

Acceptance without exception

Pride@Page

LGBT+ PROFILE



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My journey with Page started nearly three years ago, and just like everyone else, when joining, I had the perception of this established corporate FTSE250 business that Michael Page is. What I could see before me was a career path, a professional challenge, an ambitious team, but what I was refusing to try and see was whether my own personal (gay) world would fit into this corporate universe.

It was not a doubt that I was having. It was much more than that. You doubt that something is good for you when you know what it brings, and what it takes to have it in your life. For instance, you doubt that a Maserati would fit in your day-to-day because you live in London, and tubes are a much faster way of transportation (and a Maserati is bloody expensive). You doubt that a vanilla cheesecake would fit into your diet because you know that summer holiday is approaching (when there is no Coronavirus), and a six-pack is not built by a cookie crumb base. You allow yourself to doubt when you know who you are, and what you want, or alternatively what you do not want.

My journey was not one of doubt, because not even a single person in the office made me feel uncertain about being accepted. Not to mention that they did not even know that they were expected to accept me! It was a journey of acceptance that I had to go on myself, to get to the point where I am today, proudly identifying as a gay man.

I went through the full spectrum of: "I am definitely straight... or I think I am bi" until I reached the point of "Mate... you're totally gay". And I now say it as a lighthearted joke, but I know how much it takes to get here, especially when some days your life is like a Rhianna song "Work, work, work..." and the rest of it you don't really understand. That's the moment when you realise that life and work merge into one, and that your work environment is key to staying in peace with yourself.

The moment I fully accepted who I am, was the moment when I decided to bring that side of me to the office, and I was not just accepted, I was celebrated. I saw nothing but a warm embrace of that side of me by my team (my God these people love a gay bar!). Being vocal and open about my sexual preference gave me the confidence to reach out to our Diversity & Inclusion team, who are doing a great job in integrating the LGBTQ+ community seamlessly within the Group.

And before everyone who is reading this concludes that I am just wearing my rose-coloured glasses, (ignoring the imperfect reality of acceptance of a lot of queer people out there), I want to say that the perfect world begins with you, and the helping hand of a friend. Because, only after you have learned to love and respect yourself, you are ready to say "enough" when needed.

Writing this, I feel confident and empowered to share my story, even in a corporate environment; and this would not be possible without the support I have received from each and every person I have met at Page. A successful business, a family, and a network of people who go from strength to strength and appreciate each of its members for who they are.

All I can say is thank you PageGroup!

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