

Pride at Vertex: Celebration, Reflection and Intersectionality



PRIDE is one of Vertex's four global employee resource networks (ERNs) that foster connectivity and collaboration among colleagues. Dedicated to developing and enhancing belonging and career satisfaction for LGBTQ+ and allied Vertexians, the PRIDE ERN has amassed over 300 members across levels, functions and geographies. It serves as an example of how engaged employees and committed leadership ensure that Pride is embedded in the corporate culture throughout the year—not just in June.

Community is an important area of focus for the PRIDE ERN. The network is committed to ensuring their efforts are contributing to Vertex's unique culture—an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable bringing their best self to work. The PRIDE ERN aims to be a supportive team that all LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies can rely on for sharing experiences; it also creates a safe space for discussing relevant, sometimes challenging, topics. The PRIDE ERN engages with employees across the company and around the world to recognize and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, including during Pride Month, International Day of Transgender Visibility, and Lesbian Visibility Week, among others.

Advocacy is another critical component of the PRIDE ERN. Their work focuses on how to advocate for its members and allies and the LGBTQ+ community as a whole. This includes:

- Partnering with Human Resources, Facilities and other Vertex groups to establish and expand inclusive policies, benefits and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals. The company's industry-leading U.S. total rewards and benefits package includes gender affirming services, fertility coverage and access to mental health and well-being programs.

- Providing visibility and connection to LGBTQ+ organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, Greater Boston PFLAG, GLAD, and [Fenway Health](#).

Education: Continuous learning is another focus area for the PRIDE ERN. The group has its own budget and regularly invests in hosting external speakers (often in conjunction with other ERNs) in recognition of the intersectionality of individuals' identities. They also host panels with colleagues from different areas of the organization that come together to share their personal experiences and perspectives.

One successful campaign has been around **sharing pronouns**. The PRIDE ERN partnered with the ID&E, People Experience and Data, Technology and Engineering teams to offer self-identification options across tools like HR profiles, Microsoft Office and Zoom. Vertexians have multiple gender identity and pronoun options to choose from. To help promote this initiative and encourage employees to opt in, they also shared information and resources of why pronouns are important, including why they are important at work.

To further enhance corporate culture, Vertex launched a **reverse mentoring program** that provides LGBTQ+ members with a forum to coach, train and develop their leadership team on sexual orientation and gender diversity issues. This successful program is another example of how Vertex leadership continuously commits to better understanding the lived experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. This Vertex initiative has become a model for other biotech companies that are interested in setting up a similar program.

“Our ERNs at Vertex strengthen community and belonging and provide access to mentorship and professional development across functions and levels. Importantly, they also play a key role in enabling employees to directly shape our company's inclusive policies and programs.”

- E. Morrey Atkinson, Ph.D., EVP and Chief Technology and Operations Officer,
Head of Biopharmaceutical Sciences and Manufacturing Operations, Vertex Pharmaceuticals