

PRESS RELEASE

Two-thirds of Canadians feel businesses need to do more to welcome LGBT employees in the workplace

Sodexo Workplace Diversity Survey: Half of Canadians think their own employer should do more to ensure that LGBT employees feel comfortable in the workplace

Burlington, Ontario - June 16, 2014

Canadian businesses need to do more to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered employees feel welcome and valued in the workplace according to the newly released *Sodexo Workplace Diversity Survey*, a Leger poll of employed Canadians.

Two-thirds of the employed adult population (67 per cent) feel more can be done to welcome LGBT employees. However, the LGBT community is more likely (81 per cent) to feel that businesses generally need to strive harder.

The survey also found that half of working Canadians (49 per cent) believe their employer should do more to ensure that LGBT employees feel comfortable being themselves in the workplace. However, when the same question is asked of working Canadians in the LGBT community that number jumps considerably to 59 per cent.

Overall, support for work cultures more welcoming of LGBT employees is widespread. Nine-in-10 employees (89 per cent) believe that workplace cultures should welcome all employees, regardless of sexual orientation.

When asked about overall workplace diversity, 72 per cent of Canadians feel that it should be a priority for Canada's business leaders. Again, in the LGBT community that number jumps significantly to 85 per cent.

"Diversity is a tremendous source of strength for all businesses," said Dean Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sodexo Canada. "It's not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do and is critical in helping Sodexo remain an employer of choice."

Diversity strengthens the workplace

- 81 per cent of working Canadians agree that companies committed to diversity find it easier to attract and keep the best employees, compared to 93 per cent of LGBT employees polled.
- 84 per cent agree that workplace diversity helps companies deal with business challenges by enabling them to access new ways of thinking and perspectives, compared to 93 per cent of LGBT employees.
- 85 per cent agree that employees working for organizations committed to diversity and inclusiveness are more likely to have positive attitudes towards their work and their employer, compared with 91 per cent of LGBT employees.

"These numbers flag the need for more action to create inclusive workplaces across the country," said Michael Bach, Founder and CEO of the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (CIDI). "The fact that LGBT employees are more skeptical strongly suggests there is still considerable room for improvement to employer diversity policies."

Other findings

- 93 per cent of working Canadians believe that employees who feel comfortable being who they are in the workplace are more likely to contribute to the success of their company.
- 87 per cent of working Canadians believe that companies that treat employees equally regardless of sexual orientation, race, culture or religion are more likely to be successful.

“We envision a nation where LGBT individuals can bring their authentic and whole selves to work enabling them to achieve their full potential.” said Matt Petersen, Chair of Pride at Work Canada. “It’s important to celebrate the high degree of support among working Canadians for workplace cultures that welcome LGBT employees, just as it’s vital to highlight and address the areas for improvement.”

Survey methodology

These are some of the findings of the Sodexo Workplace Diversity Survey, a survey of 1090 employed (excluding self-employed) Canadians that was completed online between April 25 and April 30, 2014 using Leger’s online panel, LegerWeb. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/- 2.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20. Leger’s online panel has approximately 460,000 members nationally – with between 10,000 and 20,000 new members added each month, and has a retention rate of 90 per cent.

Sodexo and diversity

Sodexo, the world leader in quality of life services, has been recognized as one of Canada’s Best Diversity Employers for 2014. The company is rife with ambassadors for diversity from the president and CEO and senior leaders, to managers and employees all across the organization. This commitment, which is backed by a clear plan of action, is summed up in Sodexo’s philosophy: Improving the Quality of Life for our clients, their customers, and our employees through diversity and inclusion.

About Sodexo

Sodexo in Canada

Sodexo has been delivering On-Site Services in Canada for over 40 years. Recognized as a strategic partner, Sodexo Canada has consolidated its position by providing a range of Quality of Life Services for clients, their employees and visitors in the corporate, education, healthcare and remote sites segments. Delivering food and facilities management services for over 200 clients, Sodexo is a market leader in Canada in terms of revenue and consumers served, and has been recognized as a top employer for the past four consecutive years. Sodexo Canada is proud to have created the Sodexo Foundation, an independent charitable organization that has donated more than 1 million meals to at risk youth in Canada since it was founded in 2000.

Sodexo Group

Founded in 1966 by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in services that improve Quality of Life, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 80 countries, Sodexo serves 75 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits and Rewards Services and Personal and Home Services. Through its more than 100 services, Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over more than 45 years of experience: from reception, safety, maintenance and cleaning, to foodservices and facilities and equipment management; from Meal Pass, Gift Pass and Mobility Pass benefits for employees to in-home assistance and concierge services. Sodexo’s success and performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business model and its ability to continuously develop and engage its 420,000 employees throughout the world.

Key Figures (as of August 31, 2012)

Sodexo in the world

18.2 billion euro consolidated revenue
420 000 employees
20th largest employer worldwide
80 consumers served daily
34,300 sites
75 million consumers served daily
9.5 billion euro market capitalization (as of November 7 2012)

Sodexo in Canada

10,000 employees
1 million consumers served daily
230+ clients
750+ sites
850+ service solutions