

DO CANADIAN COMPANIES HAVE PRIDE?

What About the Other 11 Months of the Year?

An Ipsos Point of View

By Meghan Miller



GAME CHANGERS



Each year in June, many parts of the country are awash with rainbow flags as Canadians come together to celebrate LGBTQ2S+ Pride month. What started as a [civil rights protest](#) has now evolved into a month-long international celebration of inclusivity while also putting a spotlight on the rights and freedoms of the LGBTQ2S+ community, and an enduring ethos through the remainder of the year.

Compared to the global average, [Canadians express higher support in general for LGBTQ2S+ rights](#). In alignment with this, many businesses express support for the LGBTQ2S+ community during Pride month through targeted campaigns, communications, or by elevating the voices of their LGBTQ2S+ staff. But is this enough? Our research reveals that Canadians feel companies should do more.

Is Business Support for LGBTQ2S+ Pride Month Having a Meaningful Impact?

While there is recognition that most companies do a good job of providing individuals in the LGBTQ2S+ community with products and services that meet their unique needs (65%), a slim majority (55%) think that companies' efforts to support Pride month haven't had a meaningful impact on LGBTQ2S+ rights or its community.

In fact, Canadians are largely cynical about companies' true intentions in supporting Pride month: nearly three-quarters of Canadians think that most companies only support Pride month to market and sell their products or services, rather than having a desire to genuinely support the LGBTQ2S+ community. Almost three-quarters of Canadians also feel that many businesses only express support for Pride month to be seen as politically correct and pander to "woke" groups. With nearly two-thirds feeling that companies should do more to support the community outside of Pride month, the message is clear: support for LGBTQ2S+ shouldn't begin and end in June. These are clear signs that Canadians see a need for companies to step up in a more meaningful way, not only when LGBTQ2S+ issues may be on the public's radar.

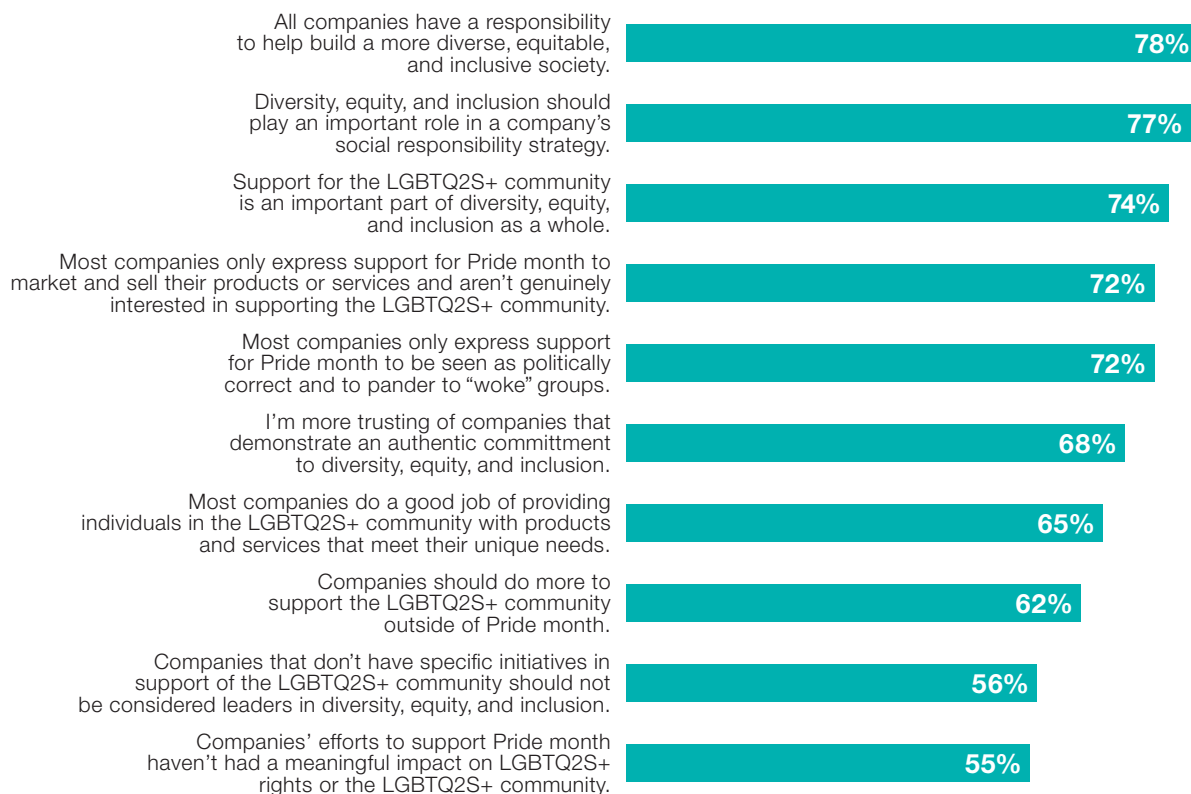
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Canadians also expect that companies demonstrate how they are making real and measurable efforts to further diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in their corporate strategy. Roughly three-quarters feel DEI should play an important role in a company's social responsibility strategy, and that support for the LGBTQ2S+ community is an important part of DEI as a whole. And while holistic dedication to DEI encompasses fostering equity beyond solely gender and sexuality, the majority

agrees that companies that don't have specific initiatives in support of the LGBTQ2S+ community should not be considered leaders in DEI.

There is also broad agreement among Canadians that all companies have a responsibility to help build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, which, in turn, fosters trust—nearly seven-in-ten agree that they are more trusting of companies that demonstrate an authentic commitment to DEI.

% Agree



Want Your Message to Resonate with Younger Canadians? Demonstrate Real Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Younger Canadians, (ages 18 to 34) are more cynical about companies' communications in support for the LGBTQ2S+ community and have a greater expectation of companies to step up. For example, those 18 to 34 are significantly more likely to strongly agree that:

- Most companies only express support for Pride month to market and sell products or services and aren't genuinely interested in supporting the LGBTQ2S+ community (26% vs. 14% of those aged 35–54 and 13% of those 55+);
- Most companies only express support for Pride month to be seen as politically correct and to pander to “woke” groups (26% vs. 16% for those aged 35–54 and 15% of those 55+);
- Companies' efforts to support Pride month haven't had a meaningful impact on LGBTQ2S+ rights or the LGBTQ2S+ community (11% vs. 10% for those aged 35–54 and 4% of those 55+);
- Companies should do more to support the LGBTQ2S+ community outside of Pride month (32% vs. 14% for those aged 35–54 and 14% of those 55+);

- Support for the LGBTQ2S+ community is an important part of DEI as a whole (34% vs. 23% for those aged 35–54, and 21% of those 55+); and that
- They are more trusting of companies that demonstrate an authentic commitment to DEI (29% vs. 21% for those aged 35–54, and 19% of those 55+).

Younger Canadians are also significantly more likely to agree that companies that don't have specific initiatives in support of the LGBTQ2S+ community should not be considered leaders in DEI (64% vs. 53% for those aged 35–54 and 52% of those 55+), and to strongly agree that all companies have a responsibility to help build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society (41% vs. 30% for those aged 35–54 and 27% of those 55+).

All told, this highlights the fact that the younger generations are watching to see how companies take a stand on LGBTQ2S+ and DEI issues—and meeting their expectations can have a major impact on a company's reputation in being considered an ally to the LGBTQ2S+ community and a leader in DEI overall.



What Is the Way Forward for Companies?

While the past decade has seen greater acceptance and celebration of those representing a broad range of gender and sexual identities in Canada, Canadians give the most credit to those companies that show their commitment to the LGBTQ2S+ community year-round and not just during Pride month in June. Canadians place a high value on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, of which LGBTQ2S+ issues are an important part.

It's crucial for companies to understand their current reputation in the DEI space and identify potential areas to effect positive change.

This means:

- **Measuring** where a company stands and what Canadians think of a company's performance on measures of DEI, including initiatives in support of the LGBTQ2S+ community;
- **Understanding** what is important in demonstrating effective DEI strategy (and identifying Canadians' expectations of a company's advocacy efforts, which may be unique within any given sector);
- Identifying the **key drivers** of positive performance; and
- Determining what **impact they have on trust**, one of the most fundamental metrics of company reputation.

In an ever-evolving world, Canadians believe companies have a responsibility to help create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive society, and may be more likely to vote with their dollar for those that can demonstrate that they're driving positive change, stand with the LGBTQ2S+ community, and have a genuine commitment to DEI.



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