Taking positive steps towards becoming a more diverse and inclusive workplace is not only a trend – studies show that it can benefit a business’s bottom line and create a more dynamic culture. While this quick checklist is not an end-all be-all to a company’s efforts to make their workplace more LGBTQ-inclusive, it is a great place to start.

Here are some things your company can do to affirm LGBTQ identities in and out of the office; design benefits and policies that are equitable; and create an overall inclusive culture.

**Conduct LGBTQ Competency Trainings**
You want to make your office LGBTQ-inclusive, but how can you do so if not everyone in the office fully comprehends the spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities? Diversity trainings, unconscious bias workshops, and reverse mentorship programs are all great places to start.

**Put Employee Resource Groups in Place**
Employee resource groups (ERGs) are essential for providing employees with space to build community, and encouraging an LGBTQ ERG gives employees access to valuable support from colleagues. ERGs can either be formed by employees or launched by an executive champion. Having open and consistent dialogue with your LGBTQ resource group can improve employee engagement, company culture and provide valuable information on ways to further innovate in the workplace.

**Express Commitment Externally**
Employers can express commitment to the LGBTQ community in and beyond their offices by creating opportunities for employees to attend LGBTQ cultural events or becoming an official sponsor of such events. Many organizations form groups to march in at local LGBTQ pride celebrations. Support can extend to a company’s Glassdoor profile to show potential employees they are an LGBTQ-friendly organization.
**Offer Diverse Benefits**
Many businesses may not realize the language or options of their benefit plans are biased towards non-LGBTQ individuals. The language of benefits can unintentionally exclude LGBTQ people. Here are some ways to provide clarity and equity:

1. Provide healthcare benefits to domestic partners; ensure the health insurance policy has a definition of “spouse” that includes same-gender spouses.
2. Allow employees to take family and medical leave to care for domestic partners as well as the children of a domestic partner, regardless of biological status.
3. Be conscious of the use of gendered language in benefits in order to expand benefits to LGBTQ parents.

**Provide Job Security**
In 28 states, there are no workplace protections for LGBTQ employees based on sexual orientation or gender identity. With no state protections to turn to, the LGBTQ workforce depends on employers for job security. If you are unaware of the workplace protections in your area, check the Movement Advancement Project to see the status of your state. For companies that operate in states without employment protections, making sure LGBTQ employees feel their jobs are secure is paramount. Including sexual orientation and gender identity in non-discrimination policies shows an organization’s assurance of equal opportunities for all.

**Encourage a Pronoun-Friendly Culture**
Many of us go through the workplace assuming coworkers’ gender pronouns (ex. She/He, her/him, etc) instead of asking how someone would like to be referred to. Sharing pronouns is not just for transgender people to do. In order to encourage an inclusive culture, all employees should be open to sharing how they would like to be addressed.

1. Create pronoun stickers to distribute through the office.
2. Provide name tags with spaces for pronouns at company events.
3. Consider asking interviewers to use gender neutral pronouns (they, them, theirs) when providing feedback to avoid implicit bias.
4. Ask for pronouns when onboarding new hires.