

2024

queering the tech ecosystem

BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

RESEARCH REPORT

QUEERTECH

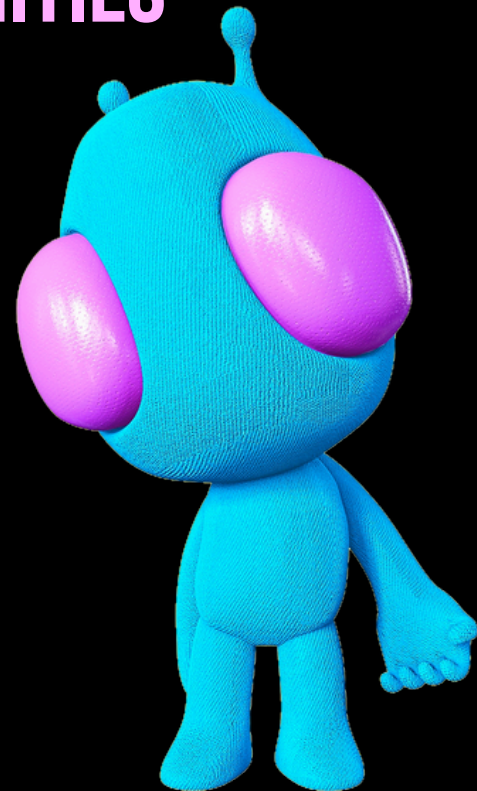


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INTRODUCTION

Technology, as a whole, has played a monumental role in affecting positive change in 2SLGBTQIA+ communities - it helps queer individuals connect beyond borders, increases visibility of issues affecting these communities, and enables the amplification of campaigns intended to ignite positive social change. Yet, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals do not see themselves accurately reflected or represented in the companies creating and driving these technologies. This report acts as an important first step in correcting these disparities.

Individuals who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community face significant barriers to gaining employment, and retaining employment, in the technology industry in Canada. These tangible barriers have resulted in a stark underrepresentation of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the sector's workforce, in addition to rampant rates of exclusive, oppressive behaviours being reported by existing queer employees and stakeholders. Currently, research on this issue is sparse and incomplete. To address this labour market gap in Canada and improve access to opportunities, we have conducted a mixed-methods research study that includes a previously published literature review, a quantitative survey relating to 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences in tech workplaces and qualitative interviews with a representative sample. This data will help QueerTech, and the greater support ecosystem, better understand hiring and employment experiences, challenges in attracting and retaining queer individuals across the industry, and how to approach and improve these vital, under informed processes.

Participants include self-identifying 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, in addition to non-2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to act as a benchmark to gauge alternative experiences of inclusion, and perceptions of inclusion, across the sector. Participants represent individuals who work in different levels of various companies, sub-sectors within the technology umbrella, and affiliated stakeholders such as hiring teams and policy makers. Results will directly inform QueerTech program design, service offerings, policy advising, and greater advocacy initiatives. This data will also aid in QueerTech's efforts to engage in knowledge translation and the application of research towards making a positive difference in the lives of Canadians and the strengthening of the Canadian economy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

QUEER EXPERIENCES IN TECH

Survey:

1. **Non-queer respondents were significantly more likely to feel safe** being themselves at work (89%) versus queer respondents (70%).
2. Harassment at work is a significant challenge for respondents, with 20% of respondents being targeted due to their ancestry or national origin, nearly **35% due to their sexual orientation**, and **55% due to their gender**.
3. While over a third of non-queer individuals (38.3%) found the atmosphere for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees was improving significantly at work, **less than a quarter of queer individuals** thought the same (24.4%).

Interviews:

- Repeated defining terms for the tech industry: **male-dominated, homogenous, hyper masculine, white & cisgender**.
- Instances of harassment and microaggressions are reduced **when 2SLGBTQIA+ employees are straight and cisgender passing**.
- **Large, multinational corporations** are, generally, **more effective at creating safe spaces and establishing transparency** than small and medium sized technology companies.

ACQUIRING EMPLOYMENT

Survey:

1. **Over 35% of respondents have experienced discrimination during at least one job interview**. Another 9.5% aren't sure.
2. Only **13.9%** of respondents **think being a part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is a benefit to acquiring employment**.

Interviews:

What needs to be improved regarding recruitment and retainment of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees:

- **Employer Brand & Recruitment Materials** to establish candidate belonging and organizational commitment.
- **Mentorship & Networking** to bolster opportunity awareness and skill development for sector interview processes.
- **Onboarding processes** need to better prioritize intersectionality and cultural competence.
- **EDI & HR Policies** tailored to protect and actively encourage the success of this community, while prioritizing flexibility and transparency.
- **STEM Academia** as a critical intervention point to improve holistic diversity and inclusion across the industry.

CLIMATE INVENTORY AND GAPS

Survey:

1. Nearly 70% of respondent workplaces have EDI initiatives. **Only 24% find them very effective**.
2. **Less than 40% of all participants feel that 2SLGBTQIA+ employees are consistently treated with respect**. Some participants mentioned the dismissal of colleagues or upper management when they raised 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the workplace.
3. 2SLGBTQIA+ Representation: **Less than 45% indicated senior leadership representation** (with 30% indicating they didn't know). Approximately **40% indicated mentorship representation** (with over 30% indicating they didn't know).

Interviews:

What needs to be adjusted to improve workplace culture and eliminate barriers for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees:

- **Community & Mentorship** to establish multi-pronged solutions for: confidence building, skill and industry transition development, direct fostering of connections to industry decision makers/employers, leadership pipeline establishment, and increased access to demographic applicable resources and education.
- **Authentic Leadership Buy-in** in order to maintain, improve and empower EDI policies.
- **Intersectional Competence in EDI Initiatives** to address barriers within company structures (e.g. reactive versus proactive policy development, legal obligations versus genuine employee wellness advocacy, under-informed policy development under-prepared and under-resourced inclusion channels, etc.) and employee experience (e.g. feeling burdensome for needing multi-layered support or accommodation).
- Dismantling the **"professional" archetype**.

METHODOLOGY

This study set out to explore three specific research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people working in the Canadian tech industry?
2. How could the tech industry adapt its work culture to better recruit and retain members of these communities?
3. What barriers need to be eliminated, and what tools can be implemented to do so?

QueerTech’s goal for this study is to produce meaningful, thought-provoking research that has a positive impact on the conditions and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people working in the Canadian tech sector, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and thriving tech industry.

Data collection methods

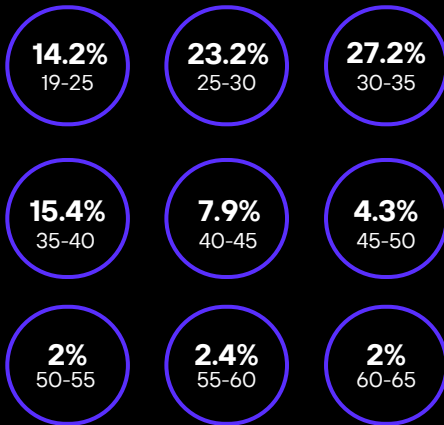
To answer these questions, an extensive review was conducted of all relevant academic literature pertaining to 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the tech industry. Research activities also included a quantitative survey of 254 people and qualitative interviews with a representative sample of 30 people who work in the tech industry and identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

#	Sample Survey Questions
1.	To what extent do you feel that your current place of employment is a safe space for you to be yourself?
2.	To what extent do you feel that your current place of employment is a safe space for others from diverse backgrounds to be themselves?
3.	To what extent are you “out” at work?
4.	Have you experienced discrimination during at least one job interview? Part 2: How could the industry adapt its work culture to better recruit and retain members of these communities?
5.	To what extent do you believe your 2SLGBTQIA+ identity has played a beneficial role in acquiring employment?
6.	Does your employer have equity, diversity and inclusion programs/initiatives? Do you find them effective?
7.	Are there people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ in senior positions at your place of work? *Duplicated for mentorship roles.
8.	Do you believe the atmosphere for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees is improving?

RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN: SURVEY

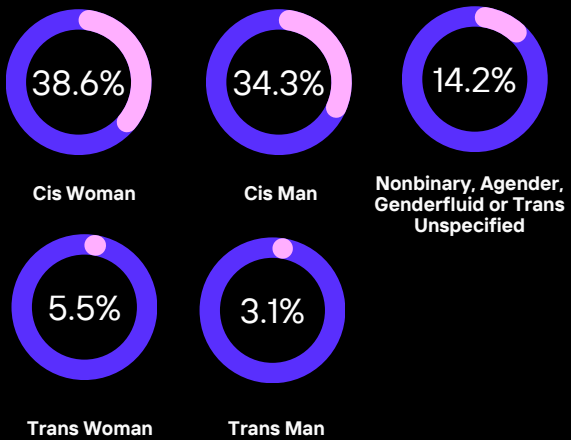
Age

The sample of 254 participants had an age range between 19 to 65 years old, mostly clustered among young adulthood to middle age (25-40).



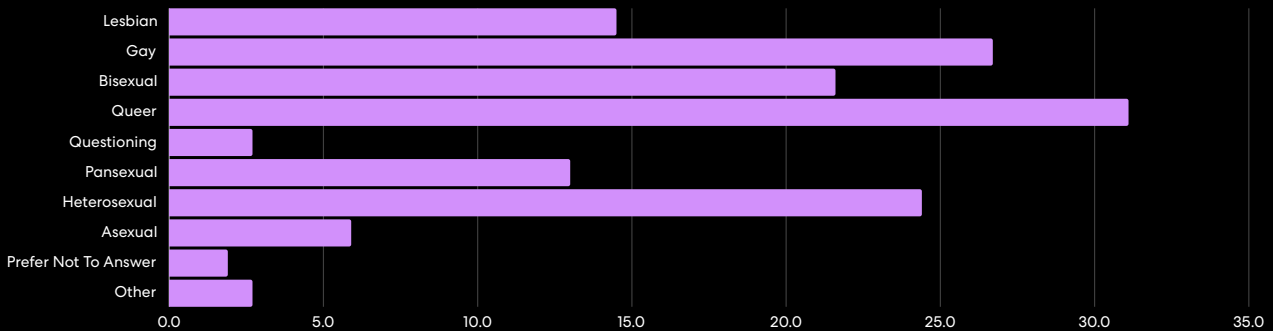
Gender Identity

Participants mostly identified as cisgender. Close to 14% of the sample identified as non-binary, agender, genderfluid or trans unspecified gender. About 8% of the participants identified as transgender.



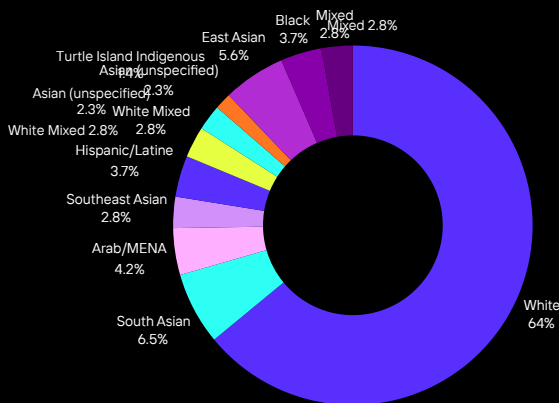
Sexual Orientation

Over 70% of respondents identified as non-heterosexual.



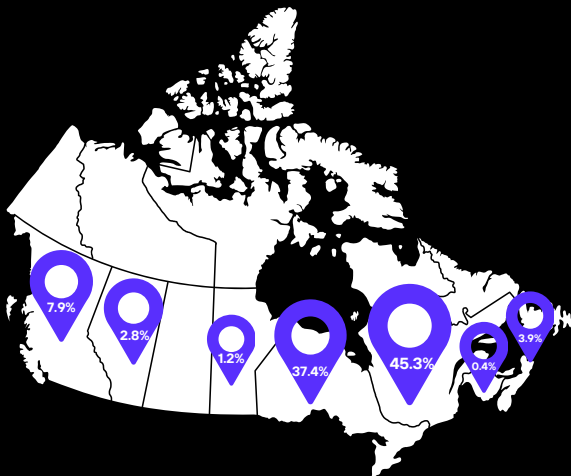
Race/Ethnicity

An extensive number of participants provided a variety of ethnic and racial identifiers/background ranging from South Asian, East Asian, Arab/MENA, Black, Hispanic, Mixed, and Indigenous.



Province of Residence

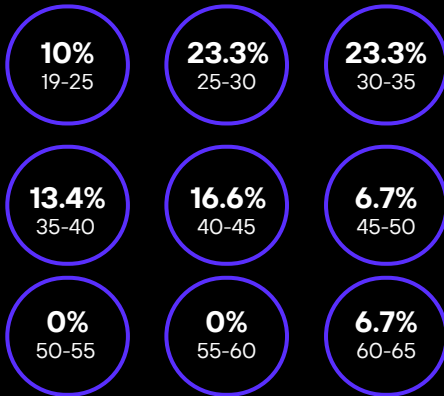
Most participants came from the provinces of Quebec (45.3%), Ontario (37.4%) and British Columbia (7.9%). Other provinces represented include Alberta (2.8%), Manitoba (1.2%), Nova Scotia (3.9%) and New Brunswick (0.4%).



RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN: INTERVIEWS

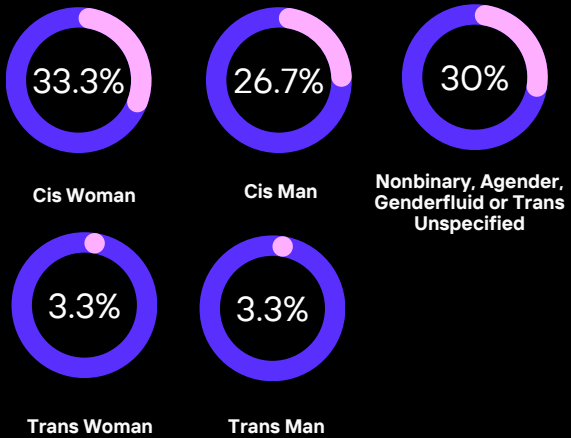
Age

Over 45% of the respondents ranged between the ages 25 to 35. The sample of participants had an age range between 22 to 60 years old, mostly clustered among young adulthood to middle age (25-40), with a mean age of 35.



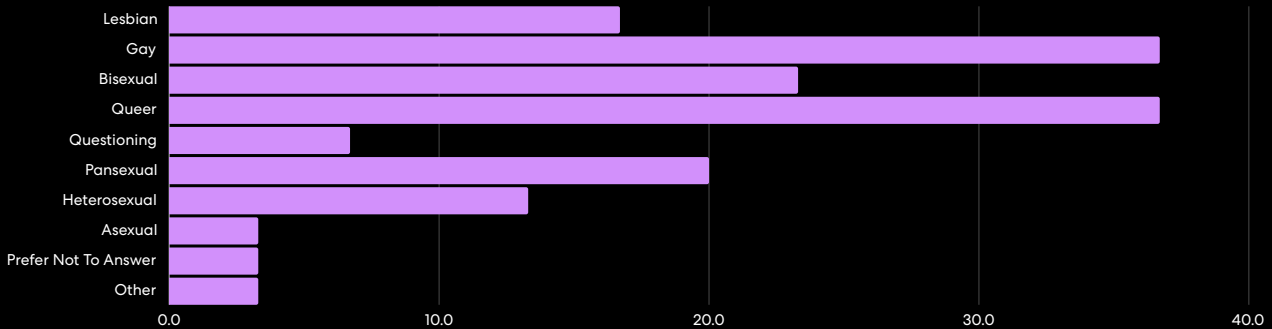
Gender Identity

Participants mostly identified as cisgender. Exactly 30% of the sample identified as non-binary, agender, genderfluid or trans unspecified gender. About 6.5% of the participants identified as transgender.



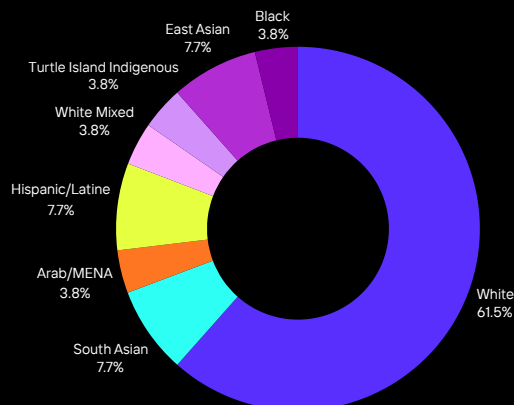
Sexual Orientation

Over 86% of the respondents identified as non-heterosexual.



Race/Ethnicity

Approximately 38.5% of interviewees identified as non-white or non-european ancestry. An extensive number of participants provided a variety of ethnic and racial identifiers/background ranging from South Asian, East Asian, Arab/MENA, Black, Hispanic, Mixed, and Indigenous.

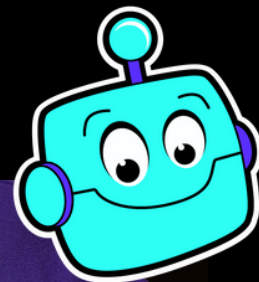


Province of Residence

Most interviewees came from the provinces of Quebec (40%), Ontario (46.7%) and British Columbia (6.7%). Other provinces represented include Alberta (3.3%) and Manitoba (3.3%).



QUEER EXPERIENCES IN TECH



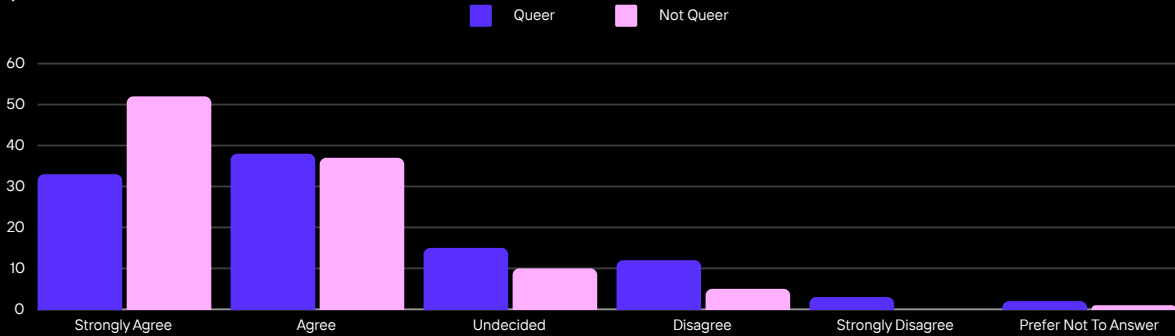
By understanding what the community needs, we can tailor inclusion efforts to be more effective and efficient.

Understanding and documenting the contemporary experiences of queer employees across the Canadian technology industry is the first step in working to progress the inclusion, safety and advancement of this community within the field. By capturing an accurate, thorough snapshot of this community's lived realities within the sector, organizations like QueerTech can better formulate - and advocate for - actionable, utility-focused recommendations for key stakeholders and decision makers across the country. This section of the report includes findings from the quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, and previously published literature review.

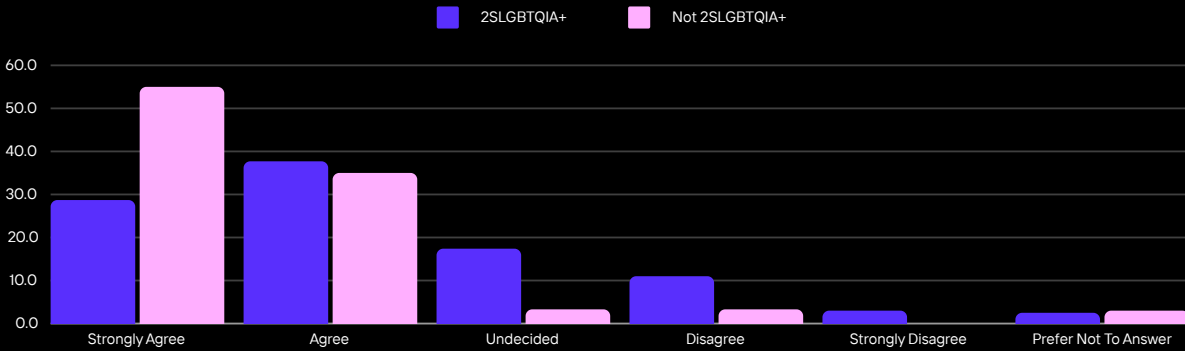
SURVEY DATA

Safety

Overall, to what extent do you feel that your current place of employment is a safe space to be yourself?

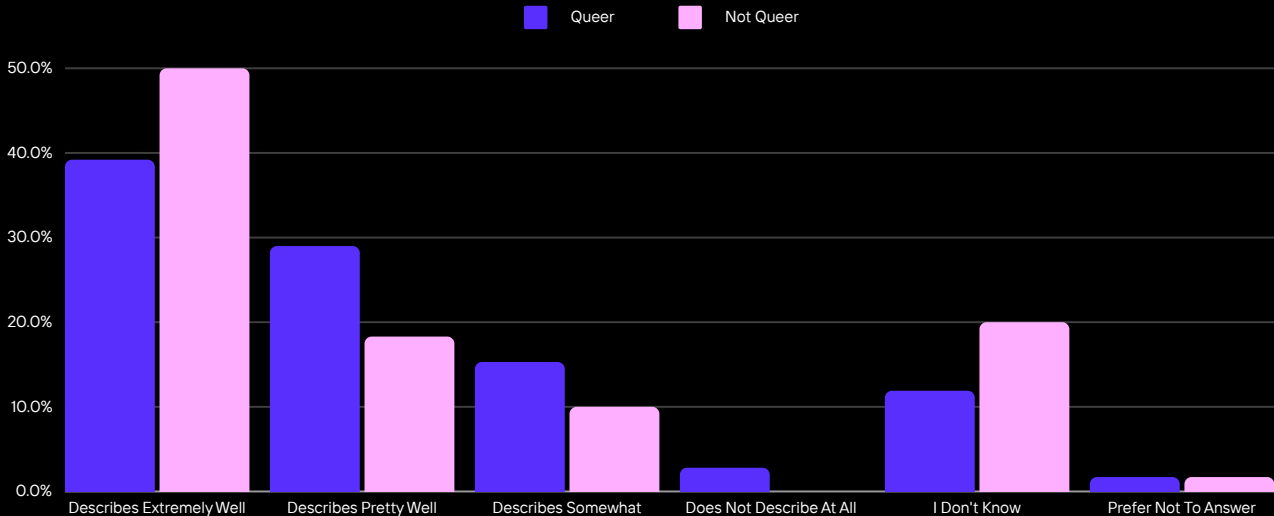


Overall, to what extent do you feel that your current place of employment is a safe space for others from diverse backgrounds to be themselves?



Belonging & Inclusivity

According to a study commissioned by Telus, more than 55% of 2SLGBTQIA+ people working in Canada do not find their workplaces to be inclusive. The results of our own study, focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in technology, suggest a similar sentiment. We asked participants **whether the company or institution provides a supportive environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ people.**



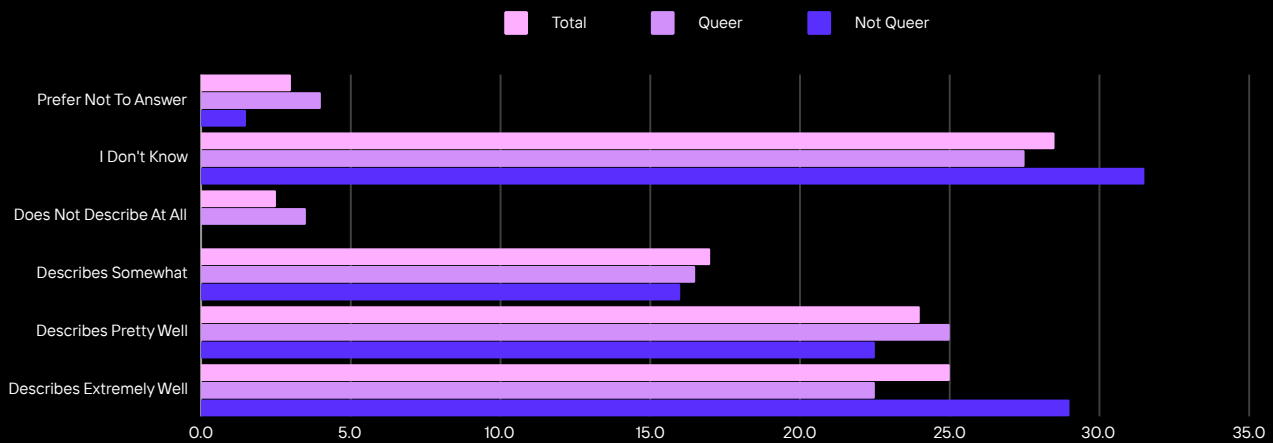
SURVEY DATA CONTINUED

Discrimination & Moving the Needle

2SLGBTQIA+ people don't only experience exclusion in the workplace - some face being singled out or harassed for their sexual orientation or gender identity. The fear of discrimination is highlighted in the aforementioned Telus study, which found that:

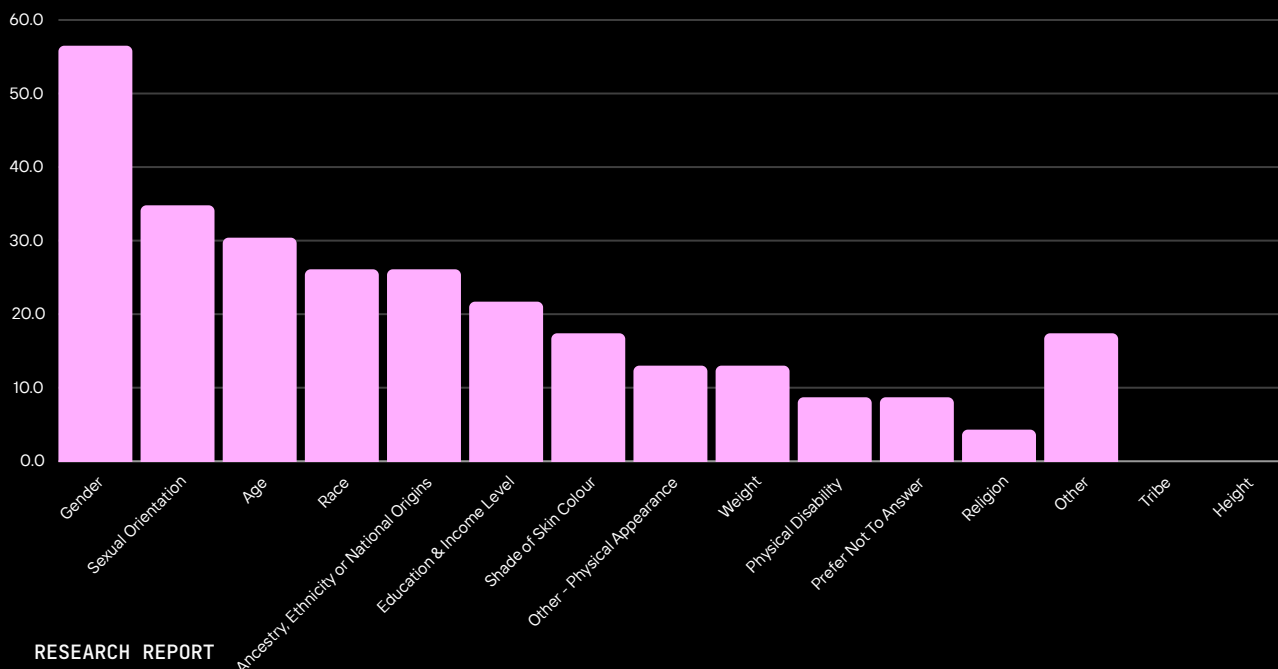
- 57% of respondents are not "fully out" at work;
- 22% are worried about a hostile work environment;
- 15% are concerned about losing out on career opportunities; and
- 26% are reluctant to apply for certain jobs because of how they identify (Van Stanvoort, 2016).

We asked participants to **describe how well they felt the atmosphere for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees is improving**. About one third of non-2SLGBTQIA+ individuals described it as improving "extremely well" while less than a quarter of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals agreed.



When participants were asked to identify **the reasons they experienced discrimination or harassment**, the data revealed that gender was the most frequently cited factor (56.5%).

Other significant findings pertaining to reported factors of discrimination include sexual orientation (34.8%), age (30.4%), race (26.1%), ethnicity/national origins (26.1%), and education/income level (21.7%).



SURVEY FINDINGS

#1

Safety: Straight vs. Non-Straight

Heterosexual respondents were more likely to agree that their workplace was a safe place to be themselves than sexually diverse respondents. Moreover, when asked if their workplace was a safe place for others to be themselves, there was a highly significant difference, with nearly twice as many heterosexual respondents strongly agreeing with this statement.

#2

Safety: Racialized Individuals

White respondents were significantly more comfortable with their racial identity than non-white respondents, with 92.7% of white respondents being comfortable with their racial identity at work, versus 81.6% of non-white respondents. Moreover, 10% of non-white respondents indicated they were undecided about their comfort level with their race or ethnicity at work.

#3

Respect: Queer vs. Non-Queer

Respondents were asked to what extent they believe 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are treated with respect at their workplace. Over 13.5% of queer participants declared that it described "somewhat" what they thought, versus 0% of non-queer participants - indicating a discrepancy in believed versus actualized respectful behaviours.

*Response options included: Describes "extremely well", "pretty well", "somewhat", "not at all", and "I don't know".

#4

Harassment

Respondents who identified that they had been harassed at work were asked to indicate why they had been targeted. 20% of respondents identified that they were targeted due to their ancestry or national origin, nearly 35% indicated their sexual orientation, and 55% indicated that they were targeted due to their gender.

#5

Improvements

Significant differences were found when respondents were asked if the atmosphere for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees was improving. While over a third of non-queer individuals (38.3%) found that it described "extremely well" what they thought, less than a quarter of queer individuals thought the same (24.4%). The latter were more likely to indicate that it described their thoughts "somewhat" (14.2% vs. 1.7%).

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Research Questions

1. **What would you say if you were to summarize your overall experience working in Canada's tech industry?**
2. **How similar or different do you think it is to other people including people with similar or with different identities/backgrounds?**

The Culture of Tech

Interviewees largely defined the technology industry as a "male-dominated", "homogenous", "male-centric", "hyper masculine", "white" and "cisgender" environment. Numerous respondents also mentioned that many of these spaces are whitewashed, resulting in tech environments recruiting like minded individuals and perpetuating a certain culture which reinforces and wholly accepts this homogenous environment. The system created by this culture is fundamentally difficult to navigate. For example, some interviewees noted that being a cisgender woman is already a daunting experience within the industry - these experiences of oppression and isolation are only compounded when the layers of sexual orientation, gender identity and race are added to the equation. Further, respondents mentioned that individuals coming from specific backgrounds are largely ignored, under-resourced, and are not given an appropriate space to exist within the industry (e.g. autistic and Indigenous) due to the unapologetic culture within the sector that results in inflexibility, homogeneity of culture, and a lack of accountability. Many mentioned that their experience at work was made easier due to them being cisgender passing. It was also noted that while being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is a protected class of employment, many environments within tech perform diversity as a quota without the appropriate efforts for true inclusion. Some of the queer interviewees mentioned the dismissal of certain colleagues or upper management when they brought up specific 2SLGBTQIA+ realities within the sector (e.g. dead named by technology).

Corporate Policies & Progress

Some interviewees mentioned that HR efforts in the tech industry have been attempting to do better regarding transparency and building spaces for queer communities, however these trends seem to be more present within bigger, multinational corporations. Yet, there is still much education work to be done surrounding holistic, comprehensive solutions.

"The tech industry is coming to its senses so much more now [...] not only with just creating inclusive work culture but also creating inclusive policies, inclusive behaviours [...] It's not just about writing a policy and saying okay I'm an inclusive company because I wrote this amazing policy that nobody's going to read, nobody's going to use, because if it doesn't trickle down from you as a behaviour then it's pointless".

Respondents also noted that within mid-range and larger tech corporations, each department typically has their issues and problematic behaviours. These sub-culture silos that exist within the tech world result in certain negative behaviours prevailing despite being condemned by corporate policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW COMPARISON

Overview

The findings in the “Queer Experiences in Tech” sections of the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews largely support the information collected in this research report’s initial phase - the literature review.

There is scarce existing data which examines queer people’s experiences in Canada’s technology industry. Much of the literature review material focuses on the general queer workforce in Canada, not specific to the sector.

Literature Review: Lived Experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ People in Canadian Tech

Queer people are underrepresented in STEM, and face stigmatization, exclusion, and moral and physical harassment in the workplace (Loren et al., 2016, Freeman, 2020, Langin, 2021, Nelson, 2019; American Physical Society, 2014; Dice, 2018; Casper et al., 2020).

- Less job satisfaction; greater employment/opportunity disparities; fewer resources and support; less fostered success; more professional devaluation; fewer transparent evaluations; worse treatment and less respect; feeling less safe and welcome at work; less belongingness; exclusion from work events; less perceived fairness (Cech & Pham, 2017; Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Schnitzer & Fang, 2015; Freeman, 2020; Else, 2021; Langin, 2021; Cech & Waidzunas, 2021; Cech & Rothwell, 2018; Leman, 2018; Casper et al., 2020).
- Queer people are more likely to consider leaving the field of STEM due to work stress related to minority status: experiencing career limitations, devaluation and marginalisation; institutional biases; and covert discrimination (Langin 2021, Suen & Chan, 2020; Cech & Rothwell, 2020; Stout & Wright, 2016; Cech & Waidzunas, 2021; Hughes 2018; Leman, 2018; Schnitzer & Fang, 2015; Cech & Rothwell; Vaccaro et al., 2021).
- The interacting components of cisnormative heterosexism, misogyny, and racial dynamics create systematic and cultural barriers in the workplace that often compound for those that are multiply oppressed (Miller, et al., 2020; Matsuda, 2015; Casper, et al., 2020; Vaccaro et al., 2021): e.g. queer women and queer BIPOC more likely to face workplace discrimination, harassment, and devaluation; queer BIPOC have a harder time finding role models and connecting to their peers (Leman, 2018; Else, 2021; American Physical Society, 2014; Hango, 2021; Oberst, 2010; Kurzweil 2010).

There is an overall lack of queer visibility in STEM research and workspaces. This is especially significant and disproportionate for TGNC people (transgender and gender nonconforming), who face repercussions for coming out as trans and the fear of stigmatization and violence (Leatherman, 2019; Matsuda, 2015; Russell & Frachtenberg, 2021).

- Trans people and bisexual people are the smallest represented, and trans people are the least tolerated group in work spaces (Oberst, 2010).
- Trans-invisibility encourages workplace exclusion and marginalization, which can lead to adverse health outcomes (Beauregard, 2018).
- Trans tech workers are paid less than their non-trans peers (Lopez, 2020).
- Intersectionality also impacts trans people’s workplace experiences:
 - Shift in workplace status after transitioning: sometimes trans men received more respect post-transition, and trans women dealt with effects of misogyny in STEM (DeNisco-Rayome, 2019; Oberst, 2010).
 - White trans people fare better than trans POC in the workplace: black and Indigenous trans people in Canada are more likely to face violence, harassment, and poverty, and less likely to benefit from organisational policies (Russell & Frachtenberg, 2021; Fosbrook, et al., 2020).
 - Outside the framework of ‘traditional’ gender, non-binary people may be looked upon even less favourably than binary cis and trans people (Russell & Frachtenberg, 2021).

ACQUIRING EMPLOYMENT



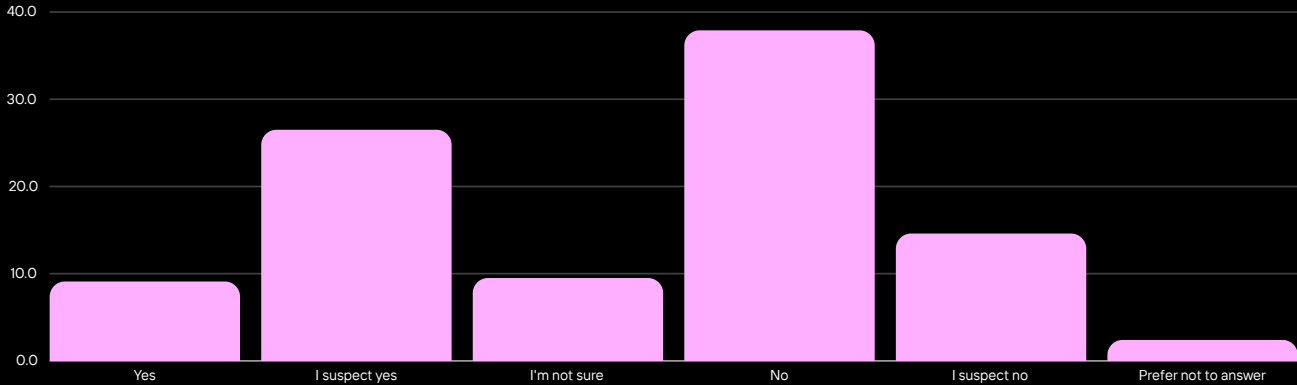
By exploring the consistent pain points associated with the acquirement of employment in tech, we can work to create effective, purposeful talent funnels into the industry from underrepresented communities.

As a result of both historic and contemporary discrimination against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, queer-identifying individuals face elevated barriers when attempting to access employment opportunities within the technology industry. These complex and often highly nuanced barriers that impede employment have led to the queer community being significantly underrepresented in STEM fields. By exploring the reasons for this representation disparity, we can work collectively to develop informed systems and processes to strategically correct these worrying trends. This section of the report includes findings from the quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, and previously published literature review.

SURVEY DATA

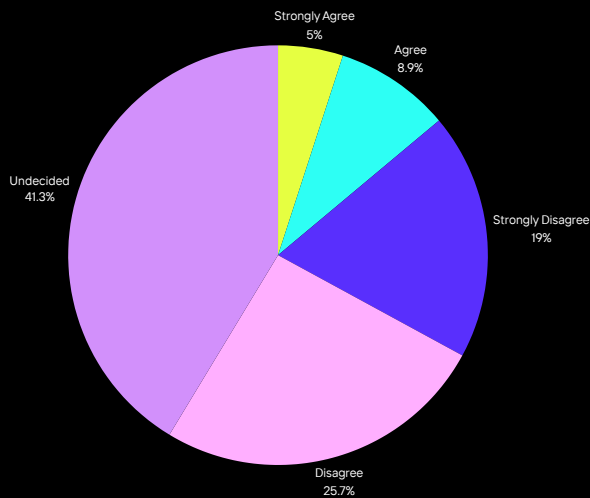
Hiring Process Inequality

We asked participants **if they have experienced discrimination during at least one job interview** (also providing the universally accepted definition of discrimination). Notably, 35.6% of respondents have, or suspect they have, experienced discrimination in the interview process within the technology sector. An additional 9.5% are not sure.



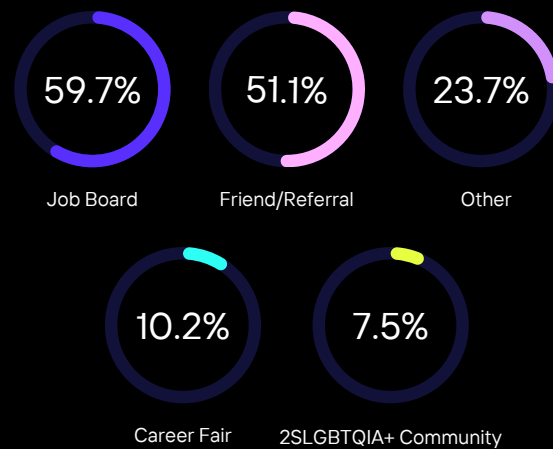
Identity and Employment

Survey participants were asked **how much they felt being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community played a beneficial role in acquiring employment**. Only 13.9% of respondents believe it is of benefit.



Interview Acquisition Channels

Respondents were asked **how, in general, they have been able to get interviews with various companies**. Job boards are the most successful avenue, while the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is the least.



Written responses in the "other" category included LinkedIn, recruiters and QueerTech events. Notably, some mentioned they have not had any success at acquiring interviews.

The above data sets support one another's conclusions. Likely a result of well documented historical and contemporary inequity, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community - while engaged and vital - is not yet efficient or consistent at initiating employment for other community members in the technology sector.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Research Questions

1. **How do you think Canada's tech industry can adapt its work culture to better recruit and retain underrepresented communities, members of 2SLGBTQIA+ community and BIPOC communities?**
2. **What do you think Canada's tech industry is already doing that is helping with recruitment, retention, and quality of employment experiences?**

Belonging

Interviewees repeatedly discussed work culture and work environments as a vital consideration to encourage both the recruitment and retention of staff from underrepresented communities. They noted it as important to create opportunities for flexibility and remote work as needed, while simultaneously not restricting or penalizing employees for adopting these working conditions. The above recommendation is especially true for anyone who might feel uncomfortable in “bro-y tech environments”. Furthermore, individual companies should avoid emphasizing toxic masculinity and “bro culture” in their recruiting materials. Actively encouraging alcoholism and levels of work likely to lead to burnout were also top concerns from interviewees within this sector. Interviewees noted organizations like QueerTech as key to creating community and reducing feelings of isolation among queer tech workers.

Interviewees noted mentorship programs as being significantly important in both the pre-employment and employment phases. For example, one interviewee reflected “how do you get people from the outside that may not know about opportunities in tech and how do you make it welcoming to everyone?” One solution proposed was to help communities organize to make it easier for them to acquire a role in the tech industry.

Although there are services like this that exist, some of them are run as a business, which may further marginalize certain communities because the services are not accessible. Therefore, help from mentors in terms of CV writing, skills training, and familiarizing potential candidates with the interview process can help with recruitment from underrepresented communities.

Similarly, networking has a key role to play in the recruitment process, especially when recruiters and companies are actively trying to recruit from typically underrepresented communities in the technology sector. An important way to do so is to engage with and participate in queer spaces and to purposefully share tech job opportunities in these queer spaces. According to one interviewee, this approach “sends the message that you thought about this, and that you would like to reach out to these communities. It makes sure that people in that community actually know about your job offer, because if they don't know about it, they can't apply.” Beyond awareness, these pre-interview actions subconsciously relay to interested candidates that this particular company is willing to do the work when it comes to inclusion practices and is therefore that much more likely to be a safe, respectful employer.

INTERVIEW RESULTS CONTINUED

Visibility In The Workplace

Throughout the interviews, there was an emphasis on the importance of having queer and BIPOC people in leadership roles, as mentors, and as role models; *“not just having a token member in the boardroom”*.

According to interviewees, visibility goes beyond a specific corporation and, instead, includes the industry’s collective culture and how it is perceived. The tech industry is one of the most lucrative areas of employment in terms of prestige and compensation, yet diverse communities have not been willing to apply. Interviewees had repeatedly mentioned the perceived culture. For example, *“gender imbalance [...] keeps people from choosing that career, they might say “well, the industry doesn’t really reflect who I am, there may be just no place for me there, and I should do something else”*.

Other respondents argued that pushing profit-based arguments regarding diversity is vital. Companies should be recruiting underrepresented individuals to make their organization more profitable, not for token purposes or optics.

Intersectionality was also reinforced as an important theme related to recruitment and retention. Interviewees spoke to the realities and lived experiences of people from underrepresented communities such as generational trauma, family responsibilities, and varying societal expectations; noting that these factors may relate to wage discrepancies and challenges in career advancement. One respondent noted companies need to do the work and *“be more compassionate towards each other and where everyone’s coming from”*. Various interviewees mentioned that hiring companies need to do the necessary research to adapt the workplace for every possible hire and the layers of identity they may have. This can be done by involving (and compensating) queer and racialized employees, in addition to external organizations, to

create a more inclusive employment process and workplace as a whole.

Beyond improved hiring and onboarding processes as a whole, multiple respondents referenced the importance of company leadership taking on the bulk of the responsibility of DEI work. One interviewee put it simply: *“It’s important that company changes are led by leadership on top so people can see themselves up there [...] without that structure, it turns into a conversation of ‘are queer and BIPOC and all these people responsible for outing themselves, educating others, and carrying that cross across the lawn?’”*.

Adding more depth to the economic argument, interviewees also referenced a needed shift in how our society as a whole, and the tech industry as a societal force, should operate and, ultimately, strive to be an example of positive change. Today, the technology industry influences how certain societies function, think and exist. One respondent noted that they *“think there needs to be large mentality changes - there are so many people of colour [and other marginalized individuals] that do seminar teachings, training and similar things [surrounding progressive DEI practices]”*. Yet, these resources are typically utilized for one-off employee professional development exercises versus being used to meaningfully inform holistic, inclusive policies. *“I think it’s a society thing - we need to stop doing things because it looks good, we need to do it because it’s right”*. Various interviewees mentioned that by increasing the well-being of current marginalized employees, the perception and visibility of your firm may naturally attract better, more diverse talent. This, in turn, will lead to an economic benefit. *“I think we are trending towards a competitive advantage over other countries because of our diversity, not in spite of it.”*

INTERVIEW RESULTS CONTINUED

EDI & HR Policies

Several interviews evoked issues surrounding the economic system - capitalism - as being a source of disparity and inequality in workplaces, in addition to the scale and accessibility of opportunities. Capitalism, left unchallenged, amplifies pre-existing disparities along multiple axis of oppression - everything from classism and racism, to ableism and queerphobia within a single workplace. The term "privilege" was raised multiple times by interviewees, citing significant differences in financial situations as a result of their race, previous socioeconomic status, and opportunities within their lifetime that have permitted them to succeed and move up the ladder more efficiently within their industry or workplace.

"I'm super privileged because my husband has a great job. He pays my mortgage and I can toy with the fact that I have a little extra wiggle room to choose my clients [...] that's why so many tech founders are young white men. They live with their parents and they have the time and energy to do this."

Proposed solutions centred around the idea of adjusting both expectations (from employer to underrepresented employee), and shifting the onus of employee success more significantly to the employer. Specifically, this means consciously creating spaces, policies and opportunities that foster success specifically for these communities within the appropriate contexts for said community. Opportunities for success should exist at every level, in which anyone can apply or thrive in the technology field regardless of their economic situation, background or identity.

Another important concept once again mentioned was transparency. Many mentioned better pay, less hours, and more flexibility for individuals to have the option to adapt to any situation they have in their personal life (e.g. healthcare needs for transitioning individuals, IVF/fertility treatments, childcare).

Transparency was mentioned several times regarding the recruitment and onboarding process as well. Largely, this point centred around the need for employers to take the time and care needed to properly invest in their future and new employees through comprehensive preparation and setting them up for success. Other ideas included: being more open about how your recruitment process functions, decreasing possible biases, having several interviewers, increasing bandwidth regarding the interview process, and eliminating unpaid or poorly paid internships.

Cultural Competence: STEM Academia

Across interviews, educational settings were discussed as a necessary point of intervention for encouraging and supporting diversity in tech. The creation of programs and opportunities, from elementary school to higher education, was repeatedly brought up as a critical tactic to reinvent the tech industry's culture, identity and intended direction. With a notable rate of women leaving STEM before completing their degrees and marginalized communities not seeing themselves represented in tech, the issue of exclusion within the industry begins in academic settings and is only further perpetuated in the workplace.

As one interviewee noted: "addressing that gender imbalance should be the number one priority for the tech industry. That starts in school, making sure underserved and underrepresented groups are encouraged to pursue tech and to develop a passion for tech. If you wait until people are in the work force, maybe it is already too late."

INTERVIEW RESULTS CONTINUED

Interview Quotes Related to Recruitment & Retainment

Several interviewees provided valuable insights into 2SLGBTQIA+ lived experiences pertaining specifically to the recruitment and retainment of queer employees across the tech sector. Across interviews, three core themes emerged relating to necessary improvements: concerted efforts to bolster authentic inclusivity in external employer brand marketing, the need for holistic management buy-in and leadership education, and cultural competence relating to accessible, flexible support channels for acquiring employment.

"DEI efforts and the focus on a welcoming, safe work environment, needs to make its way to how that company presents itself as an employer. It's not just about PR of course, there has to be mechanisms that implement whatever message they're putting out there, but I think it's important to put the message out there, the message of diversity in whatever way feels relevant and appropriate for that company. Because the more that people see that they can work in a place, they'll feel more compelled and more invited to apply."

"There has to be awareness raising and education of management - especially of middle and upper management - they will need to be willing to actually learn and actually engage with that stuff [...] they need to learn about the experiences of marginalized people and they need to learn how certain systems affect people [...] for example if their company has a product that makes the lives of people of colour harder, maybe that's why they're not getting a lot of job applications from people of colour [...] I feel like for a lot of leaders in tech, this would never cross their mind - this is so far from what they typically think about. They're so focused on tech they don't think about people's life experiences of marginalization. More so because leaders are typically not marginalized, like disproportionately less marginalized."

"Make it clear from the outside that you have a safe environment. Explain that you have policies and pathways for when things do go poorly - like when there is harassment. Having visibility into those processes from the outside as well as the knowledge that that those things are not tolerated within your company is an important way to help people and make them feel more safe."

"Basically how do you attract people from the outside that may not know about opportunities in tech - how do you make it welcoming to everyone? However, making the solution a service that you need to pay for further marginalizes the same communities. The focus needs to be two-fold from companies: can we show as a company that we welcome everybody, and then how can we organize these communities to help make the job easier for them to land [...] This guy on LinkedIn - he has this company that all it does is it helps people from non-tech backgrounds, and from diverse backgrounds, land their first role in tech [...] I think this is a nonprofit but unfortunately it's a business of his and like a few of his friends. So people have to pay something to have access to that service [...] it's for people who have never heard about the tech industry but have skills that work within the tech industry. So they match you with what kind of roles you could do in the tech industry, and then train you so that you can organize your CV better, so that you can learn how to sell yourself in the way that the interview processes work, and then make it easier for these people to make the jump [...] it's still a business and some people don't have, you know, \$3,000 to spend on these kind of things - especially people who have been historically marginalized."

LITERATURE REVIEW & PROPOSED TACTICS

Overview

Beyond interviewee responses indicating possible cultural adaptations the technology industry can make to better recruit and retain members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (which focused on the themes of Belonging, Visibility, EDI & HR Policies, and Cultural Competence in STEM Academia), the literature review produced many actionable recommendations for decision makers, HR specialists, and co-workers:

Literature Review: Adaptations to Improve Recruitment & Retention

Adaptations in HR policies (Riley, 2008; Butkute, 2016; Crittenden, 2017; Schnitzer & Fang, 2015; Hill, 2006; Unsay, 2020; Ng et al., 2017; APS, 2014; Out Leadership & PwC, 2019):

- Institute non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and domestic partner benefits
- Amend gender binary on forms
- Provide diversity trainings
- Institute gender neutral bathrooms
- Expand health insurance to cover partners and support transition
- Raise visibility for queer people in the workplace by emphasizing commitments to equal opportunities as a recruitment tool
- Create internal queer groups for support and networking opportunities
- Encourage outness in management and supervisors
- Match queer employees to mentors
- Develop leadership opportunities for queer employees.

Adaptations in institutional policies (Riley, 2008; APS, 2014; Schnitzer & Fang, 2015; Quigley, 2019; Ng et al., 2017; Crittenden, 2017; Out Leadership & PwC, 2019; Sinton et al., 2021; Hill, 2006):

- Make commitment to diversity explicit and hold the same expectations from partners
- Partner with and support LGBTQ2S+ affiliate Like QueerTech and ally groups
- Create and support creators of products and services that benefit the queer community
- Visibly engage with LGBTQ2S+ equality efforts - lobby for and advance queer rights
- Use inclusive language in advertising and market respectfully to queer stakeholders

Adaptations in the actions of colleagues:

- Supportive co-workers should (Sinton et al., 2021; Riley, 2008; Langin, 2019; Matsuda, 2015)
 - Normalize sharing pronouns
 - Demonstrate ally-ship by understanding and displaying flags/symbols of solidarity
 - Actively participate in diversity trainings
 - Be aware of 2SLGBTQIA+ invisibility and the strains of coming out
 - Use people's correct names and pronouns, even when they are not around
- Supportive management should (Riley, 2008; Out Leadership & PwC, 2019; Butkute, 2016)
 - Make their commitment to zero harassment explicit
 - Model inclusive work culture
 - Do the work to ensure out role models are present in upper management

Adaptations in policies for accountability and transparency (Velinov, 2019; Crittenden, 2017; Sinton et al., 2021; Out Leadership, 2019; Butkute, 2016):

- Use data points to assess worker outcomes
- Collect data to monitor inclusion efforts
- Provide clear paths to progression and mobility within the organization
- Use inclusive communication, such as gender-neutral language, internally
- Consistently review all policies and practices affecting workers to maintain objectivity

CLIMATE INVENTORY & GAPS



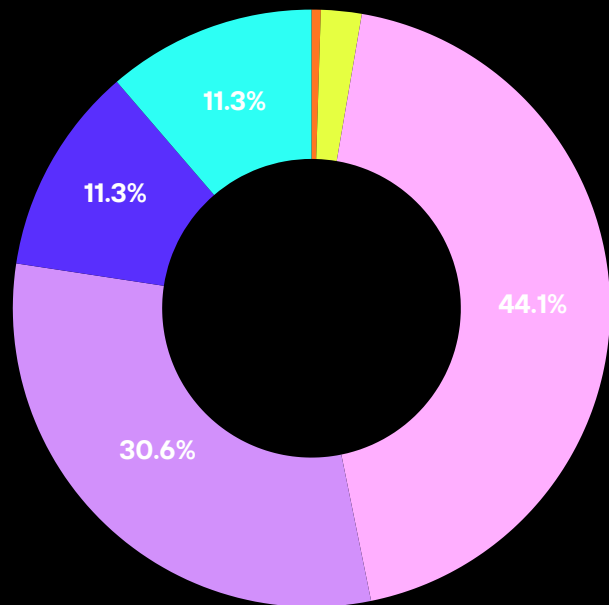
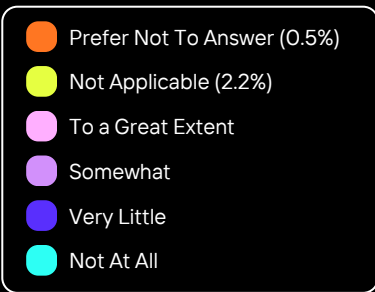
Inclusive policies, and the leaders who power and sustain them, need to work symbiotically. By increasing awareness of common gaps in workplace culture, we can work to mitigate the scale and impact of human error.

Understanding the predominant, embedded cultural aspects of a particular industry is instrumental to equipping ourselves with the needed context to holistically address diversity, equity and inclusion activities within said environment. Collecting this data, in conjunction with operational information and greater sector employment data, allows for the development of solutions that incorporate processes to balance and correct “weak spots” and learned biases (e.g. insufficient leadership buy-in, ignorance resulting in discriminatory actions and words, etc.). This section of the report includes findings from the quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, and previously published literature review.

SURVEY DATA

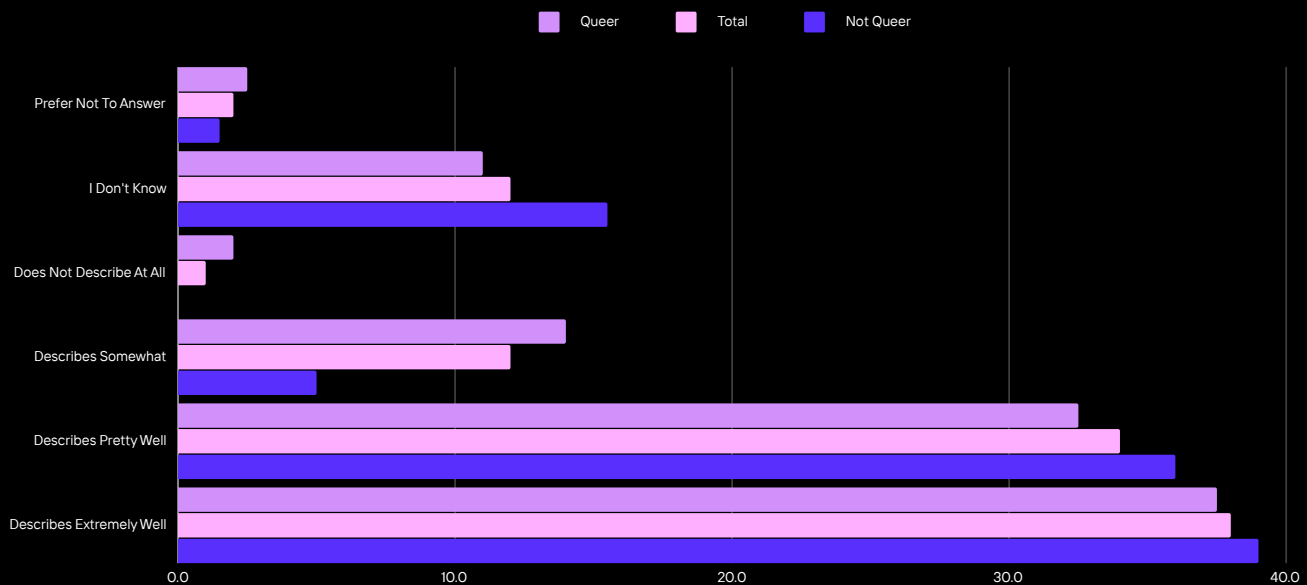
Psychological Safety

We asked participants **to what extent they consider themselves "out" at their place of employment**. Promisingly, 74.7% of respondents are at least somewhat out at work. 22.6% of respondents are out "very little" or "not at all" at work.



Respect At Work

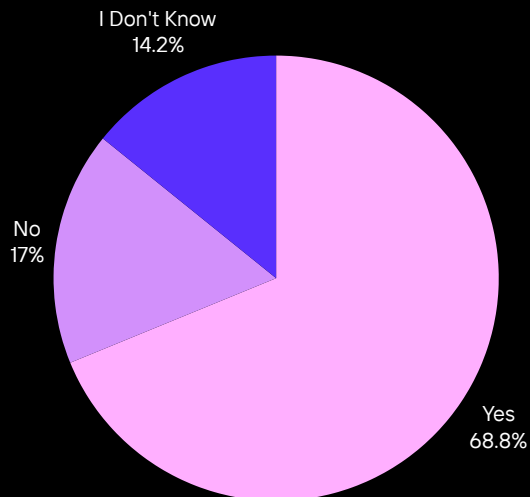
Through our own research, we looked at **whether 2SLGBTQIA+ tech employees are being treated with respect**. The results are, unfortunately, not overwhelmingly positive. Less than 40% of participants, both 2SLGBTQIA+ and non-2SLGBTQIA+, feel that 2SLGBTQIA+ employees are consistently being treated with respect. In fact, some participants mentioned the dismissal of certain colleagues or upper management when they raised 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the workplace.



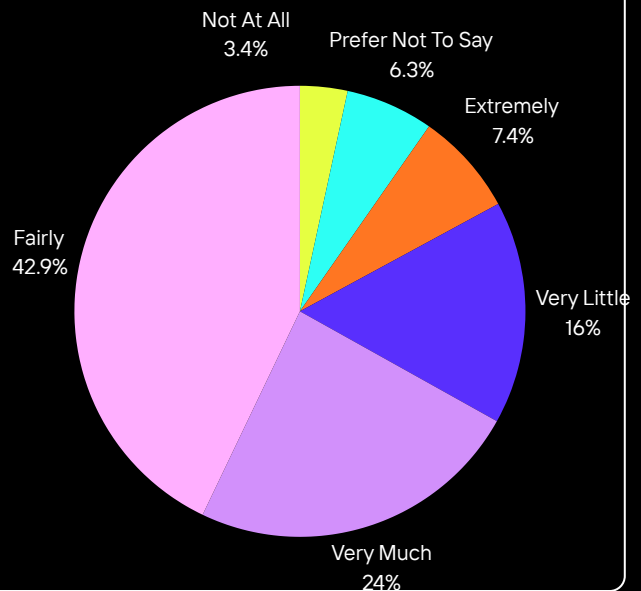
SURVEY DATA CONTINUED

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives

Survey participants were asked **if their current employer has equity, diversity and inclusion programs or initiatives**. Promisingly, nearly 70% do have programs in place.

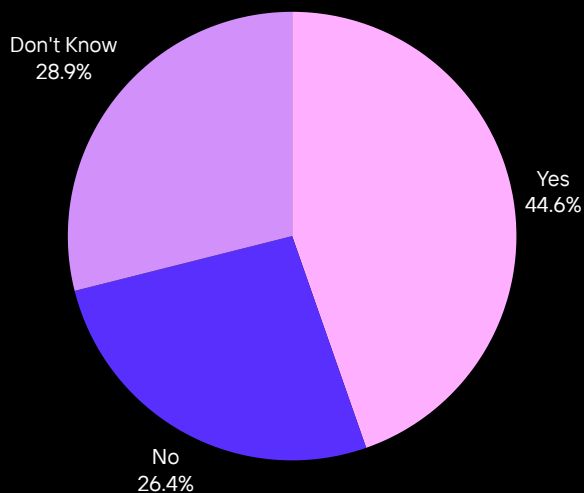


Respondents were then asked **to what extent they find these DEI programs or initiatives to be effective**. Over 40% find these initiatives to be "fairly" effective.

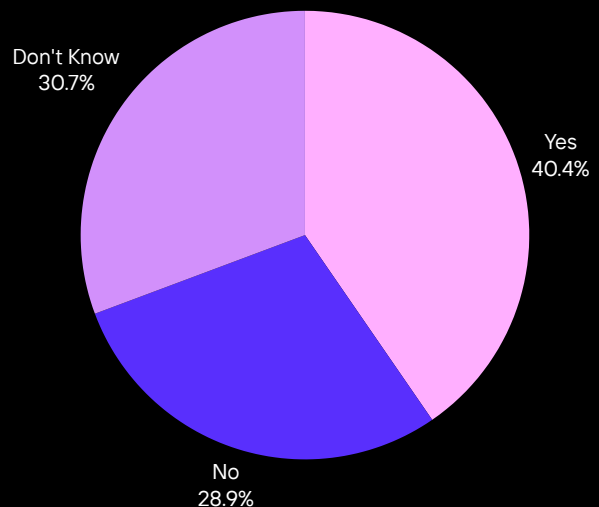


Representation & Visibility of Leadership

We asked participants **if there are people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ in senior positions at their workplace**. Less than 45% indicated yes, and nearly 30% do not know.



Participants were also asked **if people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ hold mentorship roles at their workplace**. Approximately 40% indicated yes, while over 30% do not know.



INTERVIEW RESULTS

Research Questions

1. In order to improve work cultures within the tech industry, what barriers do you think need to be eliminated?
2. What tools, strategies, or approaches could be implemented to do so effectively?

Community & Mentorship

Across many interviews, access to community, resources and connections to job opportunities emerged as a barrier that relates to, and can be better addressed by, the establishment of dedicated, resourced community and mentorship channels. Especially relevant to racialized individuals, women and the queer community, these support avenues - executed correctly - have the potential to deliver multi-pronged solutions, including: confidence building, skill and industry transition development, direct fostering of connections to industry decision makers/employers, leadership pipeline establishment, and increased access to demographic applicable resources and education.

"Increasing access to opportunities. I think QueerTech is doing a really great job at not only building a community, but also providing said community with resources and links to jobs. Mentorship too - at least for me, to build up confidence to apply to these jobs [...] women or queer people often have a kind of apprehension even applying for jobs because they don't themselves [represented] in these companies."

Authentic Leadership Advocacy

Various interviewees noted the symbiotic relationship of effective EDI policies and authentic leadership buy-in; the idea that the tools for inclusion (the policies) need to be maintained and empowered by a dedicated, committed force (leadership).

Without both elements working together as intended, the overall method and approach is often rendered ineffective. One respondent noted that *"there's work that needs to be done on the inclusion side, and that has to do a lot with how the leadership expresses that this [diversity and inclusion] is important to the company. We need more leaders who are in tune with, or who represent, that diversity"*.

Intersectional Competence

Another common theme discovered during the interviews centred around the idea of intersectional competence and the need for increased organizational commitment, sustainable investment and comprehensive understandings of multiply oppressed employees. Barriers associated with intersectional competence exist both within company structures (e.g. reactive versus proactive policy development, legal obligations versus genuine employee wellness advocacy, under-informed policy development, under-prepared and under-resourced inclusion channels, etc.) and employee experience (e.g. feeling burdensome for needing multi-layered support or accommodation).

Referring to a tendency for technology sector work environments to be homogenous, one interviewee noted there needs to be a focus on fostering a significantly more *"diverse work culture and work force that fit as many people [and identities] as possible into it [...] without [the employees] squishing themselves into white, straight, non-disabled mode"*.

INTERVIEW RESULTS CONTINUED

Dismantling “Professional” Archetypes

The importance of ensuring people feel welcome and accepted in work spaces was reiterated across interviews. This was the case across the pre-employment and employment phases. Several interviewees brought up the theme of what it means to “look professional” and the damaging archetype of the professional individual. Specifically, this theme can be understood as applicable to various underrepresented communities and demographics: queer individuals, racialized people, and people with a disability (or disabilities). The traditional archetype includes, but is not limited to the factors of, physical appearance, gender performance, assistive technologies, an individual's voice and/or tone, and so on.

One interviewee said: *“There’s no point in bringing people into a company and then having them have an awful experience because they’re discriminated against or they’re not treated fairly or respectfully because of who they are”*. They shared the following example of a barrier that can be present early on in the pre-employment phase: *“When you go and interview with a company and every person you meet in the interview process is a man, or when you look at the executive leadership team and it’s all white men, that is not something that will make you think that you could belong in a place, even if it’s true”*.

Cultural Competence: STEM Academia

Barriers exist before entering the tech industry, including in educational settings (notably in universities and higher education) and conference spaces. For example, especially for underrepresented individuals, one interviewee said that *“it’s not uncommon for there to be harassment in college that’s not addressed so they drop out early. It’s not uncommon for a lot of these conferences to be unsafe places for a lot of the groups that form the communities.”*

Furthermore, when discussing local developer and tech communities, *“it’s not uncommon for this to be dominated by a certain type [of person] or a certain group, and concerns that are brought up [are] unaddressed.”* These educational settings can be intimidating and unwelcoming, especially if homogenous, overrepresented groups tend to be present. Recommendations were made to create and support *“community programs where people can learn the skills for tech, whether it be product design, product management or development, etc.”*

In these sorts of educational settings, both within academic institutions and community organizations, we should consider *“not necessarily just targeting people in the industry, [thereby] making sure that we’re bringing in people from different walks of life, [while offering] different kinds of expositions, job fairs, that sort of things”*. In line with the theme of supporting people from younger ages and fostering interest in tech, some interviewees noted that youth are becoming more comfortable with asking questions in safe spaces. By creating more inclusive, safe, and accepting spaces where learning can take place, we may be able to overcome some of the barriers present in settings that overlap with the tech industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW & PROPOSED TACTICS

Literature Review: Barriers to Inclusive Cultures & Proposed Solutions

Multiply oppressed people face unique issues that negatively impact their experiences at work.

- Solution: The most urgent measures and targeted interventions need to be built and implemented to tackle issues that arise for these groups, with dedicated priority.

Trans people face challenges that can impact their ability to continue in their fields (hormones, lack of resources such as appropriate restrooms, ignorance/stigma)

(Beauregard, 2018; Matsuda, 2015; Leatherman, 2019).

- Solutions:
 - Specific measures to support Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) workers (recognizing name changes, including trans healthcare, and providing accessible gender neutral bathrooms).
 - Diversity training to help employees support TGNC workers (diversity workshops, listening to trans voices, sharing and respecting pronouns) (Ng, et al., 2017; Leatherman, 2019; Riley, 2008; **Matsuda, 2015**).

Lack of queer mentors and role models, especially for queer people who are more alienated from STEM spaces, such as trans and Indigenous people.

- Solution: Leadership opportunities for queer people, supporting diverse role models, increasing visibility of queer issues, reducing pressure to separate professional and personal lives in STEM culture to foster disclosure (Kurzweil, 2010; Poku, 2020; Hughes, 2018; Suri, 2015).

Disconnect between the skills employers value (collaboration, relationship-building), those that queer employees think they possess (empathy and inclusiveness), and between what employers and queer employees prioritize.

- Solution: Companies should better understand the needs of queer employees and align their priorities with those of their workers (Out Leadership & PwC, 2019).

Queer people often unaware or skeptical of organizational resources (Schnitzer, & Fang, 2015; Out Leadership & PwC, 2019; Lloren et al., 2016).

- Solutions:
 - Include queer people when deciding on which queer-friendly policies to adopt
 - Consult several organizations, in particular those that work with more severely affected populations such as TGNC and BIPOC communities
 - Ensure that workforce is aware of policies by implementing measures in recruitment and reviews
 - Consistently demonstrate commitment to social justice

Lack of research in the field itself.

- Solution: Collect measures on sexual orientation and gender identity so that researchers, policymakers, and organizations can assess (1) educational and cultural barriers, (2) disparities across STEM fields, (3) intersections of gender, ethnicity, and class, and (4) pipeline issues; and to aid in developing accountability systems to protect against bias and discrimination (Freeman, 2020; Langin, 2020).

REDACTED CONTENT

Pages 28-38 of this report have been redacted from public access and are available to industry stakeholders for purchase. Redacted sections include:

1. Opportunities for improved inclusion in the technology sector.
2. Framework to encourage beneficial change and enhanced queer inclusion.
3. Recommendations: eight pages of tailored recommendations for key stakeholder groups, including: academia, government, recruiters, support organizations, and industry (segmented by hiring practices, workplace culture, EDI and HR policies, and engagement with the larger ecosystem).

Why Redact Content?

Stay with us for a second.

Here are (some of) the facts:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ people are significantly underrepresented across the Canadian technology sector.
- 35.6% of participants have experienced discrimination during past interviews (with another 9.5% not being sure).
- Less than 40% of all respondents believe queer employees are consistently treated with respect at work.

The findings of this report were, unfortunately, worrying to both QueerTech and our Corporate Membership. While it was found that most employers have EDI initiatives, the vast majority of respondents did not find them overly effective. Beyond this, substantial disparities between queer and non-queer individuals continue to plague the industry; from access to employment and lacking leadership representation, to outright discrimination and fears surrounding personal safety.

Thoughtful, holistic workplace inclusion is not achievable through empty value statements, copy and paste policies, or band aid solutions. EDI, to many, is used as a tool to bolster organizational recognition and employer brand. We don't think this optics-only approach is enough.

The reality is that true inclusion requires sustainable, sufficient investment (capital, resources, capacity) and organizational commitment. Well-resourced support channels and authentic leadership buy-in are both needed to achieve real progress.

With recent exclusive, hateful sentiments towards 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across the country, we believe it's vital to remind the technology industry's leadership - as a powerful, innovative ecosystem of changemakers - that their actions, or lack of actions, matter and make a difference.

Queer inclusion matters.

Queer safety matters.

Queer lives matter.

This is why access to the informed, tailored framework and recommendations come with a price tag. Because committing to genuine inclusion is an investment; an investment worth making for your people.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED INCLUSION IN THE TECH SECTOR

Overview

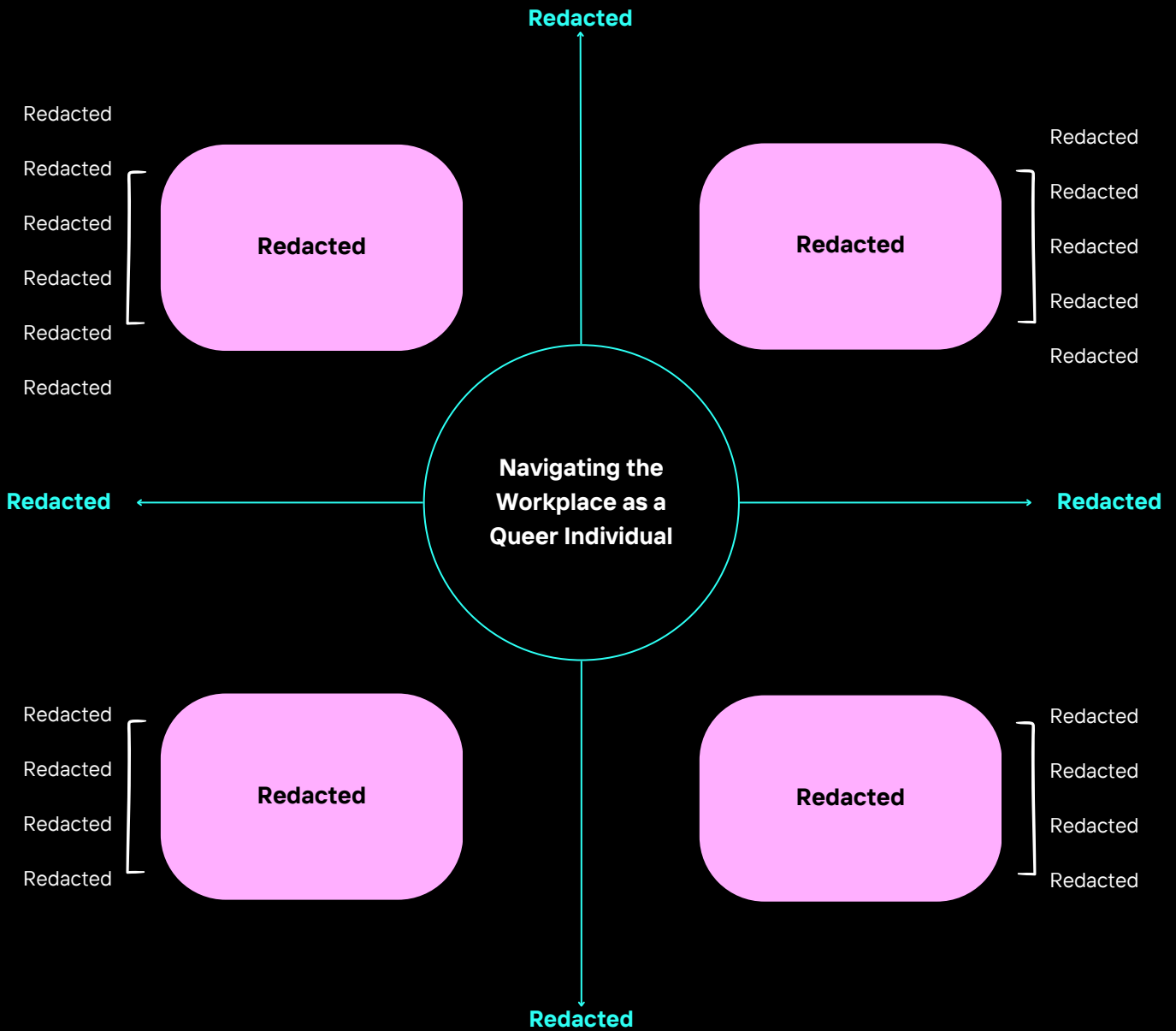
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Industry Advantage	Potential Inclusion Outcome
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FRAMEWORK TO ENCOURAGE BENEFICIAL CHANGE

Overview

Redacted.



OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the provided findings, QueerTech and our research team have compiled several short and long term recommendations for key decision makers, stakeholders, and change makers across the industry. From our qualitative analysis, three recurring concepts were identified as universal, non-segmented priorities: redacted, redacted, and redacted.

Industries in which heteronormative, cisgender, white/european descent are predominant are at particular risk of employing tokenism and performed diversity, as opposed to effective, well-rounded equity and inclusion. Often this tendency is subconscious and unintentional; if we are surrounded by a homogenous workforce that brings the same identity markers, lived experiences and perspectives to the table, company leadership is unlikely to recognize the problem, take it seriously, and identify informed solutions. The path to genuine, authentic improvement, therefore, often begins with a commitment by leadership to disrupt this normative culture - and the system it feeds on - holistically. In other words, approaches should not start and end with bandaid solutions (e.g. DEI committees which place the onus and additional responsibility on the few-and-far-between diverse employees), but rather a focus on complete organizational transformation which prioritizes collective responsibility, top-down adoption and multilateral actualization tactics, and the comprehensive understanding of the intentions behind true inclusivity - to help companies be more successful, and to benefit everyone.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: ACADEMIA

A bias against queer and trans people has been identified in STEM education, evidenced in 2SLGBTQIA+ people being around 20% less represented in STEM than expected, and 70% of “out” STEM faculty members feeling uncomfortable in their department (Freeman, 2019).

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: GOVERNMENT

The following recommendations are applicable to all levels - Federal, Provincial/Territorial, Municipal - of the Government of Canada and their prospective departments, agencies and teams. A significant responsibility is placed on all government bodies and elected officials to advocate and enact real change.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: RECRUITERS

As a fast-growth industry, oftentimes the recruitment and hiring functions of a technology company are contracted out to specialized recruitment agencies. As such, a significant responsibility is placed on said agencies, and their recruiters, to improve 2SLGBTQIA+ representation across the sector.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Within the contexts of this report, “support organizations” refers to any for-profit, nonprofit, charity or entity that exists to advocate for, support or empower the technology sector or the Canadian 2SLGBTQIA+ community, specifically.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: INDUSTRY

The following recommendations for the technology industry - pertaining to all employers, leaders and affiliates of companies big and small - relate to the topic of **workplace hiring practices**. These recommendations are intended to contribute to the goal of recruiting and retaining more 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals into the tech workforce in Canada.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: INDUSTRY

The following recommendations for the technology industry - pertaining to all employers, leaders and affiliates of companies big and small - relate to the topic of **workplace culture**. These recommendations are intended to contribute to the goal of improving the lived experience of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees in the tech industry in Canada.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: INDUSTRY

The following recommendations for the technology industry - pertaining to all employers, leaders and affiliates of companies big and small - relate to the topic of **EDI and HR policies**. These recommendations are intended to contribute to the goal of improving the safety of 2SLGBTQIA+ tech employees and enhancing the accountability of employers.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
6	Redacted.
7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.
11	Redacted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: INDUSTRY

The following recommendations for the technology industry - pertaining to all employers, leaders and affiliates of companies big and small - relate to the topic of **engaging with the larger ecosystem**. These recommendations are intended to contribute to the goal of improving the holistic inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the sector.

#	Recommendations
1	Redacted.
2	Redacted.
3	Redacted.
4	Redacted.
5	Redacted.
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7	Redacted.
8	Redacted.
9	Redacted.
10	Redacted.

CONCLUSION & URGENCY

Queer experiences and inclusion matter. Together, we *can* take collective action to correct the stark underrepresentation of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals across the technology industry in Canada and work to make this sector an example of true, authentic inclusion.

However, to achieve these outcomes which serve to benefit *all* involved in the ecosystem, we must condemn the notion that individual actions cannot contribute to holistic, positive change to the sector and the existing system it operates within.

This report acts as a call to action to every single stakeholder group, organization and individual involved in sustaining and progressing the technology industry in Canada. Employers, leaders, existing employees, suppliers, partners, recruiters, educators, students, government bodies and individual elected officials - we call on you, as an organization and as a community, to take action. We urge you to embody true allyship versus performative inclusion, champion these efforts as a personal and collective responsibility, and refuse to exist in the status quo of passive ignorance and apathy.

Canada's technology sector is largely composed of incredibly talented, innovative and passionate leaders. Yet, the industry will only ever be as strong as the collective identity we all contribute to. A homogenous, exclusive identity is not the legacy we want to leave and hand over to the next generation of leaders. Perhaps the greatest display of innovation in the sector has not yet been realized. Maybe, just maybe, the ultimate display of disruption is not found in our products, services or technical applications, but rather in a courageous commitment to swimming against the current of exclusion and demanding real, positive change for our people.

CONTRIBUTORS

Various organizations, institutions and individuals contributed to the successful completion of this report.

QueerTech would also like to thank our Corporate Members for their contributions to this initiative and for continuously supporting the work we do.

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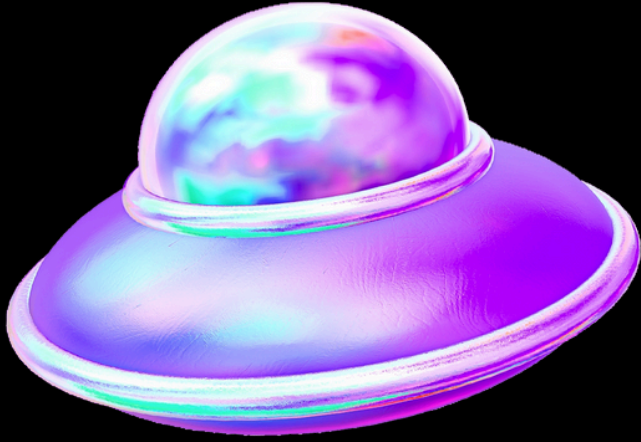


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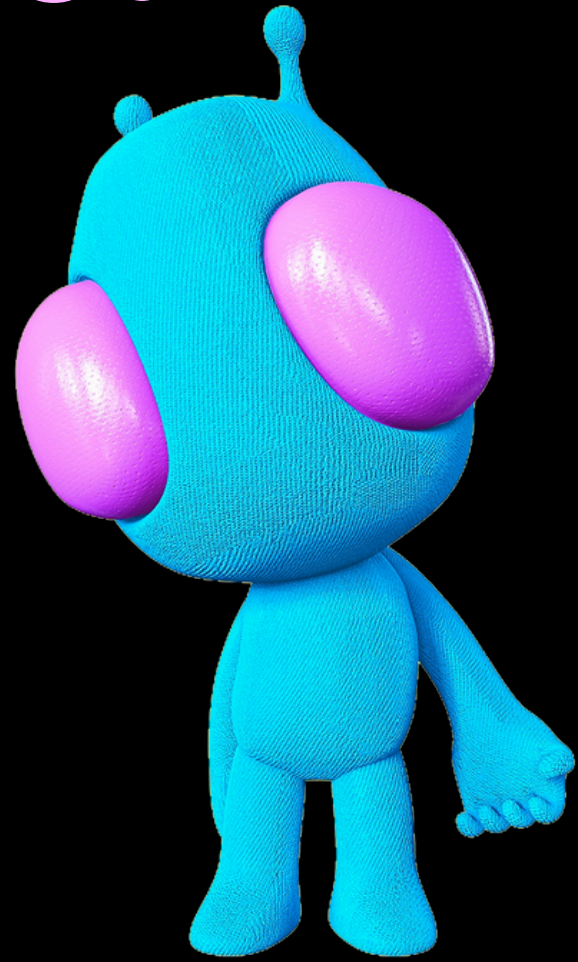
About ICT Boost:

ICT Boost empowers job seekers, participants and employers and aims to remove barriers to entering Canada's booming tech sector. Led by Lighthouse Labs and an amazing network of 300+ partners, ICT Boost offers a wide variety of fully-funded programs, including technical and soft-skills training, along with personalized wrap-around supports like stipends, work-integrated learning, mentorship, and career transition assistance. ICT Boost also supports employers with initiatives such as wage subsidies and EDIB training. Together, we aim to cultivate an ecosystem of opportunities for all and create a more inclusive and thriving tech sector. To date, over 3500 participants and 2000+ employers have benefited from the project. ICT Boost is funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program (SWSP).

About Lighthouse Labs: Lighthouse Labs is a skills development accelerator for the digital age. Since 2013, LHL has launched, accelerated, or transformed more than 40,000 careers in coding, cyber security, data science, and other in-demand fields critical in today's technological economy. We upskill and reskill through in-house bootcamps and courses, leading post-secondary institutions, and corporate training partnerships with innovative Fortune 1000 companies.



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