

Gaming companies get vocal on trans rights

Mala Singh, chief people officer at Electronic Arts (EA), has said the gaming company supports the trans community, after previously refusing to defend trans rights in a company-wide meeting. Employees demanded a public statement on the leaked Supreme Court opinion concerning abortion rights and anti-trans legislation being enacted in the US, but were told being an “inclusive company means being inclusive of all those points of view”.

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EA's support is “unwavering” for trans and LGBTQ+ communities, Singh said in a statement, adding that the company views trans rights as human rights. ([*Pink News*](#))

Why does this matter?

Companies are increasingly unable to stay silent on issues their employees care about. EA has previously been called out by activists and customers for hesitancy when it comes to “political” statements on LGBTQ+ rights – for example when it refused to release a same-sex marriage story line in the

Russian release of its Sims 4 game – but this seems to no longer be an option, now that employees are banding together to take action.

Bring in the gaymers

There are definitely issues to be resolved within the gaming industry, including gender imbalances, a problematic “tech bro” culture (looking at you Activision Blizzard), and the proliferation of online abuse on many gaming platforms like Twitch.

The virtual world of video games is also a place where many LGBTQ+ people have been able to experience a sense of belonging and the freedom to express themselves as they choose. The rise in visual representation of LGBTQ+ people through games and storylines centred around queer characters and communities has been a key part of this. The growing community of “gaymers” – with over 240,000 members on Reddit alone – has, therefore, become a target demographic for developers.

Say it loud, say it proud!

Two other gaming companies have also made statements in support of the trans community. Developer Bioware has come out in support of “trans rights, women’s rights, and bodily autonomy”, while Xbox Game Studios has announced \$25,000 in donations to two organisations specifically combatting “transphobic sentiment”. Microsoft and Xbox are also committing nearly \$8.2m to other Pride initiatives and LGBTQ+ non-profit organisations and have encouraged users to donate as well.

These moves will not only signpost to customers that they are working to be allies of the LGBTQ+ community, but will also attract talent within the industry seeking to join a company that shares inclusive values and is working to create an environment where trans and any other LGBTQ+ employees feel comfortable enough to bring their whole selves to work.

How can businesses continue to work toward LGBTQ+ inclusion, acceptance and pride?

It’s important for us all to remember that as much as Pride is a celebration of LGBTQ+ people, it’s also a protest against the inequalities and discrimination experienced by the LGBTQ+ community, and a platform to call for the

advancement of LGBTQ+ rights.

To that end, business can play a very important role by supporting the fight for these rights. There are three key areas where action can be focused:

1. Be vocal – taking the initiative to point out injustice and inequality suffered by minorities and engaging with the social and political climate as it is being experienced by your employees, your customers and any other stakeholders.
2. Visibility – ensuring that whatever position or action you take, you do so with pride and conviction, to signal clear allyship, and to influence other companies to follow suit.
3. Learning and evolving – there is no clear-cut path to equality, but there are actions, big and small, that can be taken. Learning how to make those moves and changes in a sustainable way is the first step. Just remember, it's your responsibility to seek out learning, not anyone else's responsibility to teach you.

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