



June 26, 2015 **Company**

Starbucks Applauds Supreme Court's Ruling on Marriage Equality

Starbucks News Release



“Today’s Supreme Court ruling supporting marriage equality makes me proud to be an American, and especially proud of Starbucks legacy of advocating for equality and inclusion for all our partners for the last 44 years.” Howard Schultz, Starbucks chairman and ceo

Being open, inclusive and forward-thinking is at the core of what Starbucks is about. Starbucks has been a longtime advocate for the LGBT community and marriage equality. The company filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court case challenging the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013 and signed onto The People’s Brief earlier this year.

The company's most vocal statement on diversity and equality came during a spontaneous exchange at the 2013 Starbucks Annual Meeting of Shareholders. During the question and answer portion of the meeting, a stockholder voiced his view that the company had lost customers because of its support for gay marriage.

"Not every decision is an economic decision," responded Howard Schultz, Starbucks chairman, and ceo. "The lens in which we are making that decision is through the lens of our people."

Cheers and applause interrupted Schultz, who continued, "If you feel, respectfully, that you can get a higher return than the 38% you got last year, it's a free country. You can sell your shares in Starbucks and buy shares in another company. Thank you very much."

Months later, in October of 2013, Starbucks added coverage of [transgender](#) reassignment surgery to the company's health benefits. It had already covered prescription drugs for hormone replacement therapy and mental health care. In 2014, a year later, Starbucks removed the financial cap on surgery benefits.

In June of 2014, Starbucks flew the [Pride flag atop its Seattle headquarters](#) for the first time, and earlier this week raised the flag again.

Starbucks received a 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 2015 Corporate Equality Index, a national benchmarking tool on corporate policies and practices pertinent to LGBT employees. HRC also rated Starbucks as one of the "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality."

Source: <https://news.starbucks.com/news/starbucks-applauds-supreme-courts-ruling-on-marriage-equality>

Video is available.



June 20, 2016 **Partner (Employee) Experience**

VIDEO: Pride Flag Flies at Starbucks Support Center in Seattle

As the Pride flag is raised for the third year at Starbucks Support Center (headquarters) in Seattle, we take a look back at the company's history of LGBT inclusion.

In 1996, Len Larsen was a Starbucks store manager when he saw a pink flyer in his store mail promoting the first Starbucks Pride partner event. It was a small gathering in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood of just 15 partners from the Starbucks Support Center and nearby stores.

"Starbucks had just about 1,200 stores then, but we were starting to talk about 2,000 stores in the year 2000," Larsen said. "Starbucks had always been very inclusive, but we realized that we needed to become more organized."

Since then, the Starbucks Pride group grew to thousands of partners, and opened new chapters, including Northern California, New York and Toronto. Starbucks partners marched in Pride parades and organized fundraisers to help AIDS and LGBT organizations. In 2007, the group officially became Starbucks Pride Alliance Network, and began to more formally advocate for the LGBT community both inside and outside the company.

Marilyn Calleja, a 10-year Starbucks partner who started Canada's first Pride Alliance chapter, said, "We are a part of a company that not only embraces diversity, but accepts difference and offers a safe space when there aren't any to go to. It is now, more important than ever to lead in this space."

Starbucks History of LGBT Inclusion

1988 Offers full health benefits to eligible full- and part-time employees, including coverage for same-sex domestic partnerships.

1996 First [Starbucks LGBT partner affinity group](#) forms. Over the next 20 years, the Starbucks Pride group grows to include thousands of partners in the United States, Canada and around the world.

2002 The Human Rights Campaign's first Corporate Equality Index includes Starbucks in its national benchmarking tool on LGBT corporate policies and practices. Each year since 2002, Starbucks has scored 85% or higher, including a perfect score of 100% in 2016 and designation as one of the "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality."

2007



Starbucks Pride partner affinity group officially becomes the Starbucks Pride Alliance Network, and is one of the largest employer resource groups for LGBT employees in the United States and Canada.

January 2012 Starbucks supports marriage equality legislation in Washington state, joining with other leading Northwest employers.

February 2013 Starbucks files an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court case challenging the Defense of Marriage Act.

March 2013



Starbucks chairman and chief executive officer Howard Schultz makes a vocal statement on diversity and equality during a spontaneous exchange at the 2013 Starbucks Annual Meeting of Shareholders. In response to a stockholder who voiced his view that the company had lost customers because of its support for marriage equality, Schultz said. “Not every decision is an economic decision. The lens in which we are making that decision is through the lens of our people.”

October 2013 Starbucks [supports transgender partners](#) by adding coverage of transgender reassignment surgery to the company’s health benefits.

June 2014



Starbucks [flies the Pride flag atop its Seattle headquarters](#) for the first time during the week leading up to the city's Pride Parade.

“Given our public stance on diversity and inclusion of all people, particularly on this issue, it makes sense to raise the flag in celebration,” said Lucy Helm. “Being open, inclusive and forward-thinking is at the core of what Starbucks is about.”

June 2015 Starbucks [applauds Supreme Court's ruling on Marriage Equality](#).

“Today's Supreme Court ruling supporting marriage equality makes me proud to be an American, and especially proud of Starbucks legacy of advocating for equality and inclusion for all our partners,” said Howard Schultz. Earlier in the year, Starbucks had signed on to The People's Brief, calling for the U.S. Supreme Court to recognize nationwide marriage equality.

November 2015



Seattle Police Department [Safe Place program](#) rolls out to Starbucks stores in Seattle, with special designation as secure places for victims of anti-LGBT-related crimes and harassment. More than 2,000 store partners receive SPD Safe Place training and window clings identify the 100 company-owned stores in the greater Seattle area.

May 2016 Starbucks joins with more than 200 other business leaders to call for equal treatment for the LGBT community. Lucy Helm shares a letter to partners underscoring [Starbucks commitment to inclusion](#). “From our very earliest days, we have strived to create a company and culture that treats everyone – partners and customers alike – with respect and dignity,” Helm wrote. “We will continue to champion these values and to stand for our partners, our customers and our communities.”

June 2016 To support the Orlando community during a difficult time, the [Starbucks Foundation contributed \\$50,000 to the OneOrlando Fund](#), launched by the City of Orlando’s Mayor Buddy Dyer, to help people and families affected by the worst mass shooting in U.S. history

Source: <https://news.starbucks.com/news/pride-flag-flies-at-starbucks-headquarters>