

Out to Succeed in Asia Survey 2018

## Creating an environment in which LGBT+ talent can thrive

November 2018



LGBT+ inclusion is a valuable brand differentiator, performance enhancer, and talent draw. Are Asian businesses capitalising on these benefits by creating an environment where LGBT+ talent can bring their true selves to work and fulfil their career potential?

In 2018, PwC and Out Leadership surveyed more than 300 openly LGBT+ employees from around the world, who've been identified by their employers as high performers or people with leadership potential.

This regional overview outlines the views of 89 participants from Asia. For comparison, we also include perspectives from the 111 American, 50 European, and 44 Australian participants.

### Key findings

Progress on inclusion is being made – nearly 90% of the Asian high-potential LGBT+ employees in our survey (88%) would recommend their place of work to an LGBT+

friend, compared to 98% in Australia, and 94% in the U.S. and Europe.

Resulting business benefits are coming through. Four in five Asian participants believe that having an openly supportive focus on LGBT+ has provided their organisation with wider access to the best talent, compared to 92% in Europe, 84% in Australia, and 83% in the U.S. The same proportion believe it has improved their organisation's place in the market, compared to 91% in Australia, 84% in the U.S., and 80% in Europe.

Yet our survey also reveals areas where support for LGBT+ talent is still falling short in many Asian organisations.

### Covering remains prevalent in Asia

Only 34% of Asian participants were out during their interview and application process, a significantly lower proportion than in the U.S. (60%), Europe (44%), and Australia (43%) (see exhibit 1). The median gap between when LGBT+ talent come out to friends and family and when they do so at work is four years in Asia, the same as Australia, but higher than the three years in the U.S. and Europe. And nearly two-thirds of Asian participants (64%) are aware of LGBT+ colleagues at the same or junior level who are not out, compared to 52% in Europe, 41% in Australia, and 40% in the U.S.

If LGBT+ employees don't feel they can bring their whole selves to work, or that they won't be able to realise their full potential within their current organisation, they'll vote with their feet by looking for opportunities elsewhere. They'll also tell their friends and family that this isn't a business that's living up to its promises on inclusion, which could have a detrimental impact on the brand.

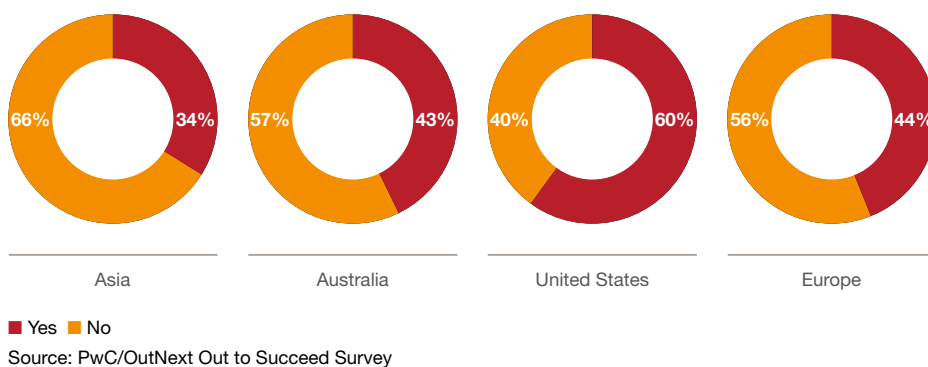
### Sectors at risk of deterring talent

Nearly all Asian participants (98%) say that a reputation as a fair and equal employer (e.g. being known for being LGBT+ friendly) is important in making an organisation an attractive employer. It's therefore significant that our survey highlights several sectors in which many participants wouldn't want to work because of their reputation regarding LGBT+ employees. Topping this list for Asian participants is the government and public sector – 30% of Asian participants would be reluctant to work in this sector, compared to only 13% of their U.S., 6% of European, and 5% of Australian counterparts. In line with responses from the U.S., Europe, and Australia, the defence, energy, utilities and mining, and engineering and construction are industries also high on this list.



Exhibit 2: Out when interviewed

Were you out during your interview and application process?



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### Findings highlight aspiration gap

Career progression is the number-one priority for the Asian LGBT+ talent in our survey. And nearly all (99%) see LGBT+ specific training and development programmes as an important factor in making them want to work for an organisation. Yet, only 39% report that their organisation takes steps to create a pathway to senior management for LGBT+ people, a much lower proportion than the U.S. (50%) sample, but roughly equal to Europe (40%) and Australia (39%). Three in five Asian participants believe that their organisation isn't doing enough to encourage LGBT+ diversity in the workplace, compared to 35% in the U.S., 36% in Australia, and 40% in Europe.

### Asian employers could do much more to advance LGBT+ equality

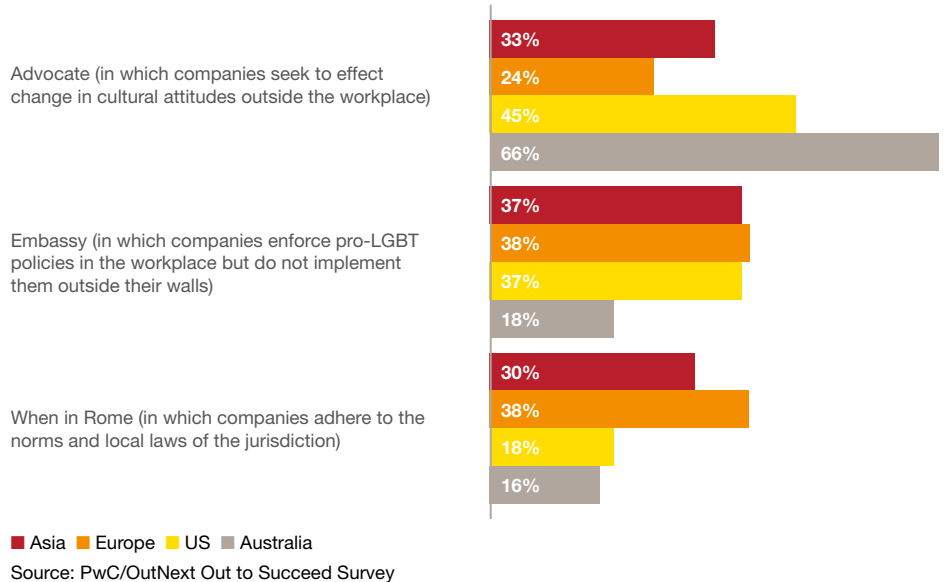
More than 90% of Asian participants in our survey (94%) believe that it's important that their company is visibly engaged in LGBT+ equality, and leverages its reach to advance LGBT+ rights. Yet, only around a third describe their employers as advocates for LGBT+ equality, the highest level of corporate engagement, which while significantly lower than Australia and the U.S. sample, is higher than Europe (see exhibit 2).

### Asian businesses are failing to capitalise on full benefits of LGBT+ inclusion

Less than 40% of Asian participants (37%) believe that their company leverages LGBT+ inclusion for business advantage, slightly higher than Australia (36%) and Europe (34%), but lower than the U.S. (41%).

## Exhibit 2: Standing up for LGBT+ rights

From your perspective, which of the three corporate models of engagement most appropriately describes your company's engagement in LGBT+ equality? (Select one only)



## Fostering true inclusion

Drawing on the survey findings, we have identified five key priorities that organisations should adopt to promote real equality and realise the full business benefits of LGBT+ inclusion:

1. Set the right tone from the top and engage with CEOs
2. Create clear pathways for career progression
3. Stand up and advocate for LGBT+ equality
4. Build and empower LGBT+ ally networks
5. Create inclusive communications

Cutting across these five recommendations is the need to ensure that LGBT+ talent feels valued and supported, rather than just tolerated. This includes awareness of the barriers that may hold LGBT+ employees back and active intervention to tackle these impediments. It should also include awareness of the socio-political environment for LGBT+ people in the places where the organisation operates, some of which may have high levels of bias.

By offering the best possible working environment and career opportunities for LGBT+ talent, businesses can gain an important edge.



## Contacts

### Jon Terry

PwC UK  
+44 7720 555 397  
jon.p.terry@uk.pwc.com

### Justine Brown

PwC UK  
+44 7710 169938  
justine.brown@pwc.com

### Lucinda Miller

PwC UK  
+44 7808 105725  
lucinda.miller@pwc.com

### Todd Sears

Out Leadership  
+1 917 636 7971  
todd.sears@outleadership.com

### Paul Wendel

Out Leadership  
+1 917 636 7974  
paul.wendel@outleadership.com

### Dave Hughes

Out Leadership  
+1 917 336 7989  
dave.hughes@outleadership.com

To find out more, please see

[Out to Succeed: Realising the full potential of LGBT+ talent.](#)



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