



**Including the Rainbow  
Planning the LGBT-Friendly Event**



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**Agenda**

- In today's session, we will discuss strategies for planning your meeting/event in a more inclusive way, where every attendee (regarding of sexual orientation or gender identity) feels comfortable and welcomed.




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**Learning Objectives**

- During this session, attendees will learn:
  - Contractual, logistical, creative and on-site strategies for planning and executing meetings/events that incorporate the unique voices, faces and perspective of the LGBT community.
  - Useful resources for ensuring inclusivity that goes beyond just your meeting!




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### About me....



- Identify as LGBT
- 13 years planning and managing mission driven events in the non-profit sector
- Direct experience planning LGBT focused events for the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Advisory Board Member of the LGBT Meeting Professionals Association ([www.lgbtmeetingplanner.com](http://www.lgbtmeetingplanner.com))





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### Identify the WHY



- Why am I hosting this meeting?
- What am I hoping to achieve?
- What are my goals?
- Also, who is my audience?

- Remember...it's impossible to host an inclusive event or increase LGBT representation if you don't have a defined reason for you're planning the event in the first place!





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### Location, Location, Location...

- Typically larger, Tier 1 cities will be more progressive and likely accustomed to working and interacting more with an LGBT clientele.
- Regardless of your budget and whether it will allow a Tier 1 city, have a conversation with any potential hotel about their experiences working with and/or hosting LGBT groups and any type of diversity training their staff have undergone.
- Reach out to the Convention & Visitors Bureau in every city that you are considering to get a sense of the local climate and attitude.



Do your own research and know the laws/policies from State to State. A great place to start is [http://www.hrc.org/state\\_maps](http://www.hrc.org/state_maps). Consider working exclusively with States that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.





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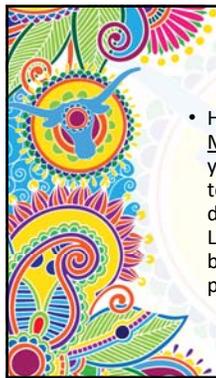
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### Contract Negotiation

- Have hotel/event facility include a Force Majeure/Excuse of Performance clause within your contract. This will allow you to terminate the contract w/out liability or damages should the State enact any anti-LGBT legislation (i.e. "bathroom bill") between the time of contract signing and program execution.




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### Program



- Incorporate LGBT voices on your Program and/or Host Committee.
- When possible, determine how the LGBT community (and other marginalized peoples) are affected by the work your organization does and how to include their voices/perspective in your panels.
- Add LGBT friendly dining/nightlife options to a "local attractions" one-pager for your conference bags or list them in your conference program. The CVB can even develop this list for you!




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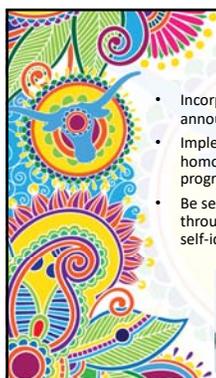
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### Marketing

- Incorporate LGBT faces in your marketing collateral, save-the-date announcement, registration mailer, conference program, etc.
- Implement and publicize a zero-tolerance policy for homophobic/racist language on the event website and conference program.
- Be sensitive to gender identity. If you document sex or gender through your registration site, be sure to include "I do not wish to self-identify" as an option.





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### Speaker Engagement

- Include LGBT speakers in your sessions. Even if speakers aren't addressing any LGBT related content, adopt diversity and inclusion as core concepts when forming your sessions/panels and through your call for proposals. Encourage LGBT folks, women and people of color to submit!
- Insist keynoters/speakers/panelists (either through your registration portal or in e-mail correspondence) use gender-neutral terms in their presentations, such as they, them, their, partner(s), significant other(s). **Language is important.**







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### Logistics and On-Site

- Host an LGBT networking social/mixer. Even if your event is in no way LGBT themed, this is a small way to make your LGBT attendees feel more comfortable and your conference/event more inclusive overall.
- Ask your host hotel and/or convention center if you can place "All Gender Restroom" signs outside all restrooms in your general meeting area. These can be purchased inexpensively and are a small but effective way to promote inclusiveness at your event.








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### Supplier Diversity

- Diversify your event by diversifying your supply chain! Get involved with the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and consider certified LGBT suppliers for your meeting/event through the Supplier Diversity Initiative. (<http://www.nglcc.org/what-we-do/diversity-inclusion>)
- Ability to access NGLCC's LGBT supplier database and meet face-to-face with potential suppliers at NGLCC matchmaking and networking events held around the country and throughout the year.
- By supporting NGLCC, you're not only supporting supplier diversity and the empowerment of LGBT-owned businesses, but you're also ensuring that LGBT folks have a seat at the table for both federal and local pro-business policy initiatives and interests. Using its national presence, NGLCC takes an active role in discussions with legislators and government officials at all levels of government to advance economic interests of the LGBT community.





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### Finding yourself in hostile territory

- I'm an LGBT friendly company, hotel or city in a State with discriminatory legislation enacted into law or on the books. What can I do?
- **Keep making yourself heard!**
  - CVB's are invested in the success of the meetings industry and have deep ties to local and State legislatures. Continue emphasizing the fiscal impact of discriminatory legislation to the CVB and your local representatives at every opportunity. And use real life examples!! (<http://www.advocate.com/politics/2016/4/13/heres-all-business-nc-has-lost-because-anti-lgbt-bill>)
- **If possible, cancel and/or plan your meetings and events out of State.**
  - Cancelling and/or sending your events out of State is the most effective way to hit 'em where it hurts. According to Skift, the State of North Carolina has already lost upwards of \$83.9 million in direct spending from cancellations due to HB2.
- **If you do need to plan your event in a city/State that is less accepting....**
  - Reach out to the CVB for advice. Can they offer any best practices from working with other like-minded clients or guidance on how to best work with specific hotels/venues?
  - Have a candid conversation and express your expectations and concerns to your hotelier/venue contact. While the State might not be welcoming, you'll be hard-pressed to find a hotel or venue that doesn't want your attendees to feel comfortable and accepted at their property.

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### Post-event

- Don't forget to include a question (or questions) in your post-event survey about inclusivity and LGBT representation at your event. What worked? What could be done better at your event?
- Get involved with the [LGBT Meeting Professionals Association](#) and connect with like-minded meeting professionals and suppliers committed to diversity and inclusion.

**WHAT NEXT?**

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### Summary

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**Q&A**

Continue the conversation!  
 • Follow @NACENational, use hashtag #NACEEXP17

For more resources on this topic, visit [www.nace.net](http://www.nace.net)

LogtMFA NACE EXPERIENCE July 16-19, 2017 | Houston, TX #NACEEXP17

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**Thank you for attending!**

Please complete the session survey.  
 We value your feedback.

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