



Date: November 23, 2017

# Inclusion & Diversity

## Our Commitment

### Fostering a Culture of Equality and diversity

A diverse environment is a rich environment, and an open, inclusive atmosphere benefits everyone who works within it. Fostering such an environment enables us to respond with a greater agility to the challenges faced by our clients in a diverse, multicultural world.

Our goal is to always exceed client expectations and be the most attractive place to work. We achieve this because we recruit, retain, reward and develop our people with regard to their abilities and contributions and without reference to their background, gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, political belief or disability.

Our mission is to attract, retain and promote individuals of exceptional ability and talent from as broad a range of backgrounds as possible.

Although management provides the leadership framework and associated policies, it is the responsibility of everyone at Cassels Brock to sustain a culture that supports principles of diversity and inclusivity.

“Diversity” means treating everyone fairly and consistently, regardless of background, gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, political belief or disability. The firm will do its best to tap into cultural differences to achieve organizational success and support staff satisfaction.

In recognition of our work to achieve these goals, the Cassels Brock Inclusion & Diversity Committee was honoured at the [2016 Lexpert Zenith Awards](#).

### Our Key Goals

Our key goals are:

- to promote and maintain a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- to ensure that everyone is aware of their own personal responsibility regarding the principles of diversity
- to provide and communicate clear employment policies and ensure that they are applied fairly

- to ensure consistency and fairness in all of our human resources processes
- to ensure that any failure to adhere to these principles is dealt with promptly, and where possible, action is taken

There is both a business and moral imperative in supporting diversity at Cassels Brock. To achieve both goals, we need to do the following:

- hire from the widest possible pool to attract high quality individuals
- motivate our people by providing a supportive culture where everyone feels that they are treated fairly and can do their best
- offer clients ideas and solutions that can only come from tapping a broad base of talent
- ensure we comply with all relevant legislation

Our Inclusion & Diversity Committee is charged with the responsibility of implementing this policy.

## Affinity Groups

The Cassels Brock Inclusion & Diversity Committee is proud to have implemented a policy pursuant to which all firm members who share a common background or personal characteristic (and their allies or supporters) may form an affinity group to support, champion and mentor one another. The goal of affinity groups is to provide a supportive environment in the workplace that encourages mentorship and peer support, as well as networking, business development and professional development opportunities, as appropriate, among firm members who identify with a shared personal characteristic or background. Firm members who share a particular personal characteristic or background that has created historical disadvantages, as well as their allies, are encouraged to form and/or join an affinity group formed for that group. Three affinity groups are currently active at the firm, a Black Affinity Group, an LGBT Affinity Group and an Asian Affinity Group.

- **Black Affinity Group:** The Black Affinity Group is a resource to all members of Cassels Brock and is committed to, among other initiatives, promoting and supporting the recruitment, retention and career advancement of black members of Cassels Brock, increasing awareness and visibility of diversity issues, providing mentoring and guidance, and encouraging participation in events and dialogue that impact the black community. The Black Affinity Group meets at least bi-monthly and all firm members are welcome to attend.
- **LGBT Affinity Group:** The LGBT Affinity Group welcomes all firm members who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transsexual, as well as firm members who wish to be active as an ally to the firm's LGBT members, to attend meetings and events to support one another's career development and discuss issues particular to the LGBT community. The main goal of the LGBT Affinity Group is to ensure the firm has created and continues to foster an environment where all LGBT members are enabled and motivated to succeed to their maximum potential, while being comfortable bringing their full and complete selves to work. The LGBT Affinity Group also works to support the recruitment, retention and promotion of LGBT talent to and within the firm. The LGBT Affinity Group meets at least bi-monthly and all firm members are welcome to attend.
- **Asian Affinity Group:** The Asian Affinity Group is a resource to all members of Cassels Brock and is

committed to, among other initiatives, promoting and supporting the recruitment, retention and career advancement of Asian members of Cassels Brock, increasing awareness and visibility of diversity issues, providing mentoring and guidance, and encouraging participation in events and dialogue that impact the Asian community. The Asian Affinity Group meets at least bi-monthly and all firm members are welcome to attend.

## Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Network

Cassels Brock is a signatory to the Statement of Principles of the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Network (LFDIN). In signing this document we have agreed to work together to promote diversity and encourage a culture of inclusion not only inside these firms, but in the broader legal profession as well. [A copy of LFDIN's statement of principles can be found here.](#)

Diversity and inclusion are core values of LFDIN members. Each signatory believes that valuing and enhancing diversity and inclusion will assist in attracting and retaining the best talent to better serve clients and assist in expanding the constantly evolving global marketplace. LFDIN members undertake to practice and advance diversity and inclusion by:

- sharing ideas for the promotion of diversity and inclusion in connection with recruitment, retention and advancement within law firms
- working with Legal Leaders for Diversity and other general counsel, law departments, business leaders and professional associations in their efforts to advance diversity and inclusion
- supporting outreach programs in law schools and the broader community
- promoting thought leadership and constructive dialogue on issues of diversity and inclusion
- evaluating our efforts

## Diversity Training

Cassels Brock provides diversity training to all employees and lawyers of the firm on a regular basis. We worked with the Law Society of Upper Canada's Equity Advisor to develop tailor-made training that would resonate with our firm and help our lawyers and staff recognize diversity issues and make respectful choices when dealing with each other, our clients and the public.

We also regularly work with a diversity specialist to deliver programs to our lawyers and students to raise awareness of diversity issues in a variety of forums, including hiring decisions. Diversity training is part of our summer law student training program.

## Workplace Respect and Anti-Violence Policy

The objective of this policy is to ensure we provide a working environment free from harassment and violence and that is respectful of others.

## Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act - Customer Service Policy

Cassels Brock is committed to providing its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The firm is also committed to ensuring persons with disabilities do not experience barriers in accessing our services. The firm is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all of its clients, third parties and members of the public.