



# WEF 2019: THE PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL LGBTI EQUALITY: FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**Sander van't Noordende:** Good morning everybody welcome here at the at the Accenture lunch, I'm Sander Van't Noordende and I'm going to be your host and moderator today.

This is our fifth Accenture LGBT panel and of course five is a special number, but it's also I would say a special year for us here because it's also the year that we are launching a new partnership with the WEF initiated by seven companies Deutsche Bank, E&Y, Microsoft, MasterCard, Omnicom and Salesforce, so it's really a milestone.

For me personally, this all started five or six years ago. But five or six years ago I saw an interview with Klaus Schwab on the television during the WEF and he was asked the question by Richard Quest.

Mr. Schwab why is there nothing about LGBT on the WEF agenda? it's a very important subject, it's about inclusion, there's discrimination, why it's nothing on the agenda? And he spoke the following words – and I promise this is the last time that I will tell the story – also to Mr. Schwab because we've come such a long way and it won't do justice to him.

He said, "Well Richard, there are many subjects on the agenda of the WEF and unfortunately, we cannot have all the subjects on the agenda of the WEF." So not exactly the answer you would be looking for. So, then we met with a few folks later that week and we said we have to change the game a little bit here and that's where Microsoft started organizing their breakfasts.

Accenture, we did our panels, EY has chipped in, Glade is now also present, so there's a lot more activity this time around. Now, ultimately culminating I would say in a new beginning

and that's this partnership we're launching. We launched yesterday, but I would say we're celebrating here today.

Let me introduce you to our panelists: Michelle Bachelet, she's the former president of Chile and now the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. My friend and partner in crime I would say, Beth Brooke, the Vice Chair at EY. Tony Prophet, the chief equality officer at Salesforce and Barri Rafferty, the CEO of Ketchum, which is part of Omnicom.

Michelle, we're going to start with you. This partnership is all about operationalizing the UN standards of Conduct for Business to for tackling LGBTI discrimination. Can you remind us why we have those standards and what they are?

**Michelle Bachelet:** I'm going to tell the story today that I told yesterday, but probably many of you already know it. But in 2016, during one of the Davos sessions, my predecessor said he realized that business did not consider that they have a responsibility with the LGTBI community in other companies, but also they thought that LGBTI rights were not a part of the human rights agenda if I may say. So, there was a decision made. And every time the UN analyzes there are a group of people who don't have rights tries to work with the private sector when it's linked to a private sector of course also with the governments and civil society to improve that condition. I said this because in 2010 I guess or 2009 was also developed the women's rights policy so also in business, women could have more alternatives.



So, they decided to work on these standards and what are these standards for? It's first of all to know and protect human rights of the LGBTI community, to promote all kind of human rights, to protect the LGBTI community, and also to go public.

And what we are asking on the standard - I mean asking of course - encouraging the companies, is that they put in place anti-discrimination policies that they can also have grievance mechanism and they can also have due diligence. We're also calling on sensitizing managers and ensuring that they will have equal benefits - the people from the LGBTI community - inside the companies, and we're also asking them to go public, to be visible in the places where they are. They can also support LGBTI communities, NGOs etc. and to work and to build partnership with the civil society and of course try to influence governments or Parliament's to put in place adequate bills and laws or to change inadequate and discriminatory bills and laws for the better, to ensure LGBTI's community rights.

**Sander van't Noordende:** Thank you. Beth, how did this partnership happen, how did it come about? Why are you excited? I assume you're excited.

**Beth Brooke:** I'm very excited to be with our colleagues in crime. You know, this is such a monumental week I think. I think you described the standards so well and you know, how this came to be really was, as you described Sander and with Dan, you know, a handful of companies working behind the scenes here for you know, six plus years, very quietly trying to make progress. I remember the private meeting we had with Vice President Biden who sat in a small private room a few years ago and looked us in the eye and he said you, multinationals, you companies can do what we, the government, cannot do and I implore you to do it around the world on LGBTI matters. And we took that to heart, we believed it ourselves, but to hear that was you know, instrumental.

So, you know, working just with the World Economic Forum over those years you know we came to you know agreement this year to form this project in collaboration with the World Economic Forum with the seven companies as founding companies, but as you said High Commissioner, in partnership.

You know, I think partnership is a 21st century skill, and I think we're seeing it around the world with civil society organizations and the companies really starting to work together.

You know, there was a period of time I think when activists didn't like big corporations and big corporations were skeptical about the professionalism of the activists and that has gone by the wayside. I mean there's a real sense of partnership now working together, so what are we trying to do? We are not trying to recreate anything. Our sole goal is to help companies activate the UN standards. That's what we're going to try to do.

So, three things. One is to build out a due diligence framework so if you could imagine, you know, kind of due diligence and you take the standards so if you're a company, you kind of go in and self-diagnose you know, how can I activate these standards, what else could I do? So, kind of a due diligence framework, best practices around talent, sharing and learning together as organizations, so you got the playbook, you've got, you know, organizations are going to learn together. And then the last thing is this collective action, individual and collective action in the public space, which is no one of us, as we all know, no one of us can do this, it's going to take all of us together, there is strength in numbers, there's confidence in numbers. One thing we consistently hear around the world as we've made more progress, you know, we are subject to pink washing, which is you do great in your headquarters but you're not getting it across the world, and so this will be helpful in our effort to go from the headquarters to the outpost to really try to push around the world together collectively.

I am you know, excited that it's the founding companies, but it's the founding company, we want as you said on the press conference yesterday, our goal by the end of 2020 is to have another hundred companies involved in this, obviously civil society organizations, foundations, so we hope to grow this greatly, we'd hope to have 200 companies signed onto the UN standards and to make great progress. So, excited to be a part of it, and I think it is a momentous week.

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**Sander van't Noordende:** Thank you very much Beth, and you're both saying it in different ways, but there is so much that business can do, and that we actually, should feel obliged to do, so to speak.

**Beth Brooke:** Well in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, which is an enormous platform to make progress.

**Sander van't Noordende:** Tony, when you at Salesforce heard about the partnership, what did you think?

**Tony Prophet:** We were tremendously excited! You know, this is a great opportunity for businesses to make a difference in the world. I think from Michelle and Beth, you know, the themes that you heard early on how businesses are uniquely positioned to make a difference in these multi-stakeholder dialogues. You used the word obliged, and I would argue that it's not just an opportunity, that's an obligation and for businesses that have been vested with a platform by their stakeholders, by their shareholders, by their employees, by their customers, I would argue that you have a responsibility and an obligation to use that platform for the betterment of society. And one of the foundations of a great society is human rights and the notion of being able to express yourself and your sexual orientation and your gender identity at work and broadly in the community is a foundational human right.

**Sander van't Noordende:** I couldn't have said it better. I mean, Barri, you have also been an advocate and an initiator from the start.

**Barri Rafferty:** Yes, I agree with you, it's a human right. And we looked at our own population and really have worked hard on inclusion because we know if our people can bring their whole selves to work they're going to be more productive and they're going to do more. But from an Omnicom perspective, we also think that being marketers that we have a great opportunity to showcase the whole society and whether that's an online, on screen, you know in media, the visual reputation and the words that we choose can truly make a difference and so we look at it both as a pledge internally to do better for our own employees, but also to make sure that we're trying to share and reflect and

work across the world and as you say it's different everywhere. I mean our open pride affinity group, we see that there's a very local piece of that, right, but there's also that part of belonging and we have a global community and there's people in that community that say you know if their parents knew they were part of that community that you know, they would be disowned, so I think bringing your whole self to work and being able to find a safe place to be all that you are is really important.

**Sander van't Noordende:** We're going to do a little thought experiment. Yesterday the title of the press conference was "Are we there yet?" What in your mind, I mean, maybe if you just sort of close your eyes and dream, what is there in your mind? Where do you think we should be heading? And then I'm going to ask how the partnership is going to help establish that. So, Michelle?

**Michelle Bachelet:** Well in an ideal world, 100 percent of companies will be you know, with DuPont, due diligence policies, will follow the standards. But not only will sign the standard, but will implement it and not only at headquarters, but also at all the levels. That will be my ideal.

**Beth Brooke:** Yeah, I would say we're not there yet. You know, in any way shape or form. And even as a progressive company, we brought in an outside advisory board and with employees and there were things even in the past six months as we looked at this that we started to change so we have within Ketchum, 'Belong at Ketchum,' and we had maternity leave and a lot of our people came back to us and said well that's doesn't represent everyone right, and so now we have family bonding time that we launched this year right and it covers fostering, adopting, you know, yes traditional birth but everyone has the same amount of time, both sides of couples. We had lactation consulting as something that you could you know get as part of maternity leave, now you can take a course on sleeping and everything.



So much of it even within you know when we looked at you know things in our own backyard we said there's more that we can do to make sure that we're being inclusive and so I think that you know looking inside your company is so important and thinking about the language and the visuals and everything that you use can really make a difference in making you know all parts of the LGBTI group feel connected.

**Tony Prophet:** We are clearly not there, and unfortunately, now when you look at the news cycle just look at the last 48 hours of the news cycle, not only we're not there, we're falling back in some places. And you know with the polarity and the world and the divisiveness that's happening in many societies around the world, you know, you're seeing places where we're now falling back, rights that had been previously won or assumed are being called into question and it's a moment of leadership, you know, we're being called on to lead in this moment of tension and this pivotal moment in human history I would argue. The point about what is our aspiration, our aspiration is clearly that in workplaces and in any institution in any society that people can be their authentic self you know regardless of their sexual orientation and their genetic gender identity and they can come into a workplace without fear of judgment or discrimination or bias or harassment and that's the ultimate goal whether it's for-profit, nonprofit, an NGO, academia, and that's ultimately where society should be heading.

**Sander van't Noordende:** We all agree, why is that important? Why is that important for business and organizations? Just to play devil's advocate.

**Tony Prophet:** Okay, I'll give you an example. We at Salesforce have an employee resource group called Outforce and it's for our LGBTQ folks to have a community and also for their allies but we didn't have that chapter a year ago in India. So, he went to launch Outforce in India and we went to March in Pride in Hyderabad, and so we're there in Hyderabad celebrating pride and we're feeling good about celebrating and standing in partnership with the LGBTQ folks in India. The only problem was nobody in the office was out.

They did not feel comfortable expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity. So you imagine going through your day trying not to out yourself and saying well last week I told you this about my interest, I told you this about my family and I told you that and you're translating and using five, ten, fifteen, fifty percent of your mental power just trying to remember what you told someone so you don't out yourself, right? How is that person really going to do their best work right? So, the business value is - by the way, the day after that, one person came out, one brave soul came out, and at that moment, that person was free. And that fraction of that person's mind that they were using to triangulate about what they told to whom, when, was free to devote to doing their personal interest and the best work of their life. That's the business value - we're all surrounded by people playing these tapes, it might be about your race, it might be about something else, and to be freed from that just to be able to express your authentic identity at work, that is the business power of allowing people to do the very best work of their life and not processing these tapes about their identities.

**Beth Brooke:** Let me put some numbers to that because this is where I think we've made progress I think, is on the business case. I really do. I mean but to put numbers to the situation you just described... As I understand now, 20 percent of millennials identify as LGBTI, 29 percent of college graduates identify as non-binary, neither male nor female. So, 20 percent, 20 percent, then they come out then they graduate from college and join our workforce. Sixty two percent go back in the closet - when they go back in the closet, they're 30 percent less productive. What's wrong with that picture? I mean that's just ridiculous. So, I mean that's just the numbers of the India person going you know in the closet they're thirty percent less productive, which is just stupid. So, I think we've made - to your leadership point - where we are, I think we have made great progress on the business case I think where we are and it's a moment here in Davos and it's being debated in Davos a lot of talk about profit or purpose.



Well it's not one or the other. If you're a business today, you are being held to a different standard - you're being held to a higher standard to describe your purpose and then to be public in the public sphere about that purpose. Well, to me, that means our issues have become part of that human rights piece, is part of the purpose and it's become part of the business case so it's no longer is it a human rights issue or is it a business case issue, it is one in the same now and you're being held accountable as a company for not stepping up and speaking out anywhere in the world.

**Michelle Bachelet:** I completely agree with what you have said and I think it's fantastic where people can be free you know and can feel safe also as you have mentioned, but what I've seen in some numbers is even companies who are fine and for the standards and that can have anti-discrimination policies still when you see at the senior leaders there's still not there yet. I mean in the recruitment process they're also bias so we need to do much more not only that people can feel that their sexual orientation or gender identity is respected, but also to provide them the opportunities to show their talent and be able to have you know the to be in the positions.

**Sander van't Noordende:** Let's talk a bit about that - about senior leaders. Imagine you are a senior executive in a multinational company, you haven't had much exposure to LGBTI or LGBTI issues, matters, maybe even LGBTI people although that's sort of hard to believe these days. And you're being asked to say would you be willing to step up to be the sponsor, the executive sponsor of the LGBTI networks, or the agenda in the company. Maybe each of you has one tip, what would you advise that senior leader do, maybe one or two things?

**Tony Prophet:** Create your own safe space - Just have a roundtable with folks with identities different than your own and just take the time to listen you know that's a very low-risk step, you're in a listening posture, you're building your empathy, you start to build your vocabulary, your awareness, your connection with folks that have identities different than your own. You know so just asking people to share their personal stories or something super

powerful you know. In this room there's a hundred people, listening there's thousands of people, and I guarantee you among these hundred people here's a hundred unique stories you can't make presumptions about their stories - just ask, listen, then overtime, begin to show up for those folks maybe in silence initially but as you build your confidence and vocabulary you can show up and use your voice in your platform as an advocate and mentor, a champion, a sponsor for these folks and that progression of just asking, listening, showing up, and speaking up.

**Beth Brooke:** And I think consistent to that, I think we need to be kind of forthright about saying don't be afraid. A lot of people are absolutely afraid to be an ally - they're afraid that people will think, they're from the LGBTI community or they're afraid of just saying the wrong thing. I mean I remember what I came out at EY, the head of our LGBT Network did not let me talk for a year - didn't. Didn't let me do an interview, didn't let me do a panel for a year. Why? Because she knew I was just going to bungle it because I had been so closeted I didn't know the language. Just because you're gay doesn't mean you know, and I just think we need to help people just not be afraid.

**Tony Prophet:** There's two sides to that equation. For folks you know, identifying as a black male heterosexual cisgendered person - so I'll talk about that black part of my identity - you know when you're seeking an ally there's a measure of grace that's required because if someone's saying, well do I say African American or do I say black and do they say the wrong thing? And people who are seeking to be your ally that don't have the vocabulary, you have to have a measure of grace and give them a safe space to get it wrong and not look for everything as a microaggression but have a space where you're offering that grace to folks as they're on that learning journey as well and that brings more allies in.



**Sander van't Noordende:** I think that's a very important point. I mean we're all struggling every now and then with the vocabulary and trying not to hurt people's feelings. I mean it's a learning process every day.

**Barri Rafferty:** You know, we work with a lot of marketers – CMOs, CCOs – and talk about bravery. It's interesting when we get a create a brief now we try to have a discussion about reflecting the society and what does that look like right? And with Omnicom we've worked with a lot of companies now to start thinking about the visual representation but it's still a big thing when you say 'oh we have a gay couple.' We've worked with AT&T and Campbell's and Wells Fargo - some of the big companies - early to visually depict the LGBTI population. We just did within Ketchum, one of our firms, I don't know if you're familiar with Marco Marco, but he's a designer kind of does underwear, swimsuits, you know designs costumes for Katy Perry and you know a lot of the celebrities, and we did the first transgender all transgender models in Fashion Week this year. And he who affiliates with that group even got backlash and it was very interesting I had him on a panel recently and he talked about how he thought he was so close to that community and even he had to listen and learn and then you say big companies like P&G you know we've done the Thank You moms campaign for years. This past Olympics, they did a love over bias campaign using their first you know gay Olympian and Gus Kenworthy and talking about a mom and a son and all of that. So, using your companies to externally market, it is still bravery and there's still you know few examples and I think there should be so many more examples of where we can really show people and change hearts and minds about what it is like to be part of this population.

**Michelle Bachelet:** I think there's no one-size-fits-all I mean because it depends on where you are, which is the culture, the language that you can use, the narrative, based on the same values and principles, but you can be smart. So I've learned when I was the secular director of you and women and I went to talk to presidents and if I started saying only about the human rights issue they wouldn't listen to me you know, they say okay thank you.

And I had two couple of nice experiences one African president, old one, he said to me "Oh no I really understand women's issues because you know I have a grandmother and mother and wife and three daughters." So, after I spoke and I spoke he said to me, "Don't worry Michelle I love women." I'm putting this example to say that I have asked myself how could I convince people, I mean how could I make them be leaders or champions in that case of women rights and now we're talking about LGBTI communities right? And I'm trying to do that in my office right now, that it is about human rights of course, it is the right thing to do, but you need to also explain to them what is the smart thing to do. So many of you speak about the business case and some people that will work, you know, in some others maybe something else. And of course, you have to sort of be smart, strategize better, because the world we're living in today is very difficult and we have a push back on human rights, but it can be done. have tried to do it many times and sometimes it works very well, sometimes you don't get all there yet, but I think you need to work with other people. Also I think it's so important media advertising to make it natural because what I mean as we don't want things like Me Too to be naturalized, we do want that all human beings rights are respected to be a natural thing so we can do it through media just like we're talking about putting faces, not talking in abstract, because that won't be telling people telling to the people it could be their sister, their neighbor, their colleague, their friends from school, I think to make it more human, to link it with humanity, I think also helps.

**Beth Brooke:** The other powerful thing we have found with allies is you know an ally and I'm sure you've all experienced this an ally who their own child is either gay or trans - one of our great leaders has a trans child and has experienced incredible discrimination and bullying and you know he's just become the most outspoken tremendous ally in the world and very helpful all around the world.



**Tony Prophet:** That story you're telling is my story, Beth. You're not talking about me literally, but there's millions of people like that - they don't identify as LGBTQ but they're apparent and the empathy that you have of seeing your child suffering and the rights that you presume that they have, not having those rights, I mean let's just say it's a super deep pain and that pulls you into the fight and brings you to the forefront.

**Sander van't Noordende:** So just to try to summarize, it's about personalizing the message to the receiver and the other thing is making it personal, so they work personal in two ways.

**Barri Rafferty:** I mean we look our affinity groups and it's kind of the three A's right? Part of it is acceptance, then it's awareness and advocacy and when you think of those three things you know they each are very important in terms of making you know people feel not only safe but that you're advocating for them and I think that's what you're talking about and how do you find ways to champion the differences and create that inclusive and it does take a lot of listening and I think you know even in looking at LGBTI you know understanding each of those letters and what that means to people in your organization is very different.

**Beth Brooke:** You know as we go to this headquarters to the outpost I think that's where the partnerships are going to have to focus a lot. And what we've found in some of the most difficult countries is the business case is still awfully important because you don't want to run head-on into religion or culture and so trying to stay focused on allies and the business case you know useful thing.

**Sander van't Noordende:** Let's fast forward five years... Where do we want to be with this partnership in five years from now? And Michelle I'm going to ask you first because it's your role to stretch us.

**Michelle Bachelet:** Well I would I would like you to have included much more companies. I'm not going to say a number, but to reach out to much more companies. I think you are key on this. I guess first of all multinationals.

I mean if multinationals do that other companies will say well yeah I mean this is a model we can follow. So, I would like you to have many many more companies on board but not only signing and being part, implementing. And also identifying which are sort of the risk in this. What I mean - I mentioned bias because you know one of the things that sometimes people have bias they're not aware of. I remember that in my country, the first woman who went to study medicine - at that time were only men possible to go- they put her sort of a like screen to separate. I mean there's two, I don't know if this is a real story - One said that for her, because we're in anatomy, so she wouldn't see the nude body of what they were studying. Others say that it was for men not to get thinking differently. So, what I need to say is that there's a lot of bias and also, I have the experience that women's bias but it's also in LGBTI and I think we need to be very alert on that invisible bias. For example this experience was Deloitte I guess, so when you interview people to make them you know progress for example a man or women and both were not very good interviews but they had before very good performance, so on the women they said they would say oh well she had great performance before the interview, was regular, she's insecure. And when they analyzed the men they would say all their performance was great before, the interview was regular, he has potential. You can have the same kind of bias with LGBTI people. So we need to sensitize managers, it's not only what the biggest bosses think about it, how you ensure that the whole and also at the supply change, customer, etc., so I would like that many more companies be involved.

**Sander van't Noordende:** That's a good stretch - Many more companies plus real action, to summarize.



**Beth Brooke:** Many more companies, but many more countries too because when you think about our multinational workplaces, you know, we have mobility issues and we just face it every day trying to move people around the world and you can't move them because they don't want to go to a certain location, or we move them but then their spouse can't come because of visa restrictions you know. We've got the situation right now in Japan. Our number two person in Japan, we moved he and his husband there, and he's Japanese national, got married in the US, we moved him back to Japan, number two in Japan, moved his husband, and his husband can't stay because he can't get a visa because they're Japanese nationals. I mean it's just silly. So we need countries laws to change as well - there was a limit to how much we can do, so we'll just keep pushing.

**Tony Prophet:** I would just underscore Beth's point - One measure of the scale is how many corporations are involved, but I think ultimately, it's the impact that we're having in civil society and the ability to change both cultural norms, which is ambitious to say that, but I don't think in a five year time horizon at that focal length it's too ambitious, and the ability to change the laws and regulations and nation states around the world. I mean that is the ultimate ambition and that's really where it starts to make a difference in making it truly safe for you to express your sexual orientation, gender identity in any country around the world.

**Barri Rafferty:** I mean I would hope in five years that it's not a handful of companies that are really showcasing LGBTI in their external marketing and that you know we're not actually having to create preparedness plans for them about what they're going to say and how they're going to approach that criticism and I think five years is probably a short time for that, but I hope we can continue to make a lot of progress and I think to what you're saying, you know, there's the local part of this and the global part and I think that we can't underestimate that our global communities in part are going to impact the local part because if we can get those employees locally to know that they're supported by their companies, I think there's hopefully an ability

for them in those markets to also as you say come out and have more of an influence on what's happening in their own countries.

**Sander van't Noordende:** Ok so I'm going to try to summarize - So more countries with more action, broader coverage both internally in the companies as well as into the external world whether it's the policy makers the customer suppliers etc. Then I'm going to ask you to stand up because you have been sort of at the start of all of all this way back when you were at Microsoft and you have been the driving force behind this partnership, so maybe just send up and we'll give them a round of applause.