

The Complete Guide to Transgender in the Workplace

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Enlightened self-interest and moral responsibility have led hundreds of cities, numerous states, and many corporations - including nearly 1/3rd of the Fortune 500 – toward expanding their employment policies to prohibit discrimination against their transgender employees. More are incorporating gender identity and expression in these policies every day. As I write this, an inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is moving through Congress on its way to (hopefully) becoming law.

Writing a law or establishing a policy is not enough to generate an open and accepting workplace. In many of those places where these non-discrimination policies have been generated, one or more transgender employees have been active in creating them. Now corporate officers, managers, and employees must work together to make acceptance of and respect for transgender employees reality. The question is how – how does the company convince ALL of its employees that respect for and acceptance of their transgender coworkers is in their best interest? And how many managers even fully understand transgender and what this means to their company?

Ms. Sheridan's new book is an excellent guide. Beginning with chapters "What is Transgender?" and "Who Are Transgender People?" she goes on to explain why transgender inclusion DOES matter to your business. Several chapters deal with the restroom debate, coming out at work, benefits of transgender-specific awareness training. Her book includes a series of tools and tips for managers and human resource professionals. All these topics are covered thoroughly, often in both her own words and quotes from other referenced articles and books.

Transgender in the Workplace is written not only to educate, but also to be used as a reference. As a reviewer, I sensed some redundancy as I worked through the book, but concluded that it was or would be helpful when using the book as a reference manual. That is, I felt the redundancies were there in order that the person only referring to one or two chapters would have all the necessary information within those chapters.

This book is also useful for the transgender employee who needs to show his or her management that inclusion IS possible without excessive distraction, and that inclusion WILL lead to higher productivity. Employees who feel safe and respected are far more valuable and productive than those who must continually hide significant portions of their identity.