



# Retail Business Services

## Celebrating National Coming Out Day

October 9, 2020



Retail Business Services, the services company of Ahold Delhaize USA, believes in celebrating each person's uniqueness, and strives to empower communities where all individuals feel accepted and valued.

Sunday, Oct. 11 is National Coming Out Day, which celebrates coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ+). This year's observation marks the 32nd annual National Coming Out Day.

"This is an important day for the LGBTQ+ community and we're proud to highlight what it means for so many of our associates, families and friends who make this personal decision," said Angela Spence, Director of Diversity & Inclusion for Retail Business Services.

For those who may be weighing this choice, Patrick Washburn, IT Portfolio Manager, Retail Business Services shares brave and bold insights about his experience coming out to his family, his friends and his employer. We've also compiled a few company policies and resources aimed at helping to make the decision to come out a moment of celebration, acceptance and love.

**Can you share your reflections on your decision to come out to your co-workers and how the company's inclusive policies provide a sense**

## **of safety and security to you?**

"These policies make all the difference in the world. There was a point where I was out to my friends and family, but not at work," Patrick shared. "It changed in part because I had reached a point where I really wanted to feel the same freedom at work that I felt outside of work and worried less and less about people at work finding out. To a larger extent, it changed because rumors began floating around. At that time, I heard that the company was looking to add sexual orientation to the non-discrimination policy and that it was even considering partner benefits. Remarkably, those things came about much faster than I could have imagined. I honestly expected that while the company was looking into these changes, it would be years before anything was in place. It has been nice over the last 13 years to see the reaction of associates to the new policies."

## **You started working with Ahold Delhaize USA companies in 1983, marking 37 years since your first role. Can you talk about the progress that has been made during this time?**

"I knew things had officially changed at the company when the first sexual orientation diversity luncheon was held," Patrick noted. "It was a truly amazing feeling to attend that luncheon and realize that my company was promoting an atmosphere in which I could be myself. I've been able to watch and, through our business resource group, even contribute to new policies that have been added to ensure we continue to foster an inclusive environment at work."

## **Can you share what it personally means to you to have the company support LGBTQ+ initiatives?**

"It was amazing to see that the company I work for respects me and my sexual orientation. And even more amazing to know that while there is certainly a business case for diversity, they were more so embracing me because it was the right thing to do," said Patrick. "I am genuinely proud to work for a company that is inclusive and honestly don't believe I could ever work for a company that wasn't."

Living its value of care, Retail Business Services fully stands by its anti-discrimination policy and is committed to ensuring a culture of care where all associates are respected and treated equally. The company was recognized as a Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality and received a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's [2020 Corporate Equality Index](#). Its efforts in satisfying all the Corporate Equality Index's criteria earned a 100 percent ranking and the designation as a Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality, an accolade we're incredibly proud to achieve as we further our goals to attract and retain diverse talent. For more resources and information about coming out at work, check out the HRC's [website](#).

Additionally, the company's paid parental leave policy allows individuals of any gender to take paid parental leave of up to three months after the birth of or assuming guardianship of children.

Further, Retail Business Services provides LGBTQ+ Business Resource Groups (BRGs) – including the PRIDE BRG and Friends BRG – across its campuses as an associate resource intended to help others feel welcome, supported and appreciated for who they are by providing a space for individuals to connect with others about key interests and beliefs.