

DAILY EXPRESS

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A show of diversity

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BEN WEST previews Friday's inaugural Diversity Career Show in central London

SEVENTY of the country's most influential employers are exhibiting at the inaugural Diversity Careers Show, a prestigious event focusing on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) communities.

The show, which is sponsored by Credit Suisse, is organised by leading gay publisher Square Peg Media, and Stonewall, the highly respected LGBT campaigning organisation.

Stonewall, which has worked closely with the Government for more than 20 years to improve gay rights, has helped more than 400 companies improve diversity and equality in the workplace through its Diversity Champions Programme. It also produces the annual Workplace Equality Index, which lists Britain's top 100 diversity employers.

Thousands of candidates have expressed an interest in attending the show, which will be held at the Grand Connaught Rooms, London, on Friday. Linda Riley, managing director of Square Peg Media, said: "We are overwhelmed by the response to the show from recruiters and candidates.

"Our exhibitors feature some of the most influential businesses and organisations in the world. We are proud to have created an exceptional opportunity for LGBT jobseekers to search for employment with diversity-friendly organisations and we see this as the first of many such specialist events to come."

Laura Doughty, Stonewall's director of fundraising and communications, said: "We are really pleased to be supporting the Diversity Careers Show. Even in more challenging economic times, employers want to attract the best talent, and gay and lesbian jobseekers want to know whether they will be able to thrive and achieve their full potential in an environment that recognises a diverse workplace gets the best results.

"Stonewall's best practice programme, Diversity Champions, recognises that people really do perform better when they can be themselves. This show will feature some top employers who also believe this."

Exhibitors are in no doubt of the competitive advantage of investing in talent from the broadest sections of society. Jemima Jefferson, European diversity and inclusion manager at Credit Suisse, said: "It is important for a diverse organisation such as ours, covering many different clients and product areas across numerous countries, to identify the strongest candidates from the broadest range of talent pools. This careers show is critical in helping us achieve this."

Former head of diversity at Barclays Group, Mark Palmer-Edgecumbe, is a consultant for the show. "Wise companies have learnt the lessons from the last recession, where they cut back on graduate recruitment and paid the price through gaps in the talent pipeline and a loss of credibility on campus. They know that they gain competitive advantage from investing in talent now, that will grow their business in the upturn."

The Diversity Careers Show creates an invaluable forum for talented LGBT undergraduates and graduates to meet face-to-face with leading organisations committed to inclusion and diversity.

Many university careers services and LGBT societies have already signed up, including those at Cambridge, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and York.

Free coach travel is provided from core universities outside London.

The show is marketed to graduate jobseekers through strategic partnerships with leading diversity consultants Ari Consulting, LGBT social networks **Village Drinks** and Citypink, as well as the gay marketing and media agency Boutique Marketing and LGBT publications Out In The City, Proud! , Out At Work and g3.

The show will feature two areas: the Professional Zone and the Public Sector/NGO Zone. In the Professional Zone, visitors can meet representatives from the world's biggest banks, law firms and other blue-chip businesses. The Public Sector/NGO Zone will feature a wide range of employers offering public sector opportunities.

Uwern Jong, head of marketing at the Diversity Careers Show and managing director of Boutique Marketing, which specialises in brand activation, awareness and engagement among the hard-to-reach LGBT audiences, said: "We have reached LGBT students, graduates and their friends like never before. The combined media strength of LGBT publications such as g3, Out In The City and Out At Work has been invaluable in getting to these audiences.

"We've also targeted candidates through innovative online and offline social networking activities, creating in-roads with university careers services, and building advocates and ambassadors on campus through the new crop of LGBT executives."

The organisers are urging visitors to register online. The first 100 visitors to the show will receive a free Some People Are Gay T-shirt, and all visitors will receive a free ticket to the aftershow party at the Shadow Lounge in Soho, London, on a first-come-first-served basis.

INFORMATION: The Diversity Careers Show runs from 11am to 5.30pm on Friday at the Grand Connaught Rooms, 61-65 Great Queen Street, London. More details on [www. diversitycareersshow. com](http://www.diversitycareersshow.com) Exhibitors include Credit Suisse, Asda, Accenture, Allen & Overy, American Express, Barclays, Merrill Lynch, Shell, Tesco, Morgan Stanley, Children's Workforce Development Council, Bank of America, Bloomberg, Citibank, Deutsche Bank, East Sussex County Council, Google, Remploy, Ernst & Young, The Law Society, Environment Agency, Kent County Council, National Audit Office, Genesis Housing Association, The Home Office, HM Prison Service, London Ambulance Service and the Metropolitan Police.

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