

Diversity and Inclusion Case Competition

In collaboration with The Bank of Montreal (BMO) and Bain & Company, The Letters @ Rotman and the Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) hosted a two-part case competition on October 31 and November 9.

Over 50 Rotman MBA students in 18 teams participated in the effort to strengthen LGBTQ2+ diversity and inclusion efforts at BMO.

The challenge question:

"How can BMO become the #1 employer in the world by empowering its employees and leadership to champion the needs and professional development of LGBTQ2+ people?"



Pictured: Diversity and Inclusion Case Competition Winners, from left to right; Alicia Riolino, Alison Zimmer, and Baidong Sun.

The Finalists

Six teams were selected for the final competition. Their creative ideas offered up new approaches to inclusion at BMO.

All six ideas are listed below.



BMO's Family First Benefits Plan

A benefits coverage plan for a wide range of assisted reproduction and adoption costs, which are particularly important for LGBTQ2+ employees.

Transformation Investment Fund

A trans-centered investment fund that provides capital, mentoring and advisory services to trans-owned businesses.

BMO Art Labs

A dedicated space for employees that supports self-development and expression through art.

BMO Allies to Advocates Program

An employee program that supports and promotes ally education through seminars, Q&A sessions, and empathy exercises.

BMO Board of Diversity and Fellowship Program

A group of employees that champions LGBTQ2+ employees and an undergraduate fellowship program for young LGBTQ2+ talent.

Project Unicorn

A series of programs that support the trans community including initiating BMO Allies Pledge Week, a dedicated time during the year when allies showcase their support for the community.



Winning idea

Further insights

In addition to the recommendations generated by the finalists, the other teams developed interesting solutions focused on the following themes:

Develop robust diversity and inclusion policies:

- Update gendered and heteronormative policy language which may alienate LGBTQ+ employees
- Invest in recruiter training that supports the inclusion of trans people in the hiring process
- Introduce a relaxed “dress for your day” dress code to support employees who have non-gendered clothing preferences

Build transformational programs for allies to engage in the community:

- Create educational material and programming that reduces unconscious bias and stigma
- Host an “Ask Me Anything Panel”, where willing LGBTQ2+ employees answer questions that non-identifying employees have about their experiences
- Publicly celebrate allies that support the LGBTQ2+ community
- Develop incentive programs for employees to engage in the LGBTQ2+ community
- Provide employees that engage in diversity training or allyship with visual symbols like pins or plaques that demonstrate their support

Celebrate diverse gender expression and sexual orientation:

- Engage in conscious pronoun practices, such as having employees list their preferred pronouns (he, his, him or she, her, hers or they, them, their) in their email signatures
- Develop creative ways for LGBTQ2+ employees to share their stories, such as a “Pride Guide,” a book that includes information on current diversity and inclusion strategies, etc.

Invest in your LGBTQ2+ talent:

- Create safe spaces for LGBTQ2+ employees to develop and grow. These could be private, public, physical, and/or digital (e.g., invest in an internal social network platform that enables training on diversity and inclusion, connects people in the community, creates space for anonymous Q&A, and presents career development opportunities)
- Create mentorship programs for LGBTQ2+ employees (e.g., develop mentorship program modelled after Dolphin Disabilities Mentoring Day)

Measure the impact of your efforts:

- Develop an internal tracking system where teams are evaluated and rewarded for their efforts to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace
- Utilize employee feedback surveys to ask for feedback on targeted programs (e.g., an internal Net Happiness Score, with specific questions about inclusion)

Thank you to all of the participants, coaches, and judges!

To learn more, please visit The Letters @ Rotman’s website [here](#), and GATE’s website [here](#).