is employee resource groups (ERGs). The enclosed brief examines six companies' LGBT ERGs, how companies support these groups and the innovative practices that have resulted from these partnerships. Salient observations from this research are presented below.

### ORGANIZATION

- *While companies may support the existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource groups, efforts to form and build an organization are most effective when they are local and grassroots.*
- *Effective LGBT ERGs maintain overarching governing bodies that establish strategic direction for the group and serve as links to senior management in addition to the local chapters that provide opportunities for community involvement and networking.*
- *Since many LGBT employees are not "out" at work, identifying and building ERG membership is best accomplished by using a variety of communication methods that reach large audiences and do not call attention to particular employees.*
- *LGBT ERGs' members have diverse needs, necessitating the organizations maintain political, professional and social goals.*

### CORPORATE SUPPORT

- *Companies recognize the invaluable role LGBT ERGs play in retaining employees and guiding marketing efforts to the LGBT customer community and thus, often provide the ERGs resources to support the organizations' goals.*
- *Profiled companies' non-discrimination policies use the term "sexual orientation" to cover the entire LGBT employee population, yet thus far companies have not taken steps to evaluate whether this language is effective in arresting LGBT harassment.*
- *The most effective means of communicating about diversity and non-discrimination policies and procedures is utilizing multiple means of communication. The more communication channels companies utilize, the more likely the message will reach a broad audience.*
- *LGBT-specific training for management employees originates in LGBT ERGs.*

### INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- *Progressive companies' LGBT ERGs are working toward promoting LGBT awareness by sponsoring company-wide events and encouraging the company to become involved in LGBT community events.*
- *Profiled companies' future diversity goals do not include specific LGBT measures, but rather focus upon improving the work environment in general. Advances for LGBT employees are primarily addressed through LGBT ERGs' action agendas.*

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Digh, "In and Out of the Corporate Closet," *MOSAIC* www.shrm.org (July/August 1999).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

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ORGANIZATION	CORPORATE SUPPORT	INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
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### FORMATION

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**Observation One:** *While companies may support the existence of LGBT ERGs, efforts to form and build an organization are most effective when they are local and grassroots.*

Although all profiled companies officially sanction their LGBT ERGs, each group began as a local organization of employees interested in supporting each other through LGBT-related issues in the workplace. Published literature also indicates that while companies may support ERGs, their drive and energy must originate from their members, as illustrated in the quote below.

*"Our sense is that the best ideas come from the grassroots. We feel strongly that these kinds of networks need to happen, but everything I've read says they need to form on their own. I think the answer is to give corporate sponsorship to communicate the company is supportive of the process, and then I think they'll form."*

—Mary Towse, Director of Corporate Diversity, Hallmark Corporation<sup>2</sup>

The timeline on the following page outlines the initial organization efforts of profiled companies' LGBT ERGs.

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<sup>2</sup> Gillian Flynn, "Hallmark Cares," *Personnel Journal* (March 1996).

ORGANIZATION	CORPORATE SUPPORT	INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
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**FORMATION (CONTINUED)**

LGBT ERG FORMATION

<b>1987</b>	<i>Company B</i>	Gay and lesbian employees at various levels of the company created a network group through which they could discuss issues relating to sexual orientation in the workplace. Following the ERG's initial organization, bisexual and transgender employees were included in the group. In 1992, Company B's LGBT ERG became a national organization.
<b>1991</b>	<i>Company C</i>	A group of LGBT employees in the San Francisco Bay Area organized an off-site and informal employee network group focused upon obtaining domestic partner benefits and promoting the inclusion of LGBT employees in the workforce. In 2000, the first year Company C sanctioned any ERGs, the LGBT ERG became a sanctioned group by commissioning an executive champion and advisory board.
<b>1992</b>	<i>Company F</i>	Four to five employees who knew each other to be gay drafted an action agenda containing steps they wanted to see the company take to support the inclusion of LGBT employees in the workforce.
<b>1993</b>	<i>Company A</i>	<p>All Company A ERGs must go through the following four-step process to become officially sanctioned organizations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Express interest in forming an ERG to the office of diversity</li> <li>2. Create the organization's vision, values, objectives and by-laws to be submitted for approval by the manager of diversity</li> <li>3. Upon approval, the manager of diversity requests that the vice president of human resources approve the group</li> <li>4. The vice president of human resources sends a letter to all officers announcing the existence of the ERG</li> </ol> <p>The LGBT ERG completed these four steps in 1993.</p>
<b>1994</b>	<i>Company E</i>	Two employees started company E's LGBT ERG as an informal networking organization. In 1995, the year the office of diversity was created, Company E endorsed the informal network group as an ERG.
<b>1997</b>	<i>Company D</i>	Informal LGBT network groups began forming in the mid 1990s. In 1997, Company D established an executive task force, independent of the network groups, that partners with management to discuss LGBT issues.

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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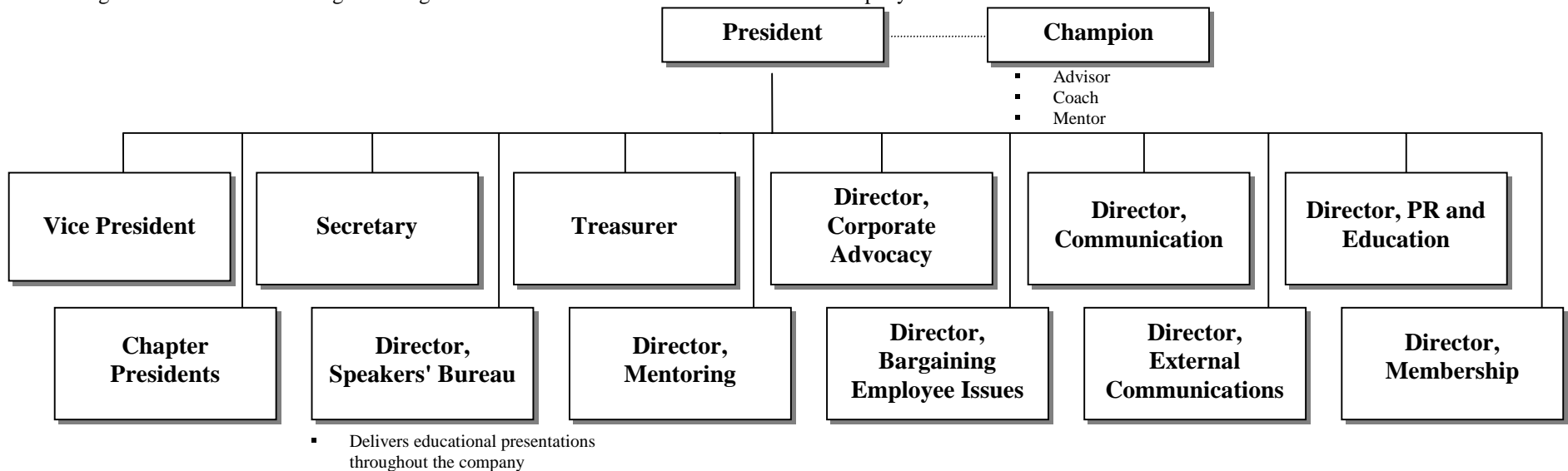
**STRUCTURE**

**Observation Two:** *Effective LGBT ERGs maintain overarching governing bodies that establish strategic direction for the group and serve as links to senior management in addition to the local chapters that provide opportunities for community involvement and networking.*

Published literature indicates that LGBT ERGs form to meet a wide array of needs ranging from helping the company understand the needs of LGBT employees to helping employees understand the company's policies related to LGBT issues.<sup>3</sup> In order to meet these varied needs, profiled companies' LGBT ERGs maintain governing bodies focused upon accomplishing strategic corporation-wide objectives and local organizations that provide support and opportunities for community involvement. Further information concerning the organizational structure and governance of profiled LGBT ERGs appears below and on the following pages.

COMPANY A

Company A's LGBT ERG operates four regional chapters located in cities where the company has a large presence. The regional chapters are governed by a corporation-wide board of directors. Officers on the board of directors may be members of any of the four chapters, and are elected each year at the organization's annual meeting. The organizational chart below outlines the roles of Company A's LGBT ERG's board of directors.



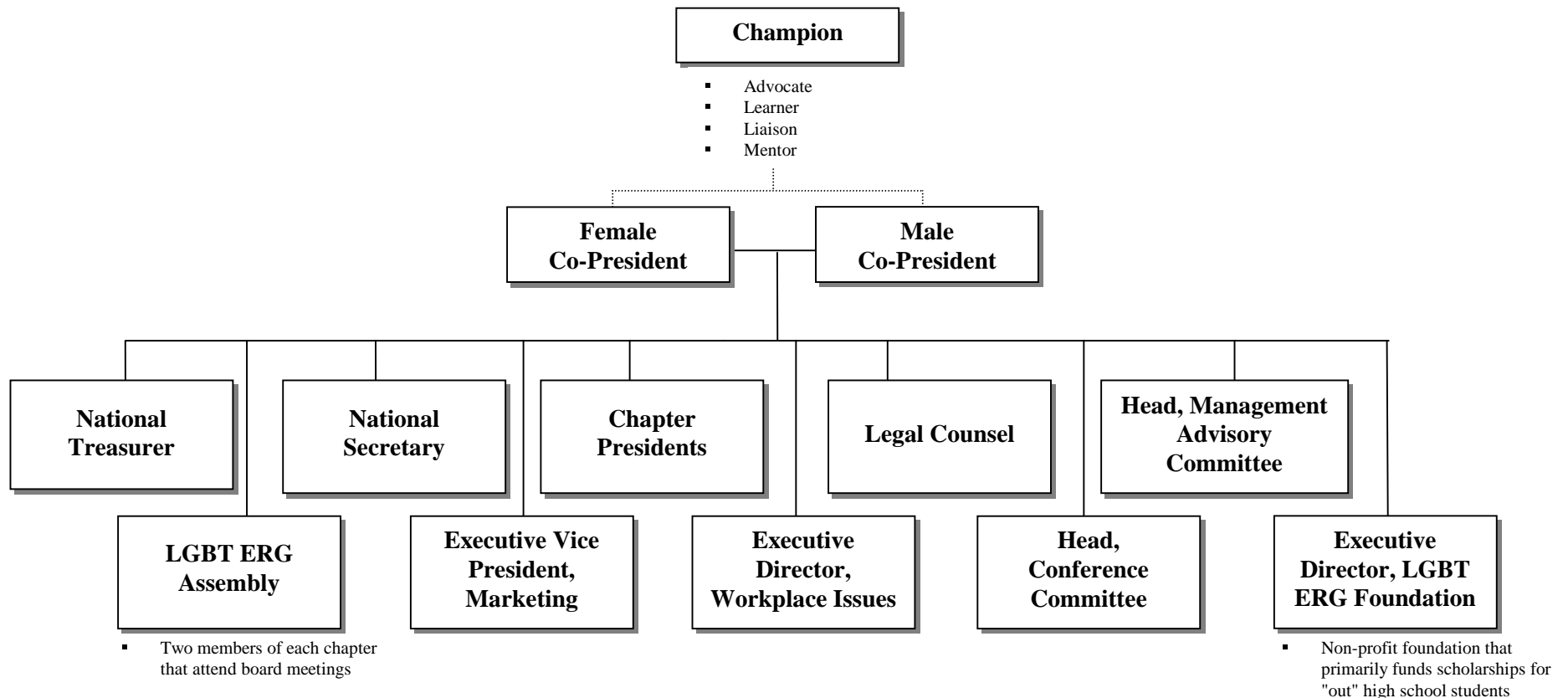
<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Campaign, "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employee Support Groups and Workplace Diversity Programs," <http://www.hrc.org/worknet/empgroup/index.html> (6 August 2000).

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)**

COMPANY B

Company B operates in numerous locations throughout the United States. Employees located in close proximity to each other may form ERG chapters that provide educational, networking and community service opportunities. Local chapters are governed by a national board of directors that provides strategic direction for the organization and provides the company an LGBT interface. Company B stipulates that membership and leadership opportunities within the ERG are open to all employees. The organizational chart below outlines the roles of Company B's LGBT ERG's board of directors.

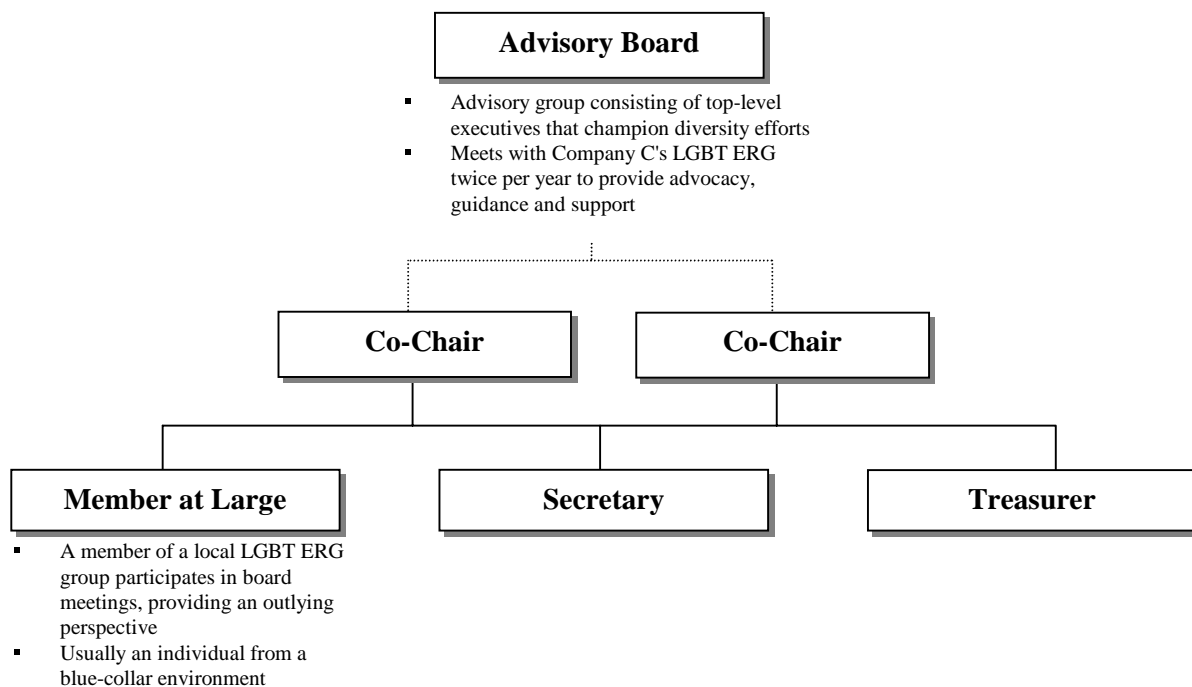


<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)**

COMPANY C

Company C's LGBT ERG is one international organization that consists of employee networks at various company locations including locations in South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Each employee network participates in events and activities specific to their locations while the international board of directors drives the organization's direction, communicates with Company C's leadership and promotes an inclusive work environment. Individuals interested in holding board positions self-nominate and the current board votes in members of the new board. The organizational chart below outlines the governing structure of Company C's LGBT ERG.



<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)**

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COMPANY D

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In order to meet the varied needs of the LGBT employee population and the corporation, Company D operates two separate types of LGBT groups. The purpose and scope of these organizations are discussed in the figures below.

***LGBT Network Groups***

*Purpose:* Provide networking, education and socialization opportunities for each geographic region in which Company D operates; delegates from each network group participate in semi-monthly telephone calls during which they share local concerns and issues and obtain advice.

*Scope:* Thirteen LGBT employee network groups operate within the United States. Each group is independent and responsible for its own governance. Company D's Australia and New Zealand sites are currently experimenting with LGBT network groups.

***LGBT Executive Task Force***

*Purpose:* Advise senior management concerning LGBT issues ranging from inclusion of LGBT employees to tapping the LGBT customer market; members of the executive task force are senior-level managers approved by the vice president of global diversity.

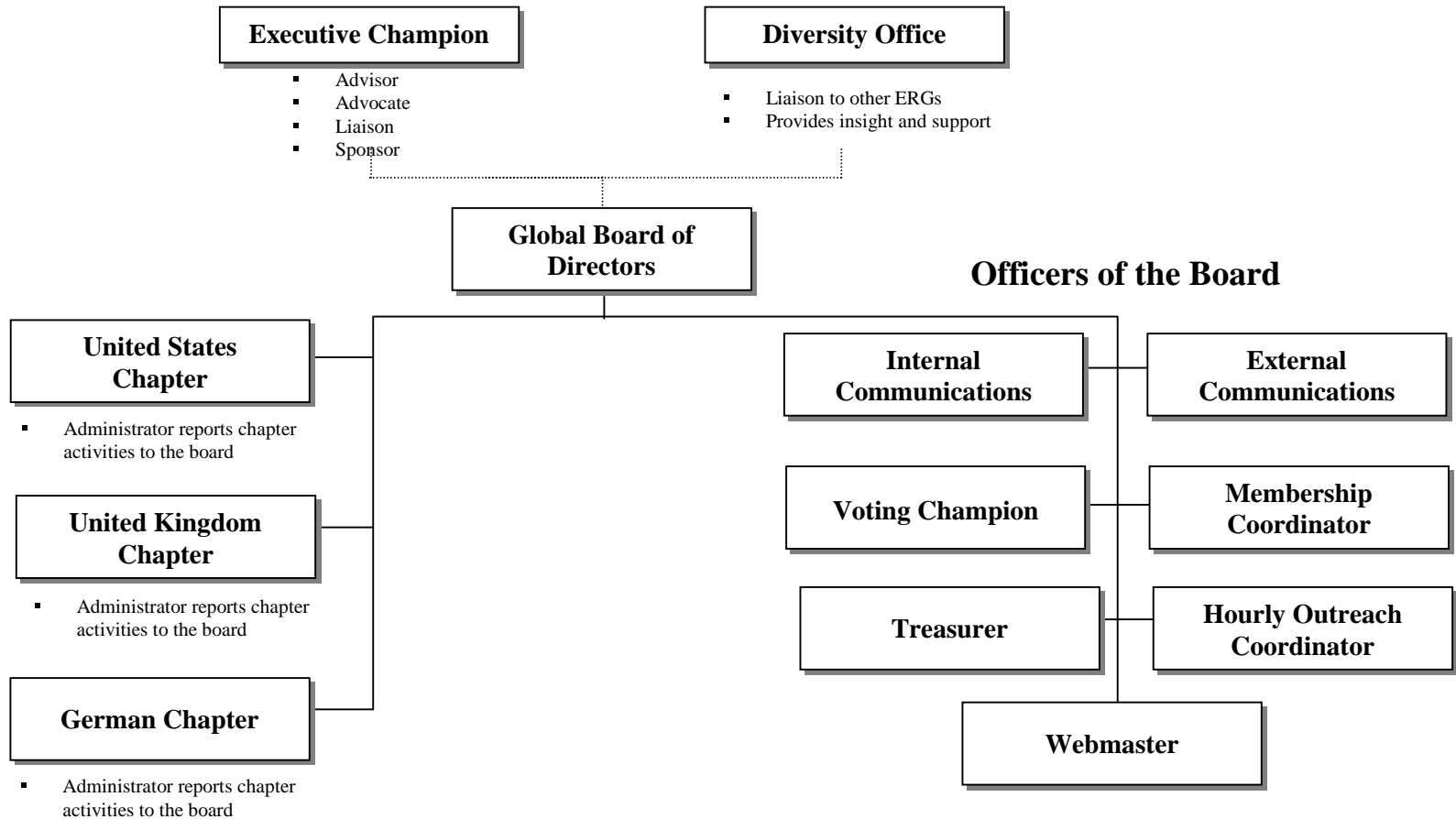
*Scope:* Currently, LGBT diversity is primarily a United States-based initiative. However, management teams in Company D's foreign locations are considering formally addressing LGBT issues.

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)**

COMPANY E

Company E's LGBT ERG operates independent chapters in three countries: the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom. Company E's LGBT ERGs are governed by a global board of directors, which guides the organization and interacts with corporate management. The board is separate from any chapter and its members are elected by all LGBT members to represent the worldwide organization. Officers of the board are appointed by and report back to the board. The chart below outlines the LGBT ERG's organizational structure.



<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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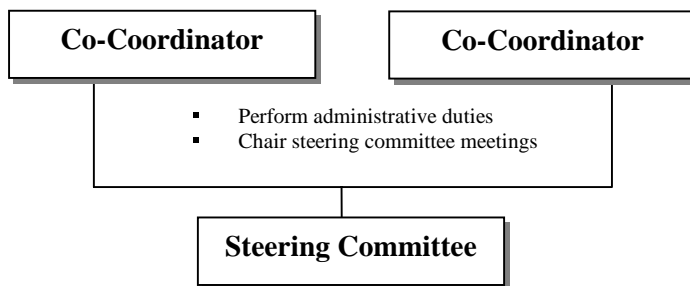
**STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)**

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**COMPANY F**

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Currently, Company F's LGBT ERG has not organized at any international locations. The group operates one chapter at Company F's corporate headquarters where the vast majority of United States employees are located. Any employee who is interested may join the group's steering committee to help establish the action agenda. The chart below outlines the governing structure of Company F's LGBT ERG.



Although Company F's LGBT ERG has systematically built relationships with key executives, the group maintains no executive champion responsible for providing direction to the group. Building relationships with executives around specific initiatives that relate to the executives' areas of interest increases the LGBT ERG's ability to progress on those initiatives.

ORGANIZATION	CORPORATE SUPPORT	INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
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**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**

**Observation Three:** *Since many LGBT employees are not "out" at work, identifying and building ERG membership is best accomplished by using a variety of communication methods that reach large audiences and do not call attention to particular employees.*

According to a 1992 survey, 76 percent of gay men and 81 percent of lesbian women conceal their sexual orientation at work, primarily because they fear the reactions of their colleagues and the company.<sup>4</sup> Interviewed individuals note that identifying and building LGBT ERG membership can be particularly challenging due to this reality; ERGs are unable to identify an audience to which membership information should be communicated. Since many LGBT employees are "closeted" at work, literature suggests ERGs use every communication channel possible to inform employees about the organization and its activities.<sup>5</sup> Profiled companies employ a variety of communication techniques to increase LGBT ERG membership, as outlined below.

*Regular public communications from the LGBT ERG informs LGBT employees that there are places to obtain support and that they are not alone at the company.*

**Event Promotion**—Companies B, C, D and E

LGBT ERGs ensure that employees are aware of special events, conferences and activities they sponsor.

**Newsletters**—Companies A, C, D and F

LGBT ERG newsletters suggest members encourage their LGBT friends and colleagues to become members. Company C's annual membership drive is conducted solely through its newsletter.

**Personal Networks**—Companies A, C, E and F

Members discuss the LGBT ERG with their colleagues known to be LGBT and suggest they join.

**Website**—Companies D and E

Maintaining an up-to-date website provides employees with information concerning the LGBT ERG, its activities and agenda.

**Brand**—Company B

Company B's LGBT ERG has worked to build brand recognition, linking its name to its mission and philosophy and increasing employee awareness of its existence.

*Company-sponsored communications demonstrate companies' support of LGBT employees and philosophies of inclusion.*

**Orientation**—Companies B, E and F

During orientation, new employees receive information concerning all company ERGs, including the LGBT ERG.

**Diversity Newsletter**—Companies A and B

The diversity newsletter, circulated to all employees, highlights the activities and existence of ERGs, including the LGBT ERG.

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Digh, "In and Out of the Corporate Closet."

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Campaign, "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employee Support Groups and Workplace Diversity Programs."

ORGANIZATION	CORPORATE SUPPORT	INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
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**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH (CONTINUED)**

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVES

With the exception of Company C's LGBT ERG's newsletter-based membership drive, profiled companies do not organize and run LGBT-specific membership drives, as LGBT employees do not necessarily want to identify themselves by working or attending a public membership drive. Instead, profiled companies' primary means for building membership is communicating the existence of the LGBT ERG and relying upon employees to take their own initiative to join. However, LGBT ERGs at Company A and Company B are included in the office of diversity-sponsored ERG membership drives.

*Office of Diversity Membership Drives*

The offices of diversity at Company A and Company B sponsor ERG membership drives. During these drives, the office of diversity provides information concerning the invaluable role ERGs play in promoting an inclusive work environment. However, these membership drives do not target specific groups.

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**OBJECTIVES**

**Observation Four:** *LGBT ERGs' members have diverse needs, necessitating the organizations maintain political, professional and social goals.*

Published literature describes LGBT ERGs as "clearinghouses of information and resources," recognizing their potential to inform company strategy, influence the experiences of LGBT employees and educate the employee population about LGBT workplace issues.<sup>6</sup> Profiled companies illustrate this point through the various benefits provided to members, which are outlined below.

**Improving Employment Cycles**  
 Company F's career development program focuses on the entire employment cycle, from helping the company recruit LGBT employees to helping them transition upon their departure.

**Communication with Company**—Companies A, B, C, D, E and F

LGBT ERGs provide a means for employees to voice their concerns to upper management. Approximately 90 percent of Company E's harassment incidents occur among the hourly population. Without the ERG, senior executives might not be aware of these issues.

**Career Development**—Companies A, B and F

LGBT ERGs organize career development workshops, informing members how to advance within the corporate culture.

**Information Dissemination**—Companies B, C, D and E

Through websites and group meetings, LGBT ERGs ensure that employees understand companies' benefits, non-discrimination policies and grievance procedures.

**Community Building**—Companies B, D, E and F

LGBT ERGs provide opportunities for members to get to know other LGBT employees through social events and networking.

**Employee Education**—Companies A, C and E

By organizing brown bag lunches and formal speakers, LGBT ERGs educate the entire employee population about LGBT issues in the workplace.

**Community Service**—Companies B and D

ERGs promote opportunities for employees to participate in community service events benefiting the LGBT population.

**Rainbow Flag Project**  
 During Pride Week each year, Company A flies rainbow flags at all company locations as a means to demonstrate the company's support of its LGBT employees. The flags are a vehicle through which the company builds awareness of LGBT workplace issues.

**Annual Conference Volunteering**  
 Company B's LGBT ERG organizes volunteer events prior to and following its annual conference. As well, attendees collect their unused toiletries from the hotel and the ERG donates them to a local organization.

**UNION EMPLOYEE SERVICES**

Three profiled companies, Company A, Company B and Company E, have bargaining employees. The LGBT ERGs at each of these companies allow union employees to join, but do not treat them any differently than other members. Instead, the value realized by the inclusion of union employees is increased awareness of the issues they face. Without union members, the ERG would likely not know, and therefore not work to rectify, the basic safety concerns of the union LGBT employees at Company E or the lack of domestic partner benefits for union employees at Company A.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**RESOURCES PROVIDED**

**Observation Five:** *Companies recognize the invaluable role LGBT ERGs play in retaining employees and guiding marketing efforts to the LGBT customer community and thus, often provide the ERGs resources to support the organizations' goals.*

Published literature indicates that an "LGBT-friendly" work environment promotes employee retention and enhances a company's image in several sectors of the consumer market.<sup>7</sup> Thus, supporting inclusive work environments benefits the business. To best support LGBT ERG, one aspect of an inclusive work environment, past Council research and published literature suggest that senior management clearly state the company's support of the organization.<sup>8,9</sup> According to interviewed individuals, profiled companies recognize the business benefits associated with supporting LGBT ERGs and thus, provide varied levels of executive support and other resources, as outlined below.

**Vice President's Letter**

Company A's vice president of human resources annually sends a letter to all managers encouraging them to support their employees' desire to attend the LGBT ERG's annual conference.

**Executive Support—Companies A, B, C, D and E**

Companies enable LGBT ERGs to work with senior leaders and thus, provide an avenue through which the organizations may discuss issues affecting LGBT employees and enact changes.

**Communication—Companies A, C, D, E and F**

LGBT ERGs are indirectly supported through communications from senior leadership. Since the companies clearly include LGBT issues in conversations and decisions regarding diversity, the general employee population recognizes the company's commitment to LGBT inclusion.

**Financial Support—Companies A, B, C and E**

Companies provide LGBT ERGs annual budgets to support their activities. However, profiled companies stipulate that corporate funding may not be used for social events.

**Sponsorship—Companies C, E and F**

Companies provide sponsorship for various community events, demonstrating their support of LGBT issues and the ERG. Typically, the ERG helps senior leadership discern which events should be sponsored.

**Dedicated Diversity Staff—Company D**

Company D's office of diversity employs a program manager for gay and lesbian diversity who is responsible for working through issues with LGBT employees and strategically enhancing LGBT inclusion.

**Company E Foundation**

Company E's Foundation supports a variety of non-profit organizations. The LGBT ERG maintains a liaison to the foundation who makes recommendations for LGBT community organizations to which the foundation should give.

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Digh, "In and Out of the Corporate Closet."

<sup>8</sup> Corporate Leadership Council, "Affinity Programs: Overcoming Problems and Assessing Benefits." Washington: Corporate Executive Board (September 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Campaign, "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employee Support Groups and Workplace Diversity Programs."

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**RESOURCES PROVIDED (CONTINUED)**

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HR'S COMMITMENT

With the exception of Company F, profiled companies' offices of diversity partner with their LGBT ERGs to provide the organizations direction and advice. While the offices of diversity have no mandate to develop and sustain the LGBT ERG, they use their resources to create an inclusive work environment, drive policy changes suggested by the ERG and provide advice about the issues raised through the LGBT ERG. Company F supports its ERGs by including diversity measures on all managers' performance reviews.

ORGANIZATION	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
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## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

*Observation Six: Profiled companies' non-discrimination policies use the term "sexual orientation" to cover the entire LGBT employee population, yet thus far companies have not take steps to evaluate whether this language is effective in arresting LGBT harassment.*

Profiled companies have a difficult time tracking the success of non-discrimination policies for LGBT employees because they have no means to determine who comprises the LGBT population. Thus, they have no baseline from which to measure the effects of their non-discrimination policies. While no profiled companies maintain formal metrics to determine the success of their non-discrimination policies, they do examine the measures listed below to gauge their policies' effectiveness for LGBT employees.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

- Number of LGBT harassment disputes
- Number of LGBT ERG members and active participants
- Number of employees using domestic partner benefits
- Number of complaints received about LGBT ERG events
- Anecdotal evidence

#### *Climate Survey*

Company E's climate survey enables employees to identify their sexual orientation. The company hopes to use this variable to determine how its diversity efforts affect LGBT employees.

## TRANSGENDER POLICIES

Transgender employees face many of the same workplace issues as gay and lesbian employees, such as feeling the need to hide their identity at work. However, they also face unique issues, such as the desire to transition or cross dress, that affect their daily work habits and are not necessarily covered in traditional sexual orientation non-discrimination policies.<sup>10</sup> Profiled companies currently do not include transgender language in their non-discrimination policies, but operate under the theory that transgender issues are included within the scope of "sexual orientation" language. When transgender-specific issues arise, they are handled on a case-by-case basis, ensuring transgender employees and their workgroups receive all necessary support. Company A and Company D are currently considering adding transgender language to their non-discrimination policies.

*"[Although Company D does not include transgender language in its non-discrimination police], our goal is to ensure people are all people are treated fairly. Company D wants to keep all of its skilled employees."*

—Manager, Workforce Diversity Initiatives, Company D

<sup>10</sup> The Transgender Network, "Transgender at Work," [www.tgender.net/taw/](http://www.tgender.net/taw/) (6 August 2000).

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**COMMUNICATION**

**Observation Seven:** *The most effective means of communicating about diversity and non-discrimination policies and procedures is utilizing multiple means of communication. The more communication channels companies utilize, the more likely the message will reach a broad audience.*

As discussed previously, clearly communicated senior management support of LGBT ERGs is an important factor in the organizations' success because company-sponsored and company-supported communication demonstrates commitment to inclusion of the LGBT employee population in the work environment.<sup>11</sup> While interviewed individuals disagree about what constitutes *the* most effective means of communicating LGBT and non-discrimination messages, they generally agree that using multiple communication mediums increases the likelihood that employees will receive the message that the company supports LGBT inclusion. Outlined below and on the following page are several communication methods employed by profiled companies to communicate about LGBT diversity and non-discrimination.

*Electronic messages highlight non-discrimination issues and provide means for employees to further explore the company's policies and support services.*

***Intranet***—Companies A, B, C, D, and E

Various intranet sites such as the LGBT ERG site, diversity site and EEO site remind employees about their companies' policies on non-discrimination.

***E-mail***—Companies A, B, C and D

Company-wide e-mails reiterate non-discrimination policies and their implications for employee behavior.

***Newsletters/Brochures***—Companies A, B, C, D and E

Company newsletters and brochures on diversity discuss non-discrimination policies and their implications for employee behavior.

***Posters***—Companies B, D, E and F

Posters placed around the workplace remind employees about the company's non-discrimination policies and procedures.

***Leadership Messages***—Companies D and E

Senior company leadership delivers broad-based messages regarding the importance of diversity for the business. Every year Company D's executives send personal messages to their managers about the importance of diversity.

***Orientation***—Companies E and F

During orientation, newly hired employees receive information about the company's non-discrimination policy.

***Internal TV Station***—Company E

Company E maintains an internal television station that communicates company events around the world. Major LGBT ERG events are covered worldwide and local activities such as participation in a gay pride march are broadcast locally.

*Broad-based communications provide employees with information about non-discrimination without calling attention to a particular employee or group of employees*

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Campaign, "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employee Support Groups and Workplace Diversity Programs."

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**COMMUNICATION (CONTINUED)**

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*Targeted communication about non-discrimination reinforces the idea that every individual is responsible for promoting an inclusive work environment.*

***Annual Diversity Education***—Companies A, B, D and E

Companies require employees to attend non-discrimination meetings or sign a code of conduct statement every year.

***Performance Review***—Companies E and F

Companies include diversity measures within managers' performance reviews, linking their performance and compensation to their actions related to diversity.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

With the exception of Company E, profiled companies with operations in international locations are just beginning to communicate LGBT diversity issues on an international scale. Primarily, profiled companies intend to expand their current United States-focused communication practices worldwide. For example, Company F plans to send its LGBT ERG posters to international locations. Company E has included LGBT diversity issues in worldwide communications for several years; further details concerning its international diversity communication strategy are provided below.

**COMPANY E'S GLOBAL DIVERSITY COMMUNICATION<sup>12</sup>**

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Global diversity messages contain strategic diversity information. Examples of global messages are:

**Global Messages**

- CEO's diversity message
- Company E's diversity mission statement
- Company E's expectation that every employee is committed to improving the company's diversity

Local diversity messages contain information concerning events. Examples of local messages include:

**Local Messages**

- Announcement of an LGBT speaker
- Company sponsorship of a gay pride parade

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<sup>12</sup> According to the interviewed manager of corporate diversity and work/life planning, Company E finds that many of its international locations are more receptive to LGBT diversity communications than its United States locations.

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**TRAINING**

**Observation Eight:** *LGBT-specific training for management employees originates in the LGBT ERG.*

Published literature indicates that companies should provide LGBT-specific training, as much homophobic and heterosexist behavior results from "misinformation, fear and lack of exposure to gay people."<sup>13</sup> However, profiled companies do not offer corporate-wide LGBT diversity training modules. Only Company E is in the process of developing a LGBT-specific diversity training module, which will be rolled out in 2001. Otherwise, companies rely upon the methods outlined below to educate managers about LGBT concerns in the workplace.

**Diversity Training—Companies A, D, E and F**

Companies ensure that LGBT issues are included in general diversity training modules.

**Ad-hoc Training—Companies A, C and F**

LGBT ERGs develop modules to provide training should LGBT issues arise within a specific workgroup or business unit.

**Business Training—Company B**

Company B does not provide any diversity training *per se*. Instead, the company includes diversity issues, including LGBT issues, into its general business training. For example, the training module focused on managing teams includes a section focused on the role diversity plays in a team environment.

**Speakers Bureau**

Company A's LGBT ERG operates a speakers bureau that is available to talk to workgroups throughout the company about LGBT workplace issues.

<sup>13</sup> Patricia Digh, "In and Out of the Corporate Closet."

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**PAST SUCCESSES**

**Observation Nine:** *Progressive companies' LGBT ERGs are working toward promoting LGBT awareness by sponsoring company-wide events and encouraging the company to become involved in LGBT community events.*

*"It's not just benefits... It's incorporating gay and lesbian issues into diversity training; it's being visible in the community. It's a big change."*

—Kim Mills, Human Rights Campaign<sup>14</sup>

Profiled companies' LGBT ERGs have all achieved domestic partner benefits and are expanding their goals to include promoting LGBT awareness within the company and community. Interviewed individuals' responses concerning the recent successes of profiled companies reflect these goals and are outlined below.

**Domestic Partner Benefits—Companies A, B, C, D, E and F**

LGBT ERGs have worked to secure domestic partner benefits. Company F's employees' domestic partners receive all of the same benefits as spouses except for retirement medical benefits. The interviewed human resources manager at Company F expects domestic partners will receive retirement medical benefits before the end of 2000.

**Recruiting—Company D, E and F**

LGBT ERGs have begun working with the human resources department to improve LGBT recruiting. Company D has begun more work with LGBT student groups to improve this effort.

**Company Awareness—Companies A and E**

LGBT ERGs have hosted events to promote LGBT awareness amongst the employee population. Since 1999, Company E has circulated a lobby display during Gay Pride month that discusses LGBT workplace issues. While the display is at a location, the ERG hosts speakers and brown bag lunches.

**Advising Marketing Campaigns—Companies B and D**

LGBT ERGs have worked with marketing departments to construct advertising campaigns that reach the LGBT community. Company D recently ran an advertisement that featured a gay couple.

**Community Involvement—Companies A, E and C**

LGBT ERGs have promoted company sponsorship and involvement in LGBT community events. For example, Company A's LGBT ERG encouraged the company to provide discounted phone service to an AIDS clinic.

**Advertising**

Company E's LGBT ERG was instrumental in having the company's non-discrimination policy, list of ERGs and domestic partner benefits posted to the recruiting website and added to printed materials. As well, the company runs "gay-specific" recruiting advertisements.

<sup>14</sup> Stephanie Armour, "Companies Work to be More Gay-friendly: From Benefits to Recruiting, Firms Making Changes," *USA Today* (28 February 2000).

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES</b>
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**FUTURE GOALS**

**Observation Ten:** *Profiled companies' future diversity goals do not include specific LGBT measures, but rather focus upon improving the work environment in general. Advances for LGBT employees are primarily addressed through LGBT ERGs' action agendas.*

*"None of us is as strong as all of us."*  
 —Company D's diversity slogan

Interviewed diversity professionals note that their companies' three- to five-year diversity goals center around further building a diverse work environment that leverages the unique talents inherent in a diverse workforce. Each company has made significant progress in various areas of diversity and aims to use the knowledge gained through past ventures to improve representation in all diversity areas. The LGBT population is included within these overarching goals, as profiled companies recognize the benefits already received from their current LGBT employees. Specific goals of profiled LGBT ERGs are outlined below.

**LGBT ERG FUTURE GOALS**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Companies</b>
<i>Increase LGBT recruiting and hiring</i>	<b>C, D and F</b>
<i>Start a new employee mentoring network</i>	<b>C and D</b>
<i>Increase community service participation</i>	<b>C and E</b>
<i>Gain full domestic partner benefits</i>	<b>A and E</b>
<i>Create policies for addressing the transgender transitioning process</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>Increase LGBT visibility with employees</i>	<b>F</b>
<i>Improve LGBT career development</i>	<b>F</b>

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### Professional Services Note

The Corporate Leadership Council has worked to ensure the accuracy of the information it provides to its members. This project relies upon data obtained from many sources, however, and the Council cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information or its analysis in all cases. Further, the Council is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. Its projects should not be construed as professional advice on any particular set of facts or circumstances. Members requiring such services are advised to consult an appropriate professional. Neither Corporate Executive Board nor its programs is responsible for any claims or losses that may arise from any errors or omissions in their reports, whether caused by Corporate Executive Board or its sources.