

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

FOR

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY



IGLTA
FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Guide for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Communication is designed to empower travel and hospitality professionals with the tools to connect authentically with LGBTQ+ travelers. In an industry focused on making people feel welcome, inclusive language is a cornerstone for creating a sense of belonging and respect. This guide offers practical strategies for adopting inclusive language, and serves as both a learning tool and a reference. Use it to:

- ◆ Audit your communications and identify areas for improvement.
- ◆ Train staff to confidently use inclusive language in all guest interactions.
- ◆ Develop marketing campaigns that authentically reflect LGBTQ+ travelers.
- ◆ Communicate effectively with international guests while respecting cultural nuances.
- ◆ Build trust with LGBTQ+ travelers by ensuring their identities and experiences are respected.

Embracing inclusive language does more than create a welcoming atmosphere; it strengthens brand loyalty, enhances guest satisfaction, and broadens market reach. This guide equips professionals with strategies and best practices to integrate inclusive language into every guest touchpoint.

Key Takeaways

1. Implement Gender-Inclusive Language Across All Interactions

- ◆ Use neutral greetings like “Welcome, everyone” instead of gendered phrases.
- ◆ Replace terms like “husband and wife” with more inclusive options such as “partners” or “couples.”

2. Enhance Booking and Registration Processes

- ◆ Include options beyond “Mr.” and “Ms.,” such as “Mx.,” and provide space for preferred names and pronouns.
- ◆ Ensure that both digital and in-person check-ins respect all gender identities.

3. Train Staff for Inclusive Communication

- ◆ Educate staff on the use of correct pronouns and how to address mistakes with professionalism.
- ◆ Integrate inclusive language into customer service scripts and internal communications.

4. Create Authentic and Inclusive Marketing Campaigns

- ◆ Showcase diverse LGBTQ+ travelers in your marketing materials and storytelling.
- ◆ Highlight LGBTQ+ friendly policies and safety considerations in destination marketing.

5. Ensure Inclusive Facilities and Policies

- ◆ Provide gender-neutral restrooms or clearly communicate your inclusive restroom policies.
- ◆ Offer personalized in-room amenities that accommodate all genders.

6. Foster a Culture of Inclusion Across Partnerships

- ◆ Collaborate with LGBTQ+ organizations, influencers, and advocacy groups to strengthen your outreach.
- ◆ Review partnerships and sponsorships to ensure alignment with inclusive values.

7. Monitor and Adapt Based on Feedback

- ◆ Use post-visit surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of your inclusive communication.
- ◆ Regularly update policies and training to reflect evolving language and community needs.

By adopting these strategies, travel and hospitality professionals can ensure that all LGBTQ+ travelers feel respected, valued, and truly welcomed. For more in-depth details and specific language guidelines across English, French, Italian, and other languages, please refer to the full guide.

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Introduction

HospitableMe’s research identified seven principles of inclusion — specific ways that tourism and hospitality brands and destinations can be more welcoming and inviting to historically underrepresented and excluded communities. One of these is crafting connections with language and imagery. Language is subtle and complex, and using community-competent language throughout your organization and across all sales and marketing channels is a powerful way to connect with lgbtq+ travelers. Many of the language “best practices” in the lgbtq+ community are still evolving; and there’s plenty of disagreement over terminology and usage within our diverse community. This demands choices based on your brand, location, and customer base. Even our use of lgbtq+ is a choice — one that is discussed later in the guide.

- ◆ Language is constantly evolving. Just like fashion, what’s in today, may be out tomorrow, and back next year. Shakespeare would hardly recognize the “english” spoken today. Today, the only place you’d hear his preferred pronouns — thee and thou — is at a renaissance fair. Because change is constant, we encourage you to consult other sources as well — HospitableMe’s online glossary <https://hospitable.Me/resources/> will help you learn about specific words. Creating an lgbtq+ external task force/advisory board at your organization is often the best way to get feedback and perspective on your language usage.

The importance of inclusive communication

In today’s globalized world, the tourism industry serves as a gateway to diverse cultures and experiences, making it essential for communication within this sector to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible. For LGBTQ+ travelers, the language used by tourism professionals can significantly impact their travel experience. Inclusive communication not only reflects respect and acceptance but also promotes a positive image of destinations and brands, enhancing the overall attractiveness to a broader audience of conscientious travelers.

Embracing LGBTQ+ inclusive language is not just about social responsibility; it also makes sound business sense. Studies show that LGBTQ+ travelers tend to travel more frequently and have higher disposable incomes compared to the general population. By fostering an environment that welcomes diversity, tourism businesses can tap into this lucrative market while contributing to a culture of inclusivity.

Furthermore, using language that accurately represents and respects diverse identities helps prevent misunderstandings and builds trust between service providers and clients. It ensures that all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, feel valued and understood.

This Guide Is for YOU

LGBTQ+ people exist in most if not every aspect of your life and work. Almost 50% of LGBTQ+ people are not “out” at work, making inclusive language more important and impactful than you may realize. Using this guidance every day as you speak with colleagues, customers and collaborators will make your organization more inclusive. Whether you work in Marketing, Management, Human Resources, or Operations, your work touches LGBTQ+ people. Using this guidance outside of work builds respect and care for the LGBTQ+ people in your family and communities.

As authors and partners in this work, we share the belief that the values of inclusion and belonging are fundamental to Travel & Tourism. And we share the hope that this guide will facilitate your own organization’s ability to help make the world a more inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.

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“Coming out” is the process by which LGBTQ+ individuals acknowledge and share their sexual orientation or gender identity with others. It is a deeply personal, gradual and ongoing process as people evaluate the safety and comfort of coming out to their family, friends, co-workers — and every new person they meet. People use the metaphor “coming out of the closet” with “the closet” representing the hiding place of their authentic selves under pressure to conform to heteronormative or cisnormative expectations. Coming out, therefore, symbolizes stepping into openness, truth, and freedom.



Understanding the Impact of Language

Language within the LGBTQ+ community is a dynamic and sometimes contentious topic, reflecting the diverse experiences and perspectives of its members. Not everyone within the community agrees on the terminology used to describe their identities, experiences, or the issues they face. Members of the LGBTQ+ community come from different cultural, socioeconomic, and personal backgrounds, which can influence their preferences for certain terms. For instance, while some embrace the term “queer” as a broad, inclusive label for non-normative sexual and gender identities, others may find it offensive due to its historical use as a slur.

There are other generational divides in the language that LGBTQ+ people use. Older individuals might be more comfortable with traditional terms like “gay” or “lesbian,” while younger members might favor newer, more fluid descriptors like “pansexual” or “non-binary.” These preferences often reflect the different ways

generations have experienced acceptance and discrimination.

The political and social contexts in which people live also shape their language preferences. For example, people in places where LGBTQ+ rights are less protected might prefer language that feels safer or less confrontational. Activists might adopt more politically charged language to highlight the urgency of their issues or to reclaim derogatory terms. The inclusion in the acronym of “I” for Intersex is very common among advocacy organizations, and hardly ever seen in tourism.

Language is deeply tied to personal identity, and the words we use to describe ourselves can affirm or negate our sense of self. This makes discussions about language highly personal and sometimes emotionally charged as individuals seek recognition and respect for their identities. Achieving a consensus on language is nearly impossible, but working towards consensus is an important process for fostering unity and mutual respect within

the community. For tourism organizations, the challenge is finding language that best reflects the communities in which you operate and where your guests come from.



The Evolution of LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language

Language, like culture itself, is constantly in flux, shaped by social, political, and cultural forces, and adapting and evolving to better reflect the identities, experiences, and sensibilities of its speakers.

This evolution in language is intertwined with growing awareness of identities and communities, and changing social attitudes. These linguistic transitions — from ‘homosexual,’ a medical and legal term, to ‘gay and lesbian,’ which describes a community rather than a condition — illustrate a shift towards recognition and respect.

The term “transvestite” was first used to describe anyone who dressed or expressed themselves as the opposite sex, encompassing both people who identified as the opposite sex, or performed that way. “Transsexual” came into use with the advent of “sex change operations” — what we now call “gender confirmation surgery” and part of “gender-affirming care.” “Transsexual” made a distinction between performance and identity, but today, we use “Transgender” to talk about identity, which emphasizes that we’re describing gender, which is different from sex. “Transgender” is commonly used, and often shortened to “Trans.” The Terms “Non-binary,” “Gender non-conforming,” “Gender Queer” and “Gender Fluid” joined the lexicon as communities

formed around these different ways people experience gender. One word we never use is the derogatory “Tr**ny.” Though some people in the community still use it with each other, it’s not okay for people outside the community to use it.

The LGBTQ+ acronym itself illustrates the evolution of language. Initially starting as “LGB,” it has expanded over time to include “T” for transgender, “Q” for queer or questioning, and “+,” acknowledging a growing spectrum of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Many of these are explored in this guide, and some of which have yet to be named.

Reclaiming the word Queer

The word “Queer” has transformed, from a term of derision to one of empowerment and identity within the LGBTQ+ community. Activists and scholars embraced “Queer” as a way to challenge traditional categories of gender and sexuality. Younger generations have embraced the ambiguity of Queer — it’s a non-label label that can encompass the full spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities and the fluidity of both. Despite its inclusiveness,

the reclamation of “queer” is not universally embraced. For community elders who experienced “queer” as a slur, it can evoke painful memories. This highlights the complex nature of language reclamation — while empowering for some, it can remain sensitive for others. Within tourism, it is rarely used exclusively, but increasingly used in addition to LGBTQ+, particularly in communications that address younger audiences.



Talking about Gender and Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation and gender identity are phrases that are often used together, and are sometimes confused and conflated. But they are not the same, and understanding the difference is important to foster respect and inclusivity, particularly in the context of tourism and marketing.

What's the Difference? — Head vs. Heart

Sexual Orientation refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. It's how you feel in your heart. It's often described as who you are drawn to — feelings of connection, love, or intimacy with another person.

Gender Identity is the internal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity is how someone understands their own gender — it's what you know in your head. The common perception of gender as a binary — strictly male or female — doesn't capture the complexity of gender. It expands when we learn that biological sex is only one of three pillars — along with identity and expression — that

form our gender. And it expands more when we learn that each of these pillars is also a spectrum.

Gender Identity is the deeply-felt internal sense of being male, female, both, neither, or something else entirely. Gender identity doesn't always align with the sex assigned at birth and can evolve over time. It's about how a person intrinsically understands themselves, in relation to the norms of male and female in the culture around them.

Gender Expression is how a person outwardly presents their gender through their clothing, hairstyle, appearance, behavior, and mannerisms. Gender expression is how individuals choose to communicate their gender identity to the world, and it can be fluid or fixed.

Biological Sex refers to the physical characteristics typically associated with being male or female, such as chromosomes, hormone levels, reproductive organs, and genitalia. Biological sex also exists along a spectrum.

Intersex people, for example, are born with a combination of male and female biological traits that don't fit neatly into either category.

No one person is LGBTQ+. No single individual embodies the entire LGBTQ+ spectrum. People may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Some might be both lesbian and transgender, or gay and transgender. However, it's not possible for one person to represent every category within the expansive LGBTQ+ acronym, such as LGBTTQQIAA2SNBGNCPP+. Each letter signifies distinct aspects of sexual orientation or gender identity, with some, like "Q" for queer, potentially representing either or both.

The acronym LGBTQ+ has evolved from Gay and Lesbian, GLBT, LGBT, and LGBTQ. Some organizations have stuck with older versions. The newest version is not "official" — the best approach is to choose the one that resonates most with you or your brand and use it consistently. Be mindful of keeping up-to-date, as some forms like GLBT may appear

outdated. The term LGBTQ+ primarily serves as a marketing tool for organizations and brands to engage with a community that is not only sizable and devoted but also has significant purchasing power, and who share the commonality of being sexual or gender minorities.

Engaging the LGBTQ+ market transcends profitability — it's a potent branding strategy. It offers brands an opportunity to demonstrate progressive values. Featuring transgender people in marketing not only reaches out to the trans community but also reshapes broader perceptions of the brand, communicating to potential customers and employees alike that a brand is modern and inclusive.

Avoid Tokenization in Marketing

In tourism marketing, there's sometimes an overemphasis on gender and sexual orientation

— it becomes the focal point rather than just one aspect of a person's identity. What's more important is addressing issues that matter most to LGBTQ+ travelers: safety, welcome, and belonging. What queer people do in their bedrooms is often irrelevant to how they want to experience a destination or interact with a brand. Queer people are inherently intersectional. We exist at the crossroads of multiple identities — race, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, and more. If you address us solely as "queer," focusing exclusively on our gender or sexual orientation,

you run the risk of tokenizing us. This can feel reductive and alienating, as if we are being seen through a narrow lens of our sexuality rather than as whole, multifaceted individuals. To avoid tokenization, ensure that your marketing highlights more than just the gender or sexual orientation of your audience. Show LGBTQ+ individuals thriving in diverse cultural, social, and professional contexts. Let your messaging reflect their full humanity, while still being mindful of the unique challenges they face, such as safety concerns or access to welcoming spaces.



Using LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language

As the tourism industry strives to become more inclusive and welcoming for all individuals, using the correct LGBTQ+ terminology is essential. This section provides a guide to LGBTQ+ identities, emphasizing the distinctions between terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual that comprise the LGBTQIA acronym.

Using community language authentically and accurately is important. Equally powerful is the use of gender-inclusive language. Gendered language leaves many people feeling left out. By using words that include people of any gender helps foster inclusion in subtle and powerful ways.



Key LGBTQ+ Terminology

The LGBTQ+ community includes individuals of a spectrum of sexual orientation and/or gender identities. For a full list of words, visit HospitableMe's [Glossary of Inclusion](#).

Key Terms

- ◆ **2S** stands for "Two-Spirit," an umbrella term that includes many different Indigenous understandings and practices of gender. Traditionally, Two-Spirit people held important roles within their communities. These roles and their names vary across different Indigenous cultures. In some places, notably Canada and Australia, 2S appears at the front of the acronym, acknowledging "First Peoples First".
- ◆ **Lesbian:** Women who are primarily attracted to other women.
- ◆ **Gay:** Individuals who are emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same sex, most commonly men.
- ◆ **Bisexual:** Individuals who are attracted to both their own gender and other genders.
- ◆ **Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- ◆ **Third-Gender:** Describes an alternative gender to Male and Female.
- ◆ **Questioning:** People who are exploring their gender or sexuality.
- ◆ **Intersex:** People with biological traits that are not clearly male or female. The Intersex community is divided as to whether they should be part of the LGBTQ+ umbrella, as their community is defined by a physical state, not identity or sexuality.
- ◆ **Pansexual:** People who are attracted to others of any gender.
- ◆ **Polyamorous:** People who experience romantic or sexual relationships with more than one person.
- ◆ **Asexual:** People who experience a diminished sexual attraction to others, some of whom may have romantic attractions.
- ◆ **Agender:** Those who have a weak experience of gender.
- ◆ **Ally:** Someone who stands up for the community, but does not identify as a member of the community.
- ◆ **Cisgender:** Individuals whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Cis and Trans are used in chemistry, where Cis indicates alignment next to, and Trans indicates alignment across from.
- ◆ **Non-binary:** People who do not identify strictly as male or female.
- ◆ **Gender Non-Conforming:** People whose gender doesn't conform to the social expectations of male or female. It is both an identity and a descriptor of someone's appearance.
- ◆ **Gender Fluid:** People who experience degrees of maleness and femaleness that change over time.
- ◆ **Genderqueer:** Similar to non-binary, used by some to describe their gender identity that doesn't fit within traditional categories.
- ◆ **Masculine:** Qualities, attributes and cultural norms regarded as characteristic of men.
- ◆ **Feminine:** Qualities, attributes and cultural norms regarded as characteristic of women.
- ◆ **Androgynous:** A blend of both masculine and feminine characteristics or a style that is neither markedly feminine nor masculine.

Gender Inclusive Language

Gendered language are words that distinguish between male and female people. In tourism, gendered language is pervasive: words like ladies and gentlemen, bride and groom, his and hers. These terms are deeply embedded in the language of hospitality, but not inclusive of people who don't identify as male or female. Gendered language is often used to describe products or experiences that have historically been offered to people of only one gender, and ignores a growing population of people of different genders who seek those same products and services — such as men buying makeup and nail polish.

Using gender-inclusive language is a best practice for LGBTQ+ engagement. It creates greater inclusion for everyone and reduces the likelihood of misgendering people.

Misgendering is when we refer to someone using incorrect pronouns or gendered words for them. It's super common — almost everyone has heard a woman with a low voice on the phone and called her “sir,” or referred to a man with a high voice as “she.”

If you do misgender someone, apologize and move on quickly. If they correct you, appreciate the correction. You can also ask “how would you prefer we address you?” Don't belabor your apology, or try to explain away the mistake.

Almost every gendered word or phrase has a gender-inclusive option — think “child” instead of son or daughter; “wedding party” instead of bride and groom. Ladies and Gentlemen can be replaced by many options, most commonly “everyone,” and it can often just be omitted. Saying “good morning” with a smile and eye contact is more powerful than saying “Good morning ladies and gentlemen” without those things. Sir and Madam are among the rare words that don't have a gender-inclusive alternative. Dropping them in

favor of using someone's name, or simply dropping them are the only inclusive options.

Using gender-inclusive language reminds us that many of the distinctions we make between men and women don't serve them or us. Gender differences are sometimes important, but more often, they are the product of deeply ingrained biases about what is masculine and what is feminine. Challenging that binary with language helps reduce misogyny, and supports equitable opportunity for people of all genders.

The Importance of Accurate and Respectful Language

Using the correct terminology is more accurate and shows respect for peoples' identities. Mislabeled or misusing terms can lead to feelings of exclusion, dysphoria, and alienation. It's vital for professionals in the tourism industry to:

- ◆ **Avoid Assumptions.** Never assume a person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or relationship status based on their appearance or behavior. Assumptions can lead to miscommunication and discomfort. Instead, create opportunities for individuals to self-identify, and let this information guide your interactions.
- ◆ **Use correct pronouns.** Because pronouns replace our names, using the correct ones is a basic form of respect. Ask people how they would prefer to be addressed and adopt their language. Consider including your own pronouns in introductions or email signatures to normalize this practice. Educate yourself continually about evolving terms.
- ◆ Apologize, correct yourself and move on when you make a mistake.
- ◆ Gently correct misuse of terms by others.



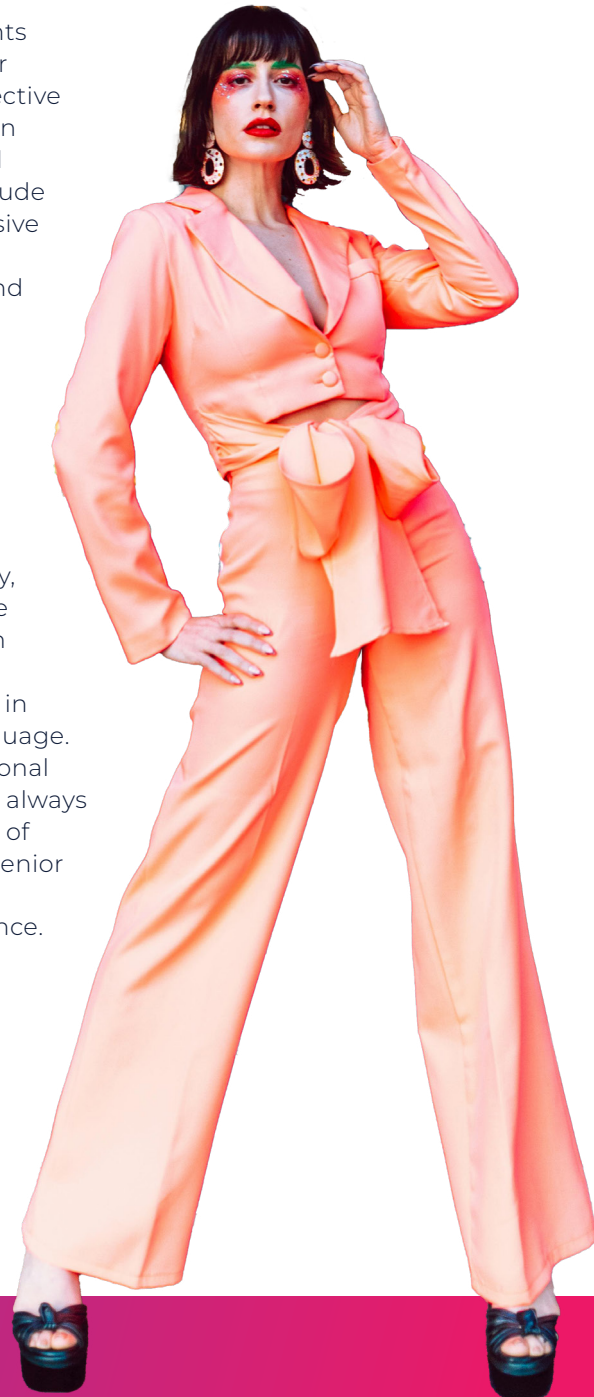
Implementing Gender-Inclusive Language in Your Sector and Role

The travel industry faces the challenge of embracing inclusivity not just as a value but as a core aspect of its operations. Every aspect of travel — from itinerary planning by tour operators to greeting at hotels — should respect and affirm every individual's identity. These guidelines emphasize the importance of respectful and open-ended communication, the provision of diverse options for titles and pronouns during bookings, and itinerary descriptions that focus on experiences rather than making assumptions based on gender or sexual orientation. By using thoughtful, inclusive language, you not only enhance the user experience but also build trust and loyalty with a wider audience.

Every tourism sector has a unique relationship to the traveler, and their own set of interactions and engagements that require consideration for inclusivity of language and imagery. After the general guidelines, you'll find specific guidance for your sector.

The digital realm presents unique opportunities for fostering inclusivity. Effective inclusive communication in online marketing and descriptions should include the use of gender-inclusive language to describe services and facilities, and ensure that images and videos reflect a broad spectrum of identities without resorting to stereotypes.

Many service announcements can be scripted more inclusively, but interactions over the phone, chat or in person require that consumer-facing teams be trained in the use of inclusive language. Reevaluating the traditional language in these areas always requires a commitment of time and budget from senior management and often requires outside assistance. Doing so enhances the travel experience for customers, and future-proofs your business with the standards for inclusivity and personalization expected by more and more travelers.



General Guidelines for Inclusive Language in Travel & Tourism Marketing and Communications

- ◆ Use inclusive and respectful language when discussing travel preferences.
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions like, "What are important considerations for you when traveling?" instead of making assumptions based on appearance or relationship status.
- ◆ Offer options for titles and pronouns on forms and during bookings to ensure all documents accurately reflect the client's identity.
- ◆ Refrain from assuming gender or relationship status. Instead of using "sir" or "ma'am," opt for gender-inclusive terms like "guest" or "client," ensuring all individuals feel respected and recognized.
- ◆ Always offer a variety of options for titles and pronouns on forms and during interactions. Provide the alternative honorific "Mx." (pronounced Mix or Mux) in addition to "Mr." and "Ms." and include a space for clients to specify their pronouns and preferred name in addition to their legal name to ensure communications are respectful and accurate.
- ◆ Be mindful of cultural differences and avoid language that might be inappropriate in certain contexts. Consider how words or phrases may be perceived by clients from diverse backgrounds, choosing language that is respectful and inclusive.
- ◆ When promoting destinations or events, clearly indicate if they are LGBTQ+ welcoming or have inclusive policies. Use language that builds trust by assuring clients of their safety and comfort, such as, "Our selected accommodations prioritize inclusivity and safety for all travelers."
- ◆ When describing travel experiences, emphasize the activities and the enjoyment they bring, rather than suggesting who should participate based on gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. For instance, use phrases like "Explore together," or "Experience this stunning view," to welcome everyone.





Role- and topic-specific recommendations

No matter your role, there are inclusive language friction points associated with it. These specific recommendations will identify them for you.

Marketing and Promotion

Avoid Assumptions: Use language in promotional materials that does not assume the gender or sexual orientation of your audience. For instance, instead of phrases like “couples’ retreats,” use “partners retreats” or “romantic getaways for two.”

- ◆ **Diverse Imagery:** Include images of LGBTQ+ couples and groups in your marketing to represent a wide range of travelers genuinely. Representation matters and seeing oneself reflected in promotional content can significantly influence booking decisions.

- ◆ **Highlight Inclusive Features:** Clearly mention any LGBTQ+ welcoming attributes of your tours, such as visits to sites significant to LGBTQ+ history or meetings with local LGBTQ+ communities. Emphasize policies and practices that ensure safety and inclusivity, such as anti-discrimination laws and policies.

- ◆ **Itinerary Descriptions:** Avoid gendered or relationship-based assumptions. Instead of, “Enjoy a romantic dinner with your husband,” say, “Enjoy a romantic dinner with your loved one,” or “Explore the city with each other.” This language is welcoming to everyone, regardless of relationship status or sexual orientation.

- ◆ **Address LGBTQ+ travelers:** Develop campaigns that explicitly welcome diverse visitors by featuring LGBTQ+ solo travelers, couples and families.

- ◆ **Be Specific:** Make it clear when destinations or activities are LGBTQ+ welcoming. Provide factual

and respectful information on local customs and laws that affect the LGBTQ+ community. For example, “Stay at one of our LGBTQ+ inclusive resorts,” or “Attend local pride celebrations and inclusive community events.” This ensures travelers know their comfort and safety are a priority.

- ◆ **Use inclusive slogans:** Including the word “everyone” can powerfully resonate with all tourists. Back up this language with action to make sure everyone really is welcome.

- ◆ **Use 3rd Party Voices:** Work with creators/influencers in the LGBTQ+ community to add visibility and authenticity to your marketing.

- ◆ **Use Community Hashtags:** Engage potential tourists through social media by using LGBTQ+ relevant hashtags and participating in discussions about inclusive travel.

- ◆ **Be Prepared for Backlash:** Respond to queries on social media respectfully, reflecting the destination’s commitment to inclusivity.

Client/Guest/Visitor Communications

- ◆ **Forms:** Provide multiple gender options on booking forms to accommodate all identities. Include options like Male, Female, Non-Binary, and Prefer Not to Say, and consider adding a free-text field for those who wish to self-describe.

- ◆ **Personalized Communications:** When sending out travel information, use the traveler’s specified name and pronouns throughout all communications. This practice should extend to all written correspondence: emails, itineraries and notes, as well as phone conversations.

- ◆ **Inclusive Feedback Forms:** Provide feedback forms that allow travelers to comment on the inclusivity of the tour. Ask specific questions about how inclusive and respectful the experience felt and whether the language used was appropriate and affirming.

- ◆ **Ongoing Engagement:** Continue to engage with customers after their trip using their preferred names and pronouns in all communications. Notify them about upcoming events or promotions,



particularly those that might appeal to LGBTQ+ travelers, and invite them to return.

- ◆ **Avoid Assumptions:** Never guess a guest’s preferences based on their name, appearance, or travel companions. Ask every guest for their bedding preferences: “We have rooms with one king bed or two double beds. Which would you prefer?”

- ◆ **Anticipate Special Requests:** Communicate your ability to accommodate special requests using language that is welcoming and non-judgmental. For example, “Please let us know any specific needs you have, and we will do our best to accommodate them.”

Itineraries and Descriptions

- ◆ **Center Activities not Identities:** Craft descriptions that focus on the experiences rather than who might typically enjoy them. For example, use terms like “history enthusiasts” or “adventure seekers” rather than gender-specific or heteronormative terms.
- ◆ **Inclusive Activities:** Ensure that activities do not inherently exclude people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, offer a range of activities that cater to different interests and physical abilities.
- ◆ **Amenity Descriptions:** Describe amenities and services in neutral terms. For instance, replace “his and hers robes” with “guest robes,” and ensure that descriptions of activities and facilities are welcoming to all, regardless of gender.

In-Person Interactions

- ◆ **Staff Training:** Train your guest-facing teams on the use of inclusive language and the importance of respect and sensitivity towards all identities. This training should cover topics like addressing groups inclusively (e.g.,

using “everyone,” “folks,” or “guests” instead of gendered greetings like “ladies and gentlemen”).

- ◆ **Neutral Language in Announcements:** Ensure all announcements avoid gender-specific greetings, opting instead for inclusive terms like “Welcome, guests,” or “Hello, everyone” instead of “ladies and gentlemen.”
- ◆ **Inclusive Descriptions of Activities:** Describe trip activities in a way that focuses on interests and excitement rather than gendered or heteronormative narratives. For example, highlight the adventure aspect of excursions or the relaxation offered by spa services without implying gender.
- ◆ **Resource Availability:** Provide brochures, maps, and other informational materials that use inclusive language and imagery. Highlight local LGBTQ+ friendly businesses, events, and attractions.
- ◆ **Handling Queries:** Prepare staff to answer questions in a manner that is respectful and inclusive. Ensure they are knowledgeable about available resources for LGBTQ+ people and can communicate this information effectively.
- ◆ **Handling Discrimination:** Establish and communicate clear procedures for handling any discrimination or harassment from staff or

other travelers. Ensure that all staff understand how to act swiftly and respectfully to resolve any issues, reinforcing that your business prioritizes guest safety and respect for all, regardless of who they are or who they love.

Engaging with Media and Influencers

- ◆ **Inclusive Messaging:** When working with media representatives and influencers, emphasize your commitment to inclusivity. Provide them with guidelines on how you use inclusive language.
- ◆ **Diverse Representation:** Encourage media and influencers to include diverse perspectives in their coverage, particularly those of LGBTQ+ individuals. Facilitate access to a range of experiences that showcase inclusivity.

Working with Conventions and Groups

- ◆ **Inclusive Event Planning:** Assist planners and organizers in creating inclusive events. This includes advising on the use of inclusive language in event materials and presentations.
- ◆ **Venue and Service Recommendations:** Recommend venues and service providers that are known for their commitment to inclusivity. Provide guidelines on how to ensure that events cater respectfully to diverse groups, including LGBTQ+ participants.

- ◆ **Bathroom Signage:** Create temporary bathroom signage where only gendered restrooms are available. This could include a statement supporting everyone's right to use the bathroom they feel most comfortable in, or highlighting single-occupancy restrooms as gender-free.
- ◆ **Check your Dates:** When scheduling events, be mindful of LGBTQ+ calendar events, like Pride, Trans Day of Visibility, National Coming Out Day, and the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. If your event occurs on one of these dates, include public recognition and education in your programming.

HR, Community and Partner Relationships

- ◆ **Inclusive Documents:** Ensure that job descriptions and applications make space for non-traditional pronouns and honorifics, along with legal and preferred name.
- ◆ **Partner Training:** Conduct regular training sessions with local businesses and community leaders about the guidelines and benefits of inclusive language. Discuss the economic and

- ◆ Offer diverse entertainment and programming that reflect a wide range of interests and identities.

social advantages of being welcoming to all visitors, including those from the LGBTQ+ community.

- ◆ **Get Local:** Collaborate with local LGBTQ+ organizations for better understanding and to incorporate their perspectives into marketing efforts.
- ◆ **Supplier Diversity:** Ensure third-party vendor contracts include non-discriminatory clauses in their contracts.



Sector-Specific Considerations

Each tourism sector has unique challenges and specific areas where they typically fall short. Here are those hot topics to address:

- ◆ **Tour Operators:** Local guides are often the weak link in your inclusivity efforts. They are particularly prone to old-fashioned figures of speech and gendered humor.
- ◆ **Wholesalers:** Descriptions and imagery often exclusively focused on heteronormative couples.
- ◆ **Hotels:** Most hotels fail to address same-sex couples correctly on welcome notes and amenities. Identify the obstacles for your team, and solve for them.
- ◆ **Travel Agents:** Many older, traditional clients have gender-expansive children and grandchildren. Using

inclusive language builds stronger client relationships.

- ◆ **Airlines:** Qantas was the first airline to implement gender-inclusive service standards in 2018. Inflight announcements and frequent traveler communications are particularly important areas to address.
- ◆ **Cruise Lines/Resorts:** Review entertainment, group activities, costume events and in-room materials for gendered language and inclusiveness.
- ◆ **Inbound Tour Operators and DMCs:** Your greeters and transportation drivers are often the first and last

contact with your customers. Ensure they are trained and comfortable using inclusive language.

- ◆ **Destination Management Organizations/CVBs:** Visitor center staff and materials should use inclusive language. Highlight local LGBTQ+ owned businesses and LGBTQ+ tourism and service professionals (chefs, bartenders, museum curators, etc.) in your marketing communications.



Language Examples

Here are some common examples of **gendered language**, and **more inclusive** alternatives.

Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome Everyone.

This couples' retreat is perfect for husbands and wives looking to rekindle their romance

This couples' retreat is perfect for those looking to rekindle their romance

Ladies and gentlemen, please fasten your seatbelts.

Dear guests, please fasten your seatbelts

We've prepared this honeymoon suite especially for Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

We've prepared our celebration suite especially for your stay, ensuring every amenity suits your needs.

Every room features his and hers sinks.

Every room has double sinks for your convenience.

This jewelry store is the perfect place to find something special for your wife.

This jewelry store is the perfect place to find a gift for someone special.

Let's welcome the bride and groom!

Let's welcome the wedding party!

Let's welcome the newlyweds!

Our Kids' Club gives moms and dads a vacation break!

Our Kids' Club gives parents and caretakers a break!

Gentlemen, you'll find our cigar lounge on deck 7.

Cigar aficionados, you'll find our cigar lounge on deck 7.

If your wife deserves pampering, book her an appointment in our luxurious spa.

If your partner deserves pampering, book them an appointment in our luxurious spa.

The restrooms are on the mezzanine level.

You'll find gendered restrooms, and a gender-free single occupancy restroom on the mezzanine level.



Cultural and Geographic Differences

It's important to consider the culture of your business, location, and customers in crafting your communications. Of course, inclusive language varies across different languages — and we discuss a few different languages below. But even when communicating in English, what you say and how you say it should change based on the location of your business and your customers.

There are big cultural differences in the way people talk about gender and sexual orientation. In some places, discussions are marked by subtlety and indirectness. In places like Japan, where cultural norms emphasize harmony, conformity, privacy and discretion, conversations about personal topics like sexual orientation are not as open

or prevalent in public discourse. In places like this, more subtle language is called for.

Other places with more emphasis on individual rights and freedom of expression, foster a more open environment for these discussions. In places like the US and Australia, LGBTQ+ travelers want their gender diversity and sexual orientation specifically acknowledged, even celebrated. However public discourse can be highly polarized, with significant

variances in attitudes across different regions and communities.

In much of Northern Europe, the approach is more pragmatic. Backed by strong legal frameworks that protect LGBTQ+ rights, public and private conversations about gender and sexual orientation are generally straightforward. Be mindful of these differences as you choose language and imagery to represent your business and services.



CONCLUSION

Embracing Inclusivity in Every Interaction

This guide has outlined the essential principles and practices for incorporating LGBTQ+ inclusive communication across various sectors of the tourism industry. By adopting these guidelines, tourism professionals can ensure that every traveler feels respected, valued, and welcomed, irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

While the concepts are simple, their implementation can be challenging. The IGLTA Foundation, Miles Partnership and HospitableMe have additional resources and services available to help you. Reach out anytime for assistance.

Key Takeaways:

- ◆ **Understanding and Respect:** The foundation of inclusive communication is a deep understanding of LGBTQ+ terminology and the respectful use of language that reflects each individual's identity and preferences. Familiarizing oneself with the correct use of terms and pronouns is not just about linguistic accuracy but about showing respect and consideration for the person's identity.
- ◆ **Gender-inclusive Language:** Transitioning to gender-inclusive language in communications eliminates assumptions and broadens inclusivity. This practice should be standard in all forms of communication, from face-to-face interactions to marketing materials and official documentation.
- ◆ **Customization and Sensitivity:** By avoiding assumptions and allowing for self-identification, we tailor the customer experience to meet each person's needs. This approach not only enhances the customer's experience but also builds trust and loyalty.

- ◆ **Sector-Specific Guidance:** Each sector within the tourism industry has unique opportunities and challenges for implementing inclusive communication. Auditing your customer journey is the best way to identify them.
- ◆ **Continuous Learning and Improvement:** Inclusivity is an ongoing journey that requires continuous education and adaptation. Engaging with resources, participating in training, and collaborating with LGBTQ+ organizations are critical for staying informed and responsive to the needs of LGBTQ+ travelers.

By implementing the strategies discussed in this guide, tourism businesses can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable travel industry and a more hospitable world. In the process, they will enhance their business potential, and better align their communication style and content with upcoming generations. The travel industry is uniquely positioned to promote understanding across cultures and celebrate the wondrous diversity around us. Together, we can make the world a more welcoming place for everyone.



ANNEX 1:

Gender Inclusive Language Around the World

As conversations about gender inclusivity and diversity spread globally, the adaptation of inclusive language practices in non-English speaking countries presents unique challenges. Each language, with its own grammatical rules and cultural nuances, approaches the concept of gender neutrality differently. From deeply gendered Romance languages like French and Italian, where every noun has a gender, to Greek, where the language itself embeds gender distinctions even in personal names, the journey towards inclusivity is complex and varied.

The movement towards gender-inclusive language is different in each language, and all are in very early stages. Each language has its own set of innovative linguistic strategies, kinds of resistance, and rates of acceptance. In some communities, it is only people deeply engaged in LGBTQ+ advocacy who are familiar with gender-inclusive adaptations. In others, the new language is more broadly known, and also more broadly challenged.

CROATIAN:

The topic of gender-inclusive language is becoming increasingly important in Croatian. Although the language traditionally contains clear gender markers in grammar, there is a growing interest in developing linguistic forms that allow for gender-inclusive expression.

The use of the singular pronoun “they” is not common in Croatian, nor is there a unique gender-inclusive pronoun. However, in informal speech and writing, especially online, some individuals and communities begin to use creative approaches to avoid gender marking, such as using initials or the first letter of a name instead of pronouns. In Croatian, which is highly

gender-marked, the use of titles and greetings also presents a challenge. gender-inclusive language is rarely used in mainstream media and public discourse, but there is an increased use of gender-inclusive language in the LGBTQ+ community and organizations that deal with the rights of that community.



FRENCH:

In France, and other French-speaking areas outside of France, the concept of gender-inclusive language is relatively new. The French language deeply integrates gender, making the adoption of gender-inclusive terms less prevalent. There remains some confusion and limited understanding of its gender-inclusive language, even within the LGBTQ+ community. It occasionally appears in LGBTQ+ media and on the websites of LGBTQ+ associations, and is sporadically used in everyday conversation. A notable innovation in French is the gender-inclusive pronoun “iel,” a blend of the masculine “il” and the feminine “elle.”

There is a burgeoning recognition that traditional greetings such as “Bonjour mesdames et messieurs” may not be inclusive. An emerging practice is to omit gendered honorifics, simply using

“Bonjour” instead. “Ecriture inclusive” (inclusive writing) is gaining acceptance, though it is not entirely gender-inclusive. Supported by the minister of equality between men and women, this approach aims to balance gender representation in language. It often employs strategic punctuation to combine masculine and feminine forms, such as in “bienvenue à toutes.” In spoken form, both gendered terms are used: “bienvenue à tous et à toutes.”

GERMAN:

German language has three genders, many words are declined by gender, and many words like professions have different forms for men and women, making inclusive language particularly difficult. Efforts are underway to accommodate non-binary individuals, particularly in academic and government settings. Most of these organizations provide detailed explanations and guidance for their language standards,

although they are sometimes met with resistance and ongoing debate regarding their necessity and implementation. Three different symbols are being used to make gendered nouns inclusive. The gender star (Gendersternchen) uses an asterisk, the gender gap uses an underscore, and the gender colon uses a colon to include all gender identities. For example, “Studenten” (students, masculine plural) can be written as “Student*innen,” “Student_innen,” or “Student:innen” to include men, women, and non-binary people. In spoken language, many people use both the male and female versions — “Studentinnen und Studenten” — but this still leaves out non-binary people. Some organizations restructure sentences or use gender-neutral terms to avoid gendered nouns altogether. For example, using job titles that don’t specify gender like “Fachkraft” (expert) instead of “Lehrer” or “Lehrerin.” (teacher). In Queer communities, some are also pushing to use a neutral pronoun “Sier” — combining Sie (she) and Er (him), similar to the singular “they” in English.

GREEK:

Greece is at a nascent stage in the adoption of inclusive and non-conforming language practices. Although there has been a gradual shift towards recognizing and accommodating diverse gender identities, the deeply gendered nature of the Greek language poses significant challenges to these changes.

Greek grammar intrinsically links nouns and pronouns to gender, with masculine and feminine pronouns directly reflecting an individual's anatomical sex, and the neutral pronoun typically used for inanimate objects. This structure requires that even self-introductions in Greek explicitly encode gender, contrasting with languages like English where one can say, "My name is George," without indicating gender.

Efforts to promote more inclusive language have primarily emerged online, where the influence of global movements, particularly from the USA and Europe, inspires queer, non-binary, and gender non-conforming Greeks to express their identities more freely. This has led to innovative linguistic adaptations such as using the neutral "it/they" or incorporating the "@" symbol in names to signal an awareness of gender diversity (e.g., "Anton@" instead of "Antonis" or "Antonia").

Within LGBTQ+ communities, there is a trend toward using feminine or neutral gender forms for groups, challenging the traditional masculine

default. However, these practices are not widely accepted outside these communities and can sometimes be perceived as derogatory when applied to cisgender men due to prevailing sexist attitudes.

In professional fields like academia, journalism, and politics, there are ongoing efforts to modify language to better represent gender equality. For instance, terms like "didaktorissa" (female Ph.D. student) and "vouleftria" (female MP) are being introduced to challenge the male defaults. Despite these efforts, widespread adoption remains limited, and traditional gendered expressions often prevail in everyday use.

ITALIAN:

Italian presents unique challenges due to its gendered nature. Every noun in Italian is assigned a gender, and adjectives and articles change to match the gender and number of the nouns they describe.

Italian pronouns are gendered. For instance, "he" is lui and "she" is lei. Nouns referring to people are also gendered, such as amico (male friend) and amica (female friend). There have been attempts to develop neutral forms, especially in transgender and non-binary communities, as well as feminist and activist spaces. There are some ways Italians step outside of traditional gender binaries: using an asterisk to denote neutrality in written

forms, using both male and female endings like amico/a, or using the schwa (ə) ending, as in amica, which is sometimes used both for individuals who use gender-neutral pronouns and for referring to mixed-gender groups. However, both the schwa (ə) ending and the asterisk (*) pose accessibility challenges—particularly for screen reader users and people with dyslexia—and can be difficult to integrate into speech. Another commonly suggested approach is restructuring sentences to avoid gendered words altogether. This is often the most inclusive option, as it ensures clarity while avoiding accessibility issues. For example, instead of saying 'Benvenuti' (which is a gendered plural for 'welcome'), one could say 'Vi diamo il benvenuto,' making the sentence neutral.

Italian uses formal (Lei) and informal (tu) pronouns for addressing others, which are not gender-specific in their usage although the verbs and adjectives that follow them must agree in gender with the subject.

There's growing advocacy for using more inclusive language in institutions and public communications. This includes using both the male and female forms when addressing mixed groups instead of defaulting to the masculine, a common practice in Italian. For example, saying cittadini e cittadine (male citizens and female citizens) to include both genders explicitly. Italian society and language authorities like the Accademia

della Crusca occasionally address these topics, but changes in linguistic practice are gradual and often met with resistance from traditionalists.

JAPANESE:

In Japan, the conversation around gender-inclusive language, particularly regarding pronouns, is still evolving. The Japanese language inherently possesses some features that make it less explicitly gendered compared to languages like English or French, but challenges remain in fostering a truly inclusive linguistic environment. Japanese typically doesn't require the use of pronouns in sentences, as subjects are often dropped when they are understood from context. When necessary, pronouns used in Japanese (like それ "sore" or これ "kore" for "that" and "this") are generally neutral.

Personal pronouns in Japanese, especially those for the first person like 私 (watashi), 僕 (boku), and 俺 (ore), do carry gender connotations. "Watashi" is neutral but more formal, "boku" is casual and typically male, and "ore" is very casual and predominantly male. There are female pronouns like あたし (atashi), which is a softer, more feminine variant of "watashi."

Gender-inclusive self-references are not yet standardized, but the queer community and its allies sometimes innovate within the language to express identities, like using "boku" among some



females or non-binary individuals to challenge or play with gender norms.

Japanese employs honorifics that are not gender-specific. Suffixes like さん (san), さま (sama), くん (kun), and ちゃん (chan) attach to names. While "kun" and "chan" can hint at gender (with "kun" often used for boys and young men and "chan" for girls or as a term of endearment), their use is flexible and context-dependent.

Japanese keigo (polite or honorific speech) focuses more on social hierarchy and respect rather than gender. Adjustments in keigo can make language respectful without necessarily

reflecting gender, though nuances exist in personal address and self-humbling forms.

In TV and movies, there is growing visibility of LGBTQ+ issues, and with it, a slow introduction of more inclusive language practices. Discussions in academic and activist circles also promote awareness around language that respects diverse gender identities.

PORTUGUESE:

In Portuguese, all nouns — including those for people, objects, and familial relationships — are classified as either masculine or feminine. This feature, common among Romance languages such as Spanish, French, and Italian, mandates that groups, irrespective of the majority gender, are referred to in the masculine form. For example, a group consisting of two women and one man is referred to as “eles” (they in masculine form), unless the group is exclusively female.

This linguistic convention often renders women linguistically invisible, which can reflect and reinforce their invisibility in public and political spheres. Since the early 2000s, efforts have been made in Portugal to address this by “demasculinizing” communication.

Initial attempts to create gender-inclusive language involved the use of the at-sign (@) in gender-marked

words, like “tod@s” for “todos” (everyone), to visually represent both masculine and feminine forms. However, this form is unpronounceable, leading to its limited adoption despite continued use by some entities.

With the advent of social media and the increasing visibility of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals, the use of “x” in place of gender-specific endings (e.g., “todxs” instead of “todos” or “todas”) has been introduced as a more inclusive alternative, though it remains unpronounceable as well.

In response to European Parliament guidelines issued in 2008, Portugal created a Guide for a Language Promoting Equality between Women and Men in Public Administration. This guide, mandatory for all public services, encourages the elimination of gender marking in accordance with Portuguese grammar rules but has had minimal impact on actual language use, highlighting the polarizing nature of inclusive language in Portuguese society. Left-wing political parties

sometimes employ paired formulations such as “todas e todos” (all women and men) to include both genders explicitly. However, inclusive language is often politicized and subject to ridicule by detractors.

Recently, the translation and subtitling of films and series featuring non-binary characters have led to the use of neutral gender language based on neopronoun systems not originally part of Portuguese grammar. The “ile” and “elu” systems replace the traditional “ele” (he) and “ela” (she) with “ile” or “elu,” and the word “todos” may be modified to “todes” to accommodate non-binary pronouns. Although these innovations are primarily used within community service and activism circles and not in tourism, their adoption signals growing recognition of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals. Institutions inquiring about gender in forms or providing training in inclusive language signals a commitment to creating a safe space for queer and non-binary individuals.

SPANISH:

Spanish nouns and adjectives are either masculine or feminine, posing a challenge for inclusive language. Spanish speakers are evolving the language in several innovative ways, especially within academic, activist, and some progressive business environments.

One common method is the use of the “e” or “x” to replace the gender-specific “o” or “a” in nouns and adjectives. For instance, “amigos” (friends, masculine plural) and “amigas” (feminine plural) become “amigues” or “amigxs,” which aim to include all genders. Mostly seen in activist writings and on social media. The “e” is more easily adopted in speech and is gaining traction, particularly in educational settings and youth culture.

Another approach has been the avoidance of gendered articles and nouns altogether, using neutral terms or rephrasing sentences to focus on actions rather than actors. For example, instead of saying “los estudiantes” or “las estudiantes” for students, some prefer the use of “el estudiantado” or simply “quien estudia” (those who study).

These changes have been embraced by various LGBTQ+ organizations, progressive academic institutions, and some local governments. However, there is significant backlash from more conservative sectors. This has sparked heated debates across Spanish-speaking

countries, reflecting a broader cultural discussion about gender identity and inclusion.

Despite the controversies, the use of gender-neutral language in Spanish continues to grow, with support from younger generations and advocates for gender inclusivity, indicating a slow but significant shift in the linguistic landscape of the Spanish-speaking world.

THAI:

Thailand has experienced social movements regarding gender diversity for many decades, including the use of gender-inclusive language in Thai, which has evolved over time. Thai does not have gendered grammatical structures, but it does use words imbued with a kinship system, indicating respect and humility.

Some Thai pronouns are fluid, depending on the conversational partner, context, and situation, which affects the meaning of the chosen pronouns. First-person pronouns include “ดิฉัน” (di-chan for females), “ผม” (phom for males), and “เรา” (rao, neutral), among others. For instance, if someone does not wish to specify their gender, they might use “เรา” comfortably. However, “เรา” may be inappropriate if the conversational partner is of a significantly higher status, as it might be seen as disrespectful. To avoid such issues, speakers might use their first or nickname as a pronoun in conversation, which is also acceptable. “ข้าพเจ้า” (kha pha chao) sounds too formal and is rarely used in casual conversation. Often, trans

men might refer to themselves as “ผม” and conversely, trans women as “ดิฉัน.”

When referring to the second person, pronouns such as “แก” (gae), “เธอ” (ther), “คุณ” (khun), “ท่าน” (than), “คุณท่าน” (khun than) are gender-inclusive and can be used for any gender. “แก” and “เธอ” are neutral and commonly used among friends or acquaintances but are inappropriate in professional or business contexts. Previously, “คุณ” was seen as honorific and classist, but now it is neutral and suitable, especially in professional settings or when speaking with strangers, usable for all genders and ages. “ท่าน” and “คุณท่าน” are honorific but can imply inequality and class distinctions.

Lastly, the third-person pronouns “ท่าน”, “เขา” (kao), and “เธอ” can be used neutrally for both males and females. Service providers were trained to use “คุณผู้หญิง” (khun phu ying) and “คุณผู้ชาย” (khun phu chai), but these terms may no longer be suitable for customers with diverse gender identities. Using simple terms like “ลูกค้า” (customer) or “คุณลูกค้า” (khun luk kha) not only shows equality and non-discrimination but also respect. Therefore, when choosing pronouns, consider the situation, environment, and overall context.

Some terms, such as “เบี่ยงเบนทางเพศ” (sexual deviation) and “รักร่วมเพศ” (homosexual love), were acceptable in the past but have become pejorative. The recommended replacement is “ความหลากหลายทางเพศ” (gender diversity).





TRADITIONALLY gender-inclusive LANGUAGES:

Some languages are traditionally perceived as gender-inclusive, and they offer a broader perspective on how these linguistic systems naturally facilitate inclusive communication.

- 1. Finnish** – Finnish is part of the Finno-Ugric language family and is known for its lack of grammatical gender. The same pronoun “hän” is used for both “he” and “she,” which inherently supports gender-inclusive language use.
- 2. Turkish** – Turkish utilizes the same third-person singular pronoun “o” for “he,” “she,” and “it.” This feature, along with the absence of gender

in verb conjugations and possessive constructions, makes Turkish naturally suited for gender-inclusive communication.

- 3. Hungarian** – Similar to Finnish, Hungarian has no grammatical gender. Pronouns, nouns, and adjectives do not change based on the subject’s gender, simplifying the adaptation to inclusive language norms.
- 4. Estonian** – As a close linguistic relative to Finnish, Estonian also does not use gendered pronouns, and like Finnish, it employs a gender-inclusive approach in daily communication.
- 5. Mandarin Chinese** – In spoken Mandarin, the pronouns for “he,” “she,” and “it” are phonetically identical (“tā”), although they are written with different characters. This commonality

in pronunciation aids in promoting gender-inclusive oral discourse.

- 6. Korean** – Korean language occasionally uses gender-specific terms, but typically, it employs a neutral approach as pronouns are often dropped when context clarifies the subject, avoiding unnecessary specification of gender.
- 7. Persian (Farsi)** – Persian features no gender distinctions in pronouns or verb conjugations, using “oo” for “he,” “she,” and sometimes “it,” which facilitates a more inclusive communication style.

These languages demonstrate diverse ways in which linguistic systems either accommodate or are adapted to enhance gender inclusivity, serving as examples for discussions on reducing gender bias across different cultural and linguistic contexts.



ANNEX 2:

Staff Training and Stakeholder Engagement

The success of LGBTQ+ inclusive initiatives relies on the understanding and participation of all staff members and partners. Training and engagement must deliver information and foster an environment where inclusivity is valued and practiced at every level. Training should provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to communicate inclusively and respectfully. It should help eliminate biases and misconceptions that might lead to unintentional exclusion. Engaging partners, suppliers, and community leaders, ensures that inclusivity extends beyond the immediate business environment, influencing the broader community and environment. Here are some suggestions for sharing and discussing this guide.

Key Discussion Topics:

1. Understanding LGBTQ+ Terminology and Concepts:

Explore basic and advanced terms related to LGBTQ+ identities and what they mean in the context of respectful communication.

2. The Impact of Inclusive Language in Tourism:

Discuss how using inclusive language can improve customer satisfaction, enhance business reputation, and tap into a wider market.

3. Handling Mistakes Respectfully:

Address common scenarios where mistakes might happen (e.g., using wrong pronouns) and how to correct them gracefully.

4. Legal and Ethical Considerations:

Review the legal obligations related to

nondiscrimination and how ethical practices in inclusivity can impact business operations.

5. Creating Inclusive Marketing Materials:

Examine examples of inclusive advertisements and learn how to craft marketing that appeals to a diverse audience without stereotyping.



Questions for Staff Training Sessions:

1. What are some common assumptions people make about gender and sexual orientation, and why are they problematic in the tourism industry?
2. How can we modify our current booking forms or customer interaction scripts to be more inclusive?
3. What should you do if you accidentally use the wrong pronoun or name for a guest?
4. Why is it important to include options for non-binary or gender-nonconforming individuals in data collection forms?

FAQs for Introducing this Guide:

1. Why is LGBTQ+ inclusive communication important?

Inclusive communication is crucial for making all guests feel welcomed and respected, which enhances their overall experience and supports business success.

2. What should I do if there's pushback from staff or partners about implementing these practices?

Educate on the benefits, provide examples from successful businesses, and reinforce the ethical and legal reasons for inclusivity.

3. How often should training sessions be conducted?

Training should be ongoing to accommodate new staff and refresh existing staff's knowledge, especially as language and societal norms evolve.

4. Are there specific legal reasons for adopting LGBTQ+ inclusive practices?

Many regions have laws protecting LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination. Even in areas without specific legal requirements, adopting inclusive practices is a best practice for risk management and corporate responsibility.

5. How can we measure the effectiveness of our inclusive communication practices?

Feedback forms, customer satisfaction surveys, and staff feedback can all provide insights into how well inclusivity practices are being received and their impact on customer service.

By regularly discussing these topics and addressing questions, your business can remain at the forefront of social responsibility and customer service excellence.



ANNEX 3:

Case Studies and Examples

Many businesses have implemented inclusive language practices across their operations. In 2019, Qantas became the first global travel brand to remove gendered language from their service guidelines, and many airlines have joined them in removing “ladies and gentlemen” from their customer announcements and replacing it with more inclusive words like “guests” Here are some other best practices you may find helpful and instructive.

1. Marriott International: #LoveTravels Campaign

Industry: Hospitality and Tourism

Summary: Marriott International launched the #LoveTravels campaign to specifically address and welcome LGBTQ+ travelers. The campaign featured diverse stories from LGBTQ+ individuals, including prominent athletes and activists, showcased through various media. Marriott emphasized inclusive language in its marketing materials and staff training programs, highlighting their commitment to making every guest feel comfortable and valued. The campaign not only increased Marriott’s visibility within the LGBTQ+ community but also enhanced its reputation as an inclusive brand.

2. Accenture: Inclusion Starts With “I”

Industry: Professional Services

Summary: Accenture, a global management consulting and professional services firm, initiated an awareness campaign titled “Inclusion Starts With ‘I.’” The campaign was designed to educate and encourage employees about the importance of using inclusive language and respecting individual identities, including gender pronouns. Through videos and workshops focusing on personal responsibility in fostering an inclusive workplace, Accenture strengthened its inclusive culture, which contributed to higher employee satisfaction and retention.

3. Lush Cosmetics: Pronouns Matter Campaign

Industry: Retail

Summary: Lush Cosmetics launched a campaign across its North American stores to promote the use of pronouns and raise awareness about gender diversity. Employees wore name tags with their pronouns, and stores displayed signage explaining why pronouns are important for inclusivity. This initiative educated customers and staff alike, promoting a respectful and welcoming shopping environment for individuals of all gender identities.



4. Transport for London (TfL): “Please Offer Me a Seat” and Inclusive Announcements

Industry: Public Transport

Summary: Transport for London introduced badges and cards saying “Please Offer Me a Seat” to help passengers with invisible disabilities or conditions get a seat more easily. Alongside this, TfL revised their public announcement scripts to use gender-inclusive language, replacing “ladies and gentlemen” with “hello everyone” to address passengers inclusively. These changes were part of a broader initiative to make London’s transport network more accessible and comfortable for all passengers, including those from the LGBTQ+ community.

5. Google: Inclusive Product Development

Industry: Technology

Summary: Google has integrated inclusivity into its product development, especially in AI and machine learning. Efforts include modifying algorithms to better recognize different speech patterns and accents, and ensuring that products like Google Assistant understand and respect diverse user identities, including using correct pronouns for individuals. Google’s approach not only enhances user experience but also sets a standard for inclusivity in technology development.

These case studies illustrate how different sectors can effectively implement LGBTQ+ inclusive language and practices. By doing so, they not only comply with ethical standards but also enhance their service offerings and connect better with diverse audiences.



ANNEX 4:

Resources for Continuous Learning

These resources provide valuable insights and practical tools for anyone in the tourism industry looking to enhance their understanding and implementation of LGBTQ+ inclusive practices.

Books and Publications:

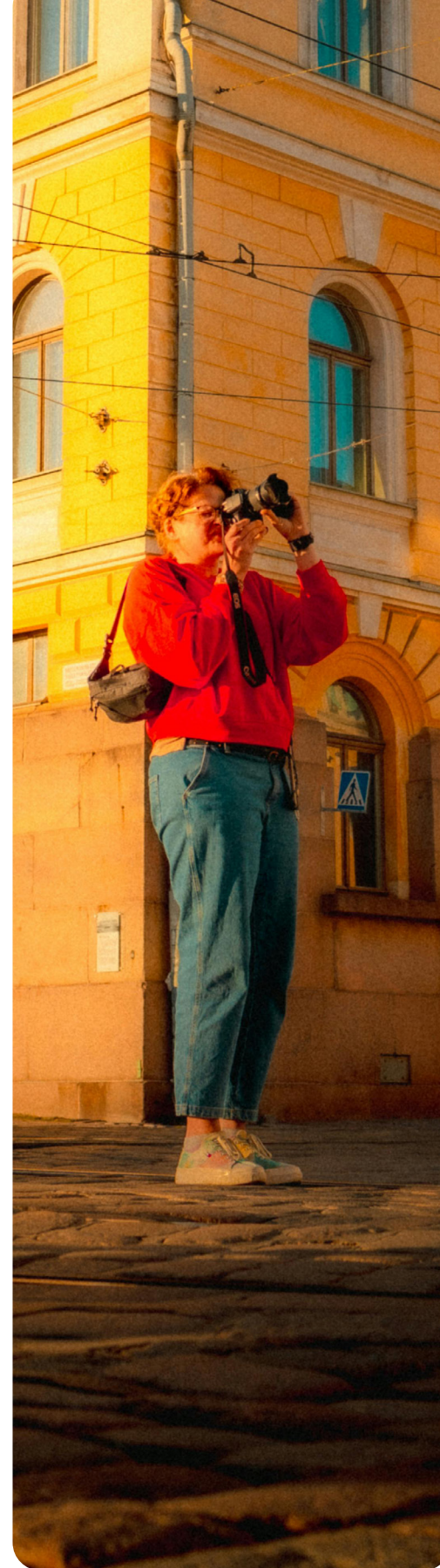
- ◆ [“The Queer Advantage: Conversations with LGBTQ+ Leaders on the Power of Identity”](#) by Andrew Gelwicks - This book offers insights into how understanding and embracing one’s identity can be a powerful advantage in business and personal growth.
- ◆ [“Inclusive Leadership: The Definitive Guide to Developing and Executing an Impactful Diversity and Inclusion Strategy”](#) by Charlotte Sweeney and Fleur Bothwick - Provides frameworks and strategies for creating inclusive environments within organizations.

Online Courses and Workshops:

- ◆ [Coursera - LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace](#): This course explores strategies for promoting LGBTQ+ inclusive practices and policies within workplaces.
- ◆ [FutureLearn - Understanding Diversity and Inclusion](#): An introductory course that provides a foundation in the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including sections specifically focused on LGBTQ+ issues.
- ◆ [Everyone Welcome](#): An introduction to LGBTQ+ travelers, their relevance to the travel industry, the ways they are often mistreated, disrespected and made uncomfortable, and the ways hospitality businesses can be more inclusive.

Professional Organizations and Networks:

- ◆ [IGLTA \(International LGBTQ+ Travel Association\)](#): A leading global organization dedicated to connecting and educating LGBTQ+ travelers and the businesses that welcome them.
- ◆ [Out & Equal Workplace Advocates](#): An organization focused on achieving LGBTQ+ workplace equality that offers training, resources, and guidance for businesses.



Websites and Online Platforms:

- ◆ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide](#): GLAAD offers a comprehensive media reference guide that provides advice on LGBTQ+ terminology and sensitive language use.
- ◆ [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\) - Workplace Resources](#): HRC provides numerous resources on LGBTQ+ inclusion, with a strong focus on policies and practices beneficial for businesses.
- ◆ [HospitableMe Glossary of Inclusion](#): A continuously updated list of all the words you might encounter related to inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded people.

Podcasts and Video Series:

- ◆ [“LGBTQ&A” Podcast](#): Interviews with influential LGBTQ+ figures that explore personal stories and broader advocacy issues.
- ◆ [“The Out Entrepreneur” by Rhodes Perry](#): A podcast that provides inspiration and insights for LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and allies.

Reports and Industry Studies:

- ◆ [“Creating Belonging: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging in Travel & Tourism”](#) by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). The first report to cover the state of inclusion and belonging efforts across the global travel industry.
- ◆ [Out Leadership’s Country Briefs](#): These reports compile data and case studies on LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies across various countries.



HospitableMe

HospitableMe is a global leader in inclusive hospitality, providing strategy and education to tourism and retail organizations. Our educational programs help people, organizations and brands connect more comfortably, respectfully and authentically with all customers and guests. More than 90,000 hotels and destinations have used Everyone Welcome training, including some of the most storied brands such as Booking.com, NYC Tourism + Conventions, Brand USA, The Kering Group, Discover Puerto Rico, The Travel Corporation, Bottega Veneta, AIG Travel, New Belgium Brewing, and Costa Navarino. Our newest curriculum The Seven Secrets of Inclusive Hospitality looks at inclusion for everyone through the lens of 16 identities.

Learn more at hospitable.me.



The IGLTA Foundation supports LGBTQ+ welcoming travel businesses globally through leadership, research and education. As the philanthropic arm of the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (the world's leading LGBTQ+ travel business association), the Foundation is able to count on the experience and contacts of 13,000+ tourism professionals in 80 countries.

The IGLTAF scope of work encompasses various initiatives aimed at fostering a more inclusive and understanding travel landscape. Through its leadership programs, the Foundation empowers LGBTQ+ welcoming businesses to thrive and flourish in the industry. Additionally, the Foundation actively engages in research endeavors to deepen insights into the unique needs and preferences of LGBTQ+ travelers.

Through its multifaceted approach, the IGLTA Foundation continues to make significant strides in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusivity within the global travel industry, fostering a more welcoming environment for all travelers.



At Miles, we're working to evolve destination marketing practices to better advise our clients, their communities and the visitors they serve.

As part of that commitment, we have a dedicated team of experts who work with organizations and brands to help them effectively connect with a wide range of audiences.

We offer customized solutions tailored to your organization's specific goals. Our services include strategic planning and implementation, training and education, community engagement, audience-focused marketing campaign development and digital accessibility.



