

Helping You Navigate the GLBT Landscape

In 2005 and 2006, major corporations and nonprofit organizations observed a complex, swiftly changing and often confusing landscape in responding successfully to the employment status and benefits needs of its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) employees.

In 2007, the terrain continues to shift. Pro-equality measures will continue to be introduced in state legislatures around the country. Constitutional amendments will continue, including new limits on gay parenting, adoption and foster care. And extremist forces will try to block Corporate America's forward progress with threats.

Consider these facts:

- As of April 26, 2000, **Vermont began performing civil unions** for same-sex couples.
- On June 13, 2003, **Ontario, Canada legalized same-sex marriages**. On July 8, 2003, British Columbia legalized same-sex marriages. On March 19, 2004, equal marriage is now the law of Quebec.
- As of May 17, 2004, **same-sex marriage is legal in Massachusetts**. Employers nationwide will be faced with questions from employees and the public about eligibility for full spousal benefits.
- The passage of a **Federal Marriage Amendment** banning gay marriages could decrease the availability of domestic partner health benefits through state-regulated plans.
- As of December 31, 2003, 200 Fortune 500 and 7,149 private employers (including colleges and universities) provide **health insurance coverage to employees' domestic partners**.
- In 2005, seven states saw the introduction of **statutory bans on gay and lesbian adoption** and/or foster care measures. All were defeated during the subcommittee or committee process. It is no surprise that all the states that will likely face these measures saw constitutional bans on same-sex marriage passed in the last two years.
- The Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2006 annual report card — the Corporate Equality Index — found that **142 of Fortune 500 companies scored a perfect 100%** on a scale that measures seven key indicators of fair treatment for GLBT employees, growing ten times since 2002.
- The 2006 election cycle saw many states pass constitutional amendments **banning same-sex marriage** and in most cases other legal responsibilities and rights for same-sex couples, bringing the total to 26 states.



Your Counselors and Partners

Corporations will increasingly face a challenging environment — one in which they must balance sound business practices and marketing opportunities with equitable employee policies. Today's multicultural marketing and planning means understanding how GLBT employees and customers fit into the fabric of a company's mission and vision.

To help executives make sound business decisions that are in sync with existing corporate philosophy, mission and vision, Witeck-Combs Communications provides strategic and actionable counsel that helps assess, analyze and plan in this fast-changing environment.

We also have developed a number of tools to help you not only prepare for today's challenges, but make smart business decisions that positively impact your bottom line. These include:

- **Communicating effectively about Gay and Lesbian Issues**
- **Your Business and Gay Public Policy**
- **How to tap the \$690 Billion Gay Market**

Working closely with your management, Witeck-Combs Communications helps you accomplish these challenging tasks:

- **Responding to negative internal and external feedback** concerning marketing and company policies addressing gays and lesbians.
- **Developing and implementing marketing strategies** aimed at the buying power of the GLBT market — estimated to be \$690 billion in 2007.
- **Enacting and modifying corporate policies** that provide equal protection for GLBT workers amidst rapidly changing state legislation addressing gay issues.

About Us

Witeck-Combs Communications is the nation's premier strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with unmatched expertise in the GLBT community. We welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can help guide you through this sometimes delicate process using experience, knowledge and trust. For more information, contact:

Wesley Combs
202-887-0500 x14
wcombs@witeckcombs.com