

Why should you make your business/website more LGBTQIA Affirming?

First, Please don't get defensive. Put aside any tendency toward contempt prior to investigation—we all have blind spots. We're always learning.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: I am not an expert on diversity and inclusion!

I am not perfect and I am learning here, too. In fact, I recently had the opportunity to listen and learn from a gay wedding vendor who has had many negative experiences that I would never be aware of without them opening up & sharing. Because of the stories they shared, I'm more aware of the urgency of creating safe spaces. We have work to do in the wedding industry.

Consider the following as you aim to be more affirming:

- Gendered language is in everything we do in the wedding industry.
- **As a gay client you don't know if someone is safe. There's a chance they may not be.**
- LGBTQIA clients need to see that you're LGBTQIA affirming.
- Couples end up in tears from encounters with vendors who are not affirming.
- **It's still an act of courage to get married in the LGBTQIA community.**
- These changes are critical.
- A lot of harm has happened to the gay community including discrimination and violence.
- **"Welcoming" isn't enough--SAFE is the goal.**
- Being more affirming is a positive for everyone—ALL of your customers.
- Doing things that are diverse is good for your business overall.
- **There are ramifications to not affirming.**
- If gay clients don't see themselves in your portfolio, they may not feel safe!
- **Modify language on inquiry forms and in sales copy.** Use "couples" or "clients", not "brides and grooms".

- **Ask for pronouns. Use pronouns.**
- Remember that pronouns are not "preferred"; they "are". More on [pronouns here](#).
- Don't assume--ex. 2 brides getting married might or might not wear a dress/dresses.
- Gay couples still get turned away or "ghosted" by vendors.
- Gay vendors still get fired or not hired.
- **One easy step: Add a diversity & inclusion statement to your site.**

For example, here are the diversity and inclusion statements from my sites:

From realflowerbusiness.com

Real Flower Business respects and values diverse life experiences and heritages and aims to ensure that all voices are valued and well served regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation.

From floralartvt.com

At Floral Artistry, **we believe in a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment**, where all employees, clients and vendors--whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or identity--feel valued and respected.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE AGAIN: I'm not an expert on inclusivity or diversity!

In my Vermont wedding community we are having some tough conversations with both LGBTQIA vendors and straight allies who ALL want to do better.

Seek out local LGBTQIA education and Pride Centers to be an ally in your community. We can all do better together.

With love from me to you, Alison