



INCLUSIVITY GUIDE

Would it not be fabulous if you could make your business more inclusive for all 2SLGBTQ+ folks to shop, while increasing your bottom line revenues? Fostering an inclusive business environment and strategy is easy to accomplish by pivoting slightly, if you have not already. We are here to spill the tea on some of the most common do's and don'ts of the industries when gearing your marketing to 2SLGBTQ+ folks.

TERMINOLOGY + DEFINITIONS

2SLGBTQ+

There are many "rainbow alphabets" out there, but the most common and widely used abbreviation is: 2SLGBTQ+. This stands for 2 Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning. The "+" in the rainbow alphabet encompasses such identities as Fluid, Pansexual, Asexual, Non-Binary etc.

GENDER IDENTITY VS. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

There is a difference between gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender identity is how folks identify themselves. Folks can identify as male, female, transgender or as something outside of the gender binary. Sexual orientation refers to an attraction, physically or emotionally. **This understanding is important as we should refer to our clients with gender-neutral pro-nouns until we have a chance to identify them or have created a safe place to ask them what their pronouns are.**

I identify as male and my orientation is homosexual	I would be in a same sex relationship
I identify as female and my orientation is bisexual	I would be in either a male/female or female./female relationship
I identify as a transgender male and my orientation is gay	I would be in a male/male relationship
I don't identify as male or female and my orientation is pansexual	I would be in a they/male, they/female or they/they relationship

CHOSEN/FOUND FAMILY

Chosen or found families are a widely used term within the 2SLGBTQ+ community. It is term that is used to describe ones family unit. These are the folks someone has chosen to embrace, love and support in addition to, or absence of their own family. This type of family unit often is not blood related.

SAFE PLACE

Often the community will speak of Safe Places. This is referring to a place where folks can truly be their authentic self without the fear of judgement, harm and/or hate.

A GUIDE TO PRONOUNS

- Pronouns can feel tricky but they do not have to be. One common way to increase your visibility as an ally could be to display your own pronouns. By doing this on your name tag, in your bio on your website or beside your name in an email, you will give your potential community clients the comfort of knowing their pronouns will be respected. If you are not too sure what someone's pronouns are... just ask. Folks will not get upset with the question, but will feel they will be respected during their interaction with you. If you address somebody using the wrong pronouns, there is no need to feel horrible about it. It is a journey for everyone as the world adapts to the regular use of pronouns. Do not necessarily make a comment apologizing for using the wrong pronouns. When we do this, it is forcing folks to say "that is okay", when in reality it is not. Instead, say something like, "Thank you for correcting me, I understand"
- It is also never okay to assume someone is community based on visible stereotypes. Folks will self identify when they feel comfortable enough. The coming out experience can be an amazing experience but also a hard one. By creating a safe place within your environment, you will be putting your potential clients at ease. Can you imagine attending a beautiful vendor show and having to come out to each vendor? This can draw up fear, anxiety and discomfort while potentially robbing these beautiful couples of the joy of getting to know the amazing vendor you are.
- A common mistake we have heard from the community is that folks ask "where is your bride or groom?" while assuming they are straight. When someone approaches you as two males or females, try saying.... "Who is the happy couple?" or "Who is getting married?" instead of "Where is your bride/groom?". From time and time again, we have heard of folks getting asked these questions and leaving without learning about those vendors.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Visibility of the 2SLGBTQ+ on your social media networks is key. When the community is shopping and looking to spend money on their wedding day, they are looking to see folks like themselves. Not only does posting folks from the 2SLGBTQ+ community instantly diversify your social media presence, it is also a way of showing the community that you and your business is a safe place for folks to be authentic to themselves.
- Ask for approval before posting their event on social media or blogs. Although we have made leaps and strides in the journey to equality and we would love to say that in 2021/2022 the community is widely accepted and safe, the fact is, we have a lot of work to do. We never know where someone is on your 2SLGBTQ+ journey and it is not our place to "out" someone who may not be "out".
- Use hashtags such as #loveislove #lovewins #samesexwedding #loveislovevendor . These are all hashtags that are searched by community members when seeking safe places to invest their time and money

TERMINOLOGY AND CONVERSATION

- When discussing the day's details, it is best to stay away from the traditional style of wedding assumptions. 2SLGBTQ+ wedding can look drastically different from a traditional style with family and friends. When discussing their event, use open-ended questions as we do not know the relationships they have with their own family. As much as we hope such a celebration would be filled with loving family, for many of us that is not necessarily the case. Try to stay away from "What is your father/daughter dance song or "is your dad giving you away?" These are questions that could upset the couple as family isn't always supportive and family violence can still very much be present.
- Look at using more gender neutral language in posts, print or conversation. Try saying wedding party instead of bridal party or brides maids. Look at using couple instead of bride and groom. The term "partner" in describing ones relationship now doesn't always mean they are community. It is a term that is used widely when folks describe their life significant other, regardless of being part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- Let your couple know that you are open to being corrected in order to make it the best experience possible.
- Just like turning folks away for being part of the 2SLGBTQ+, tokenizing them can also have a negative affect on the couple. An example of tokenizing is if you are not regularly sharing LGBTQ+ couples in your business, and you shift your social media strategy entirely during Pride month. Be cautious to use 2SLGBTQ+ models in your style shoots and want to work with the couple to help them create their day and not because it is good for your social media or portfolio

The journey to becoming more inclusive can be a scary and an overwhelming one. We hope that our quick tip guide has given you some ideas and can help you along that journey. We can speak for hours on this subject and are here to answer any additional questions or concerns you might have.

With Pride,
LOVE IS LOVE COLLECTIVES TEAM

