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It's an important time to celebrate how far we've come in supporting LGBT individuals, and reflect on how far we can still go. It also reminds us to think about how we as employers, leaders and, most importantly, people create diverse and inclusive jobs. Initiatives such as CEO Action and Diversity Reports are a step forward, but the realization of an inclusive workplace is the result of actions we take on a daily basis. Related: Research shows when groups are diverse, people are less likely to go along with CrowdAt Ultimate software, our people have always been our top priority and it's been a process as we continually strive to make Ultimate a better workplace for all people. We learned along the way how best to do this by talking to our employees and listening to them. One example is the expansion of our 100 percent employer-paid medical premiums to include not only workers and their families, but same-sex couples as well. Aside from the benefits, however, there are many other key steps employers can take to create a more inclusive workplace: Understand that diversity and inclusivity are not the same. Companies often focus on achieving a certain diversity of representation and can then reduce their focus once they have reached their original goal. But hiring different employees is only the first important part. Once you have created an inclusive culture, you have to work every day to protect that culture. Think about what you do to make different people feel engaged, supported and respected - and whether you're doing enough. While you can donate to transgender equality organizations, do you understand the problems that transgender employees typically face at work? Look to engage outside experts for training on how leaders can create a welcoming and inclusive environment that treats all people equally. Related: The website that helps helps Find a variety of talentsInfluence of people managers. Minority groups should have the same opportunities as majority groups, but this is not always the case in practice. A recent study by the Kapur Social Impact Centre found that a third of under-represented women of color were referred for promotion, and 64 percent of LGBT employees left the company because of bullying or public humiliation. Leaders influence inclusion by influencing promotion decisions, promotions and job opportunities. At Ultimate, we believe that organizations should offer trainings on transgender sensitivity and peer support groups to queer women in leadership positions. Technology can also help level the playing field when organizations use objective metrics and quantitative feedback to support their decisions. Related: Here are the best technology companies for women WorkBe open to change. Promoting an inclusive workplace is in the process of being developed. As progress progresses, it is equally important to recognize our shortcomings and remain open to change. Many LGBT couples turn to adoption when they start a family. Example: Ultimate's original adoption leave policy stated that an adopted child must not be in 1 year for an employee to take leave. However, when one of our employees adopted an eldest child from China, we realized that our policy was limiting. So we decided to change the policy for everyone. Small companies may not be able to bend each rule to each employee, but you should be open about adjusting policies that do not adequately support unique situations. Related: How to improve workplace diversity by hiring MetricsBe transparent. The inclusive workplace starts at the top, but thrives from below. It is important to respect people's beliefs and appreciate differences of opinion, as well as to be frank with potential employees about the company's on-site policies and the values you stand for. During interviews, let the candidates know what resources you are offering. For example, if you have a women-only network group or a mandatory racial sensitivity training program, be transparent about these company priorities. It shows the minority employees you are committed to incorporating them, and can give an idea of whether candidates share your company values and believe in your mission. Related: 3 key ways to develop the DiversityCon workplace to rethink their programs. As you look for more ways to improve your workplace for all individuals, take a look at what other companies are doing to address diversity and inclusion. The Human Rights Campaign annually releases the Corporate Equality Index, studying how the largest countries are considering specific strategies, such as sexual orientation in non-discrimination policies, transgender benefits and LGBT community. Don't forget to also look at your competitors. Are talented people leaving your company for a more inclusive workplace? Aside from being great for people, having a workplace that values all people is also good for business - inclusive organizations have been shown to outperform their peers. Diversity and inclusion is a complex topic, and there is no night-time solution to make our employees feel valued. As we reflect on Pride Month and it is time to celebrate the people who make our companies so unique, now is the perfect time to renew our attention to all people. What can we all do today to create more inclusive jobs? Inclusivity is the hot buzz word in the fashion world. Campaigns are built on it, social networks talk about it, panels are held for this purpose. So what does inclusion really mean? Inclusion comes from the word include, which means letting someone share in activities or privileges. In the fashion world, being inclusive means including all the needs and desires in your products, shopping experience, and marketing materials. It is very important to understand that some people are traditionally included, while others are excluded in fashion and clothing. In Western culture, the norms that are included tend to fall under the same category of what society has chosen as acceptable, or beautiful. Amazing steps have been taken to take more people into society and incorporate their needs and desires into the fashion world, and yet there are still groups that are usually excluded. Some of these groups are people of color, plus size people, people with different capable bodies or feelings, gender non-compliant and LGBT communities, elders, and most minority groups. We can note the great progress made by the fashion world and recognize that much remains to be done. And there are different ways of doing this work. In order to include groups and people who are usually excluded, brands and stores can expand their product offerings. A common first way to do this is with large sizes. They can also make their stores more hospitable or accessible to different types of people with signage, gender-neutral fitting rooms, or ADA upgrades available. For some brands, it can be overwhelming to try to serve each person and include a wide range of needs, sizes and preferences. For example, creating a larger product size and color requires a large financial investment, updating design and fittings, and manufacturers or factories capable of producing these sizes. In some cases, brands will make fashionable and apparel products focused on supporting only those who tend to AdARA, which specializes in clothing for Muslim women and other women who love modern modest fashion, points out that it can with difficulties that they may seem exclusive. In fact, while this means they do not include everything, it is still an inclusive practice because they specifically include those most often excluded. The fashion business emphasizes the importance of being involved in diversity, and goes beyond products and boardrooms. Writes Chantal Fernandez, in her BOF article, What can the fashion industry do to be more inclusive, often in fashion, diversity is superficial, like casting different races of people on the runway or in campaigns while designers and executives call shots behind the scenes remain unchanged - and does not reflect the consumer brand trying to attract. She continues by saying that real change can only happen when different decision makers and executives can enter the top levels of the industry. Inclusion is important in fashion because clothing and how we outwardly show ourselves is a big factor in how we communicate with others and how we express who we are. When certain groups are closed, forgotten or not supported, it is detrimental to their existence and to our culture as a whole. Incorporating people into the choice of clothing and clothing is the main form of promoting equality, sharing love and creating communication and understanding. Below are a few brands that practice incorporating, or taking steps to be more inclusive. These are just one or more examples from different fashion categories. Some of these brands have been around for centuries, and are expanding their offerings. Other brand-new and serving groups of people who are usually excluded. And some were quietly humming along. Whether it's in the products they offer, the store experience, or the marketing they use, these brands are taking steps toward a more inclusive world. Every part of fashion and retail has the opportunity to step it up! Parfait Historically has been so that the full community has been excluded from fashion styles, shopping options and affordability. Mainly because of the body's positive movement, the current statistics on the size of clothing in the U.S. year, and the very purchasing power of this population, the plus size of the fashion genre has seen an amazing change in terms of inclusion. There are vocal brands, models and activists that have real meaning. One of the companies to make a new splash in this space is 11 Honor, which collaborates with and curates styles from luxury and high-end designers, a category reserved for a small range of sizes in the past. According to their website, they are a size-inclusive shopping site that for the first time ever, gives more women the option to experience the best designer clothes and celebrate and honor their body, beauty and style. The brand made headlines for its NYFW Show strips filled with plus-size model models Ages and ethnicities, which closed with transgender actress Laverne Cox, and the company's successes are doing to work with top luxury designers to expand their size offerings to include a plus-size community. Eugenia Delman, CEO and co-founder of Ava James NYC, is on a similar mission to serve women sizes 8-18 with her trendy dresses and designs. Delman argues that the most common sizes are also the most historically overlooked groups. She adds: Also, as a brand that was started by two Asian women, we wanted our models to have representation in all our marketing. Creating different sizes and finding fit and models according to these projects doesn't always prove easy, however. It was a challenge to find a patterner and a factory that was experienced yet willing to work with us, given that our sample size started at a rate of 14, explains Delman. Each of our projects went through an extensive fit process, and we had several fittings for each garment, which ended up being quite expensive (especially what we wanted to produce in New York for quality purposes). When it came to hull models, she says the company also ran into difficulties. Not every size 14 woman has exactly the same body shape: There are far fewer differences in body types when you look at the 5'11 size 2 model, so finding a model with the right look for our brand that is in our size in different races has proven to be a much more difficult exercise than we expected. As with other brands practicing inclusivity, the fight is worth the effort for the community and on a personal level. Delman Reason work: As an Asian woman, I love seeing women who look like I'm celebrated and valued for our beauty. Besides, as a businesswoman, I also want to be a role model for other Asian women who have said we are big worker bees, not good leaders. Representation matters. The first thing that comes to mind for fashion and inclusion is usually not shoes. But this is a real need for some. Emme Cadeau Inc., creates sharp and comfortable shoes for a wider range of sizes than is commonly found in the shoe industry. Their shoe sizes go from a U.S. size 5 to a U.S. size 14, including half the size. The brand's owner, Marcella Gift, notes that most brands go from 6 to 10, and that there are discussion groups for tall women, curvy women, short women, but not much for big legs. Styles and suitable for extended sizes is a big step in the shoe market. Another opportunity for the fashion community to do this is to include more shoe options for people with different capable legs, legs and body. Accessories can often be gender or size only for groups of people. However, they are often one of the easiest fashion categories for practicing inclusion. Advenurist Backpack Co. was created by Kelly Kelly and his wife, Matilda Sandstrom, who did not want to do specific projects for men and other women, but wanted all their products to be unisex. My wife is an immigrant from Sweden, says Belknap, and this idea comes a lot from my wife's home country, where a lot of clothes and accessories are worn regularly by both men and women. It was also important for us that people of all types and shapes of the body could wear our backpacks comfortably. And he recognizes that it makes marketing harder for our brand, and figuring out who to advertise can be more challenging, but agrees that the effort he faces in the end is because inclusivity is a responsibility for brands. It is very important for companies to spread the message of equality, kindness and acceptance. The benefits are an opportunity to make the world kinder and more welcoming, where no one should feel marginalized or out of place. The underwear industry has undergone a makeover in terms of inclusion, and is ripe for more steps. The most popular form of inclusion in this type of fashion is the inclusion of size, with brands expanding or specifically dedicated cup sizes outside of B-DD and strip sizes below 34 and above 40. Companies such as Parfait, for example, include A-K cup sizes (UK sizes) and stripes of 30-44 in many of their colourful, supportive bras. Other companies are focused on one end of the spectrum. Panache, a UK based bra brand makes D cups and up, for example. While the company Little Bra maintains sizes under the cup C. Another step taken is offering different skin tones and neutral bras outside of the typical nude light most companies used. And for sure, in marketing, underwear brands including models of different sizes, ethnic backgrounds and skin tones, as well as abilities and body types. One way to make a difference in the industry is with education and discussion like inclusivity and intimate clothing panels at the Curve Lingerie Expo in New York City, where various voices come together to make a difference about changes in the industry due to inclusivity. Another area in which fashion brands practice inclusion in adaptive clothing. Defined as clothing designed for people with physical disabilities, the elderly and the infirm, who may have difficulty dressing themselves due to the inability to manipulate closures such as buttons and zippers, or due to the lack of the full range of movement required for self-dressing, there are several subcategories to consider. The appops, for example, now carry fashionable items with light shoes and touch-friendly clothing, as well as adaptive jeans with magnetic circuits. The idea, said Molly Kettle, director of the Adaptive Appops, came from a client. The employee took a call from a client who shared that her grandson has autism and cannot lace shoes due to tying them up. It gets harder to find shoes for his needs as he gets older. When asked about the importance of this initiative, and how to take steps toward inclusion, she continued: Being inclusive is a constant effort that requires empathy, education (just ask our Advisory Board!), and passion. It also means being open to going beyond yourself and your needs and immersing yourself in the needs and desires of others. These little steps beyond your own experience add up to creating big changes that positively affect those who need around us, and create a more inclusive world. World.

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