



BUILDING REPUTATIONS THROUGH STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

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### **America's LGBT 2015 Buying Power Estimated at \$917 Billion**

**Washington, D.C. – July 20, 2016** – The combined buying power of the U.S. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adult population for 2015 is estimated at \$917 billion, according to a new analysis by Witeck Communications.

Releasing the finding, Bob Witeck said, "Buying power – also known as *disposable personal income (DPI)* — is not the same as wealth. It is a practical tool for economists and marketers, in particular, to signal the increasingly visible contributions made to our economy by America's diverse gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender individuals and households."

Disposable personal income (DPI), according to economists, is the amount of money that individuals have available to spend and save after paying taxes and pension contributions to the government (roughly 86% of income). Witeck added, "To understand this estimate, it's important to underscore that there is no evidence that same-sex households or LGBT people are more affluent or, on average, earn more than others. That is a stereotype, long debunked by economists and policy experts."

"LGBT buying power is an economic marker that helps benchmark America's diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities," said Justin Nelson, National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) Co-Founder and President. "At NGLCC, we have more than 150 corporate partners that understand not only the value of the LGBT dollar, but the economics of inclusivity and loyalty. Their commitments to our communities prove our NGLCC philosophy that economic visibility, just like social visibility, is essential in building a diverse and inclusive society."

Witeck agreed that LGBT workers, businesses and consumers are directly shaping the American economy. He said, "Today improved laws, greater visibility and welcoming attitudes help address some of the longstanding discriminatory burdens that LGBT people and same-sex couples face. Nonetheless, LGBT Americans still confront many forms of legal, economic and social inequities in the absence of federal nondiscrimination laws covering employment, housing, public accommodations, healthcare and other aspects of American society. The barriers confronting transgender people are especially severe and must be challenged."

In addition, Witeck emphasized that contemporary market behaviors are favorably shaped by millennials who appear to be the most LGBT-inclusive generation yet. "I call this the PFLAG effect – which helps explain the familiar and loyal experiences of younger non-LGBT people towards their LGBT friends, family members and co-workers. Brands today recognize a growing proportion of younger consumers whose attitudes and buying behaviors are directly shaped by LGBT-friendly policies, campaigns and messages."

For example, in August 2014, according to a Google Consumer Survey, over 45% of all consumers under the age of 34 say they're more likely to do repeat business with an LGBT-friendly company. A majority of these consumers – more than 54% — also say they would choose an equality-focused brand over a competitor. Keep in mind also that nearly ¾ of millennials support marriage equality, according to Pew Research.

## Methodology

Based on an acceptable range of LGBT population estimates, aided by evaluating more than a hundred online population samples conducted by the expert Harris Poll over more than a decade, the 2015 estimate reflects roughly 6 to 7% of the adult U.S. population as willing to self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (or 16 million-plus adults 18 years of age and older).

Witeck acknowledged that social science approaches tend to assume slightly lower population targets. Nonetheless, demographers also confirm that significant proportions of the LGBT population, particularly bisexual and transgender individuals, still remain resistant to traditional sampling and reporting methods. Fortunately, newer and credible surveys reveal that younger generations are beginning to self-report their sexual orientation and gender identity in higher numbers than earlier.\*

*\*Note: In 2015, the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) released its findings on the sexual attitudes of millennials, revealing that 7% of millennials identify either as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender – based on a survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 35.*

The general approach used for estimating buying power mirrors the steps applied by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia in its calculation of the purchasing power of other diverse populations, such as Hispanics, Asian Americans and African Americans. This methodology uses aggregate disposable income data that are compiled by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce and are therefore considered the most authoritative measure of purchasing power in the United States. LGBT purchasing power is understood by estimating the proportion of total disposable personal income (DPI) to the population range of LGBT-self identified adults.

Since 1993, Bob Witeck has provided expert knowledge, trend analysis and communications counsel to Fortune 500 companies on their strategies to understand and reach LGBT households and families.

## **About Witeck Communications, Inc.**

Witeck Communications, Inc. ([www.witeck.com](http://www.witeck.com)) is a leading strategic communications firm, specializing in respect, outreach and inclusion for diverse LGBT communities and an LGBT-owned company certified by the National Lesbian & Gay Chamber of Commerce. With nearly 25 years' experience in this arena, Witeck Communications not only serves as a bridge between corporate America and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender consumers (LGBT), but also provides counsel to non-profit organizations that aim to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues or to better reach their LGBT audiences.

In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck one of 25 experts over the last 25 years who has made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trend spotting for his path-breaking work on the LGBT market. His co-authored book, "Business Inside Out: Capturing Millions of Brand Loyal Gay Customers" was published in 2006 by Kaplan Publishing. He has appeared in worldwide media outlets including Fortune, CNBC, Times of London, Bloomberg Business, Daily Telegraph, CNN, Reuters, Associated Press, Ad Age, the New York Times and the Washington Post.

## **About the NGLCC**

The National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce is the business voice of the LGBT community and is the largest global not-for-profit advocacy organization specifically dedicated to expanding economic opportunities and advancements for LGBT people. NGLCC is the exclusive certification body for LGBT owned businesses. Learn more at [www.nglcc.org](http://www.nglcc.org)

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