

# VMLY&R triumphs in SA Workplace Equality Index

VMLY&R South Africa has achieved bronze status - and is the only advertising agency - in the South African LGBTQ+ Management Forum's biennial South African Workplace Equality Index (SAWEI).



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

SAWEI is a globally recognised index that acknowledges companies that are leaders in creating safe and inclusive workplaces for LGBTQ+ employees in South Africa. It evaluates participating companies against best practice and their peers. It is the only corporate inclusion benchmark on the African continent.

## How companies get awarded

Companies wanting to participate must choose to apply. Application is free of charge but involves a rigorous submission and evaluation process. Participants are evaluated on the following categories: policy, processes, support mechanisms, training and awareness, diverse and inclusive thought and visibility, as well any additional measures they have in place that don't fit into these categories.

## What this means for VMLY&R

SAWEI evaluation is strict and it is difficult for companies to place in the gold, silver and bronze tiers. VMLY&R South Africa's Diversity Council, HR department and local representatives of the company's global LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group (ERG) have been working together for four years to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ employees and they are delighted to have achieved this recognition for their 2021 submission.

“We didn’t participate in the study to get this badge,” says Dono White, strategic planning director. “We have been working hard over the past four years to create a safe and inclusive organisation for all. This recognition does, however, allow us to celebrate the progression of our policies, education programmes, work, and culture into how we recognise, acknowledge and respect each other as VMLY&R employees.”



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Dono White 26 Jan 2022



“Achieving bronze is by no means easy. However, the journey is not over and we won’t stop pushing for gold in the coming years so all in the LGBTQ+ community can be welcomed and be their very best because the environment allows them to be their true self with opportunities that come without prejudice.”

There were also unexpected consequences that have had a lasting impact on the business as a whole.

“Some of the work we did was changing policies and language, but what was interesting is the conversations and work we did to change those resulted in many meaningful conversations and the business truly listening to people in the [LGBTQ+] community about their lived experience and how the business could be a more welcoming and inclusive place,” says People Operations director Vanessa Gibb. “I feel like all wins in diversity are wins for everyone in the business. Any move towards a more inclusive and genuinely safe and accepting space is something we should all celebrate!”

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