



The FoRB Pledge

Corporate Pledge in Support of
Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB):

*Supporting Religious Diversity and Freedom
in the Workplace*

Overview

- What is the FoRB Pledge?
- How can we support Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for our employees?
- Why is FoRB good for employees, customers and shareholders?
- Broadly, how does FoRB benefit the world?
- What risks are there with the FoRB Pledge?
- Proposed action



What is the FoRB Pledge?

- One component of [Company Name's] overall strategy to value our employees and increase their loyalty for the benefit of our customers and shareholders
- Our public commitment to take reasonable steps to ensure that working at [Company's Name] does not put employees at odds with their deeply held religious convictions



Sends Two Clear Messages

... to current and prospective employees

- You can work here without changing who you are
- [Company Name] respects all employees and will not favor certain employees over others



Examples: Promoting FoRB

- Permission to wear religious symbols or clothing at work (crosses, yarmulkes, hijabs, etc.)
- Availability of meals that meet religious criteria at company events (Kosher, Vegetarian, Halal, etc.)



Examples: Promoting FoRB

- Reasonable accommodations for Sabbath day and religious holiday observance, periodic prayer, etc.
- Sending a letter to a (foreign) government requesting permission for employees to meet in religious settings or register their religious or belief group with that nation

Why is the Pledge good for

... employees, customers and stakeholders?

- Reasonable accommodation in the workplace positively impacts:
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
 - Loyalty and morale
 - Intra-company communication
 - Productivity

Why is the Pledge good for

... employees, customers and stakeholders?

- Potentially reduces religious-based litigation and accompanying reputational harm (ex. Abercrombie & Fitch)

Why is the Pledge good for

... employees, customers and stakeholders?

- It's a powerful component of a workplace culture that puts people first, including:
 - anti-discrimination
 - [other of our company's priorities]
 - [community service]
 - [women's leadership]

Why is the Pledge good for

... employees, customers and stakeholders?

- Viewed favorably by “Best Places to Work” competitions and CSR groups like the UN Global Compact
- The establishment of a people-first culture is known to lead to superior customer satisfaction and shareholder returns



Why is the Pledge good for

... employees, customers and stakeholders?

- Leads to a high Corporate Diversity score

Corporate Diversity Index



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM &
BUSINESS FOUNDATION

Rating Workplaces Worldwide on
Religious Diversity and Freedom
(0 – 100 scale)

Why is the Pledge good for

... the company?

- It provides an additional return on our investment in Workplace Culture, which is good for business
- It aligns with characteristics of “Best Companies”

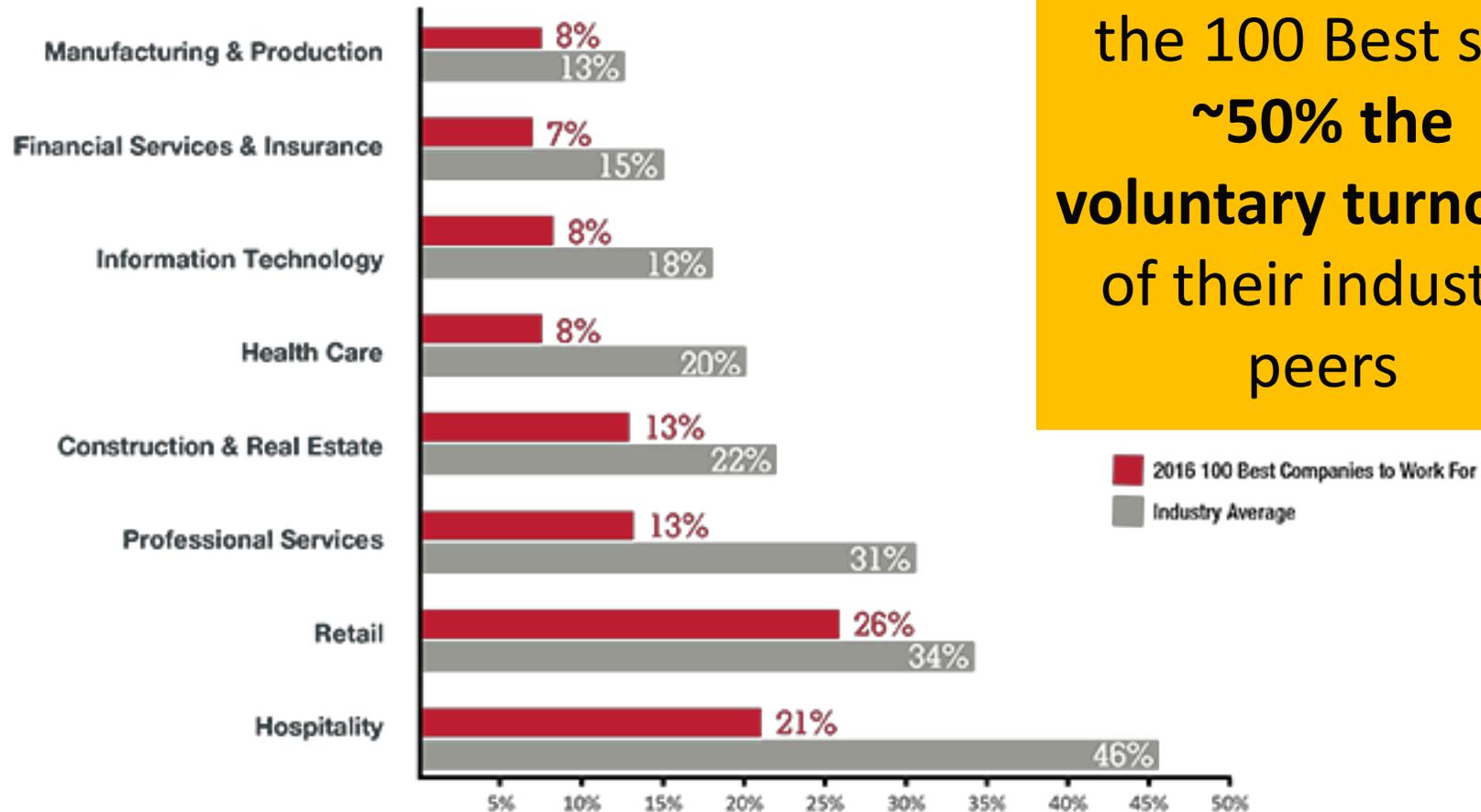
Why is the Pledge good for

... the company?

- **“Best Companies”** focus on creating a great workplace culture which improves:
 - financial performance
 - stock market returns
 - employee morale
 - company profits vs. competitors
 - **retention rates**

Turnover Rates

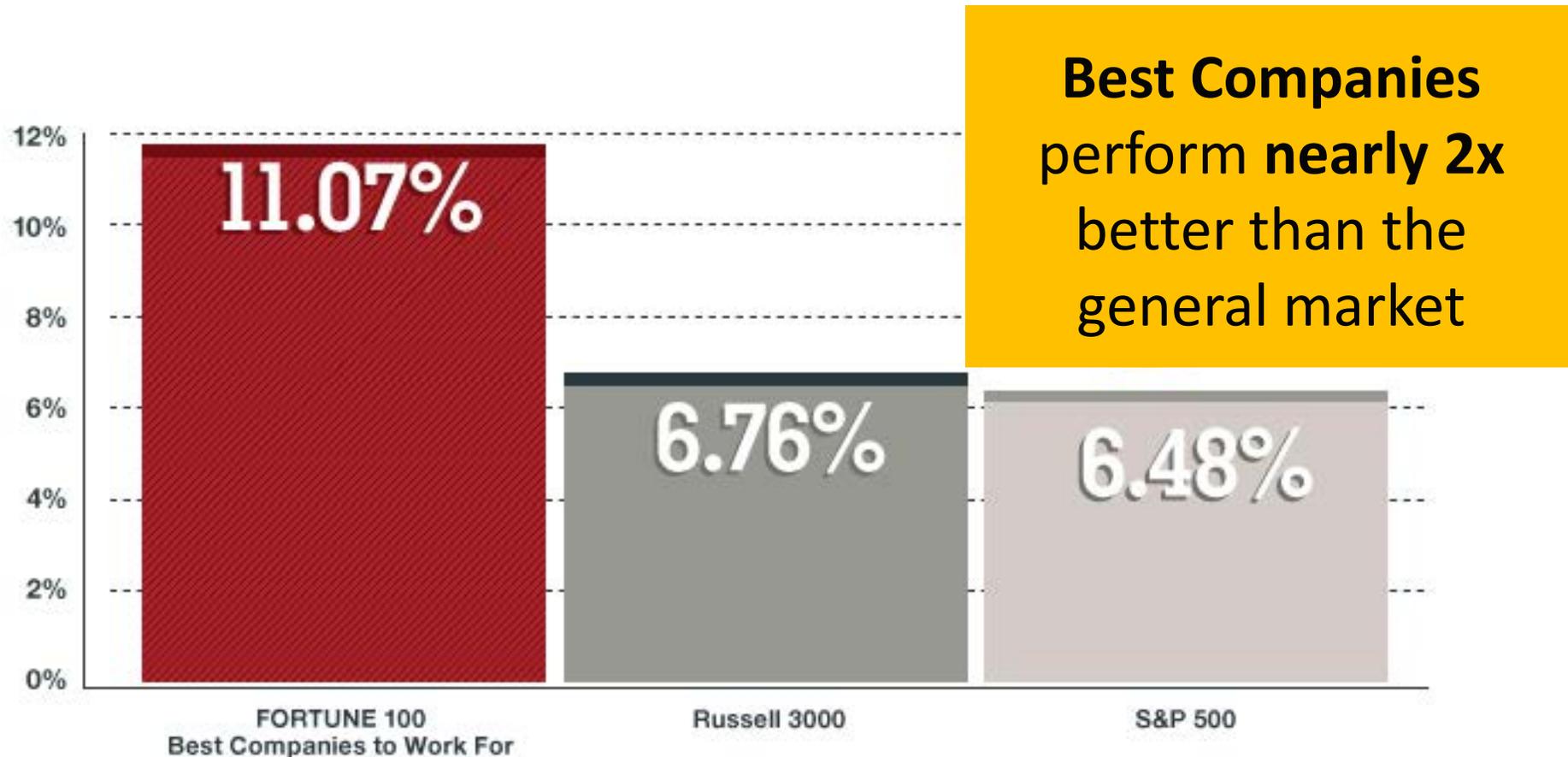
in the 100 Best Companies



On average,
the 100 Best see
~50% the
voluntary turnover
of their industry
peers

Comparative Annualized

... Stock Market Returns (1997-2014)



Stock Market Returns

(comparative cumulative)



Broader benefits of FoRB

... for countries of the world

- Research shows FoRB is associated with:
 - Women's empowerment
 - Inclusive education
 - Fewer "evils" (torture, trafficking, etc.)
 - Lower harmful government regulation
 - More freedoms (speech, assembly, press)
 - Fewer restrictions on the Internet

Broader benefits of FoRB

... for countries of the world

- Research shows FoRB is associated with:
 - Better human and social development
 - Reduced corruption
 - More intellectual property rights protections
 - Fewer conflicts and wars
 - Better developed regulatory systems
 - **Economic growth**

Broader benefits of FoRB

... for countries of the world

- Research shows FoRB is associated with:
 - Primary education and health
 - Higher education and specialized training
 - Infrastructure: comm., transport, markets
 - Labor & goods market efficiency
 - Business sophistication and wealth creation
 - Innovation & technological readiness

Risks

A. Could be viewed as favoritism of religion

- Response 1: Any reasonable accommodations demonstrate [Company's Name] respect of the equality of all employees, regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof.
- Response 2: The message for all employees is the same: "We value you. You can work here without changing who you are or what you believe."

Risks

B. Could increase costs & decrease efficiency

- Response 1: Costs associated with reasonable accommodations – such as Sabbath day observance, religious holidays, increased menu selection, and facilitating periodic prayer practices – should be relatively low and far outweighed by the benefits, including increased loyalty, morale and productivity, and decreased turnover rates.

Risks

B. Could increase costs & decrease efficiency

- Response 2: The importance that religious individuals place on reasonable accommodations should not be underestimated.
- Response 3: Making the pledge sends the clear message: “If it is important to you and a reasonable request, ask us and we’ll accommodate. You matter to us.”

Risks

C. Could be seen as opposed to LGBT rights

- Response 1: While some scenarios raise issues of conflicting human rights of religious people and LGBT individuals (ex. same-sex wedding photography and cakes), the vast majority of religious accommodations or promotions of FoRB do not involve these issues.

Risks

C. Could be seen as opposed to LGBT rights

- Response 2: The pledge does not mandate any specific action in scenarios that may involve conflicting human rights and is to be administered in a manner that is fully consistent with the Company's anti-discrimination policies; indeed, it enhances those policies.



Action: Make the Pledge

1. Promote Sustainable & Innovative Business by Protecting Freedom of Religion or Belief

[COMPANY] affirms that freedom of religion or belief (“FoRB”) is a fundamental right. [COMPANY] also recognizes that religious freedom promotes sustainable and innovative businesses, contributes to human flourishing, and results in peaceful and stable societies. For these reasons, and with a vision of a future of innovative and sustainable economies where FoRB and diversity are respected, [COMPANY] strives to be a leader in promoting and protecting FoRB in its workplace and communities. [COMPANY] will not tolerate abuses of religious freedom within its sphere of influence.



Action: Make the Pledge

2. Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment on the Basis of Religion or Belief

[COMPANY] respects each individual's rights to freedom of religion or belief, provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. This prohibition on religious discrimination applies to all aspects of employment including, without limitation, recruitment, interviewing, hiring, training, job assignments, promotions, demotions, compensation, benefits, transfers, terminations.

[COMPANY] will take appropriate action upon receiving a report consistent with its general non-harassment and non-discrimination policy.



Action: Make the Pledge

3. Religious Accommodation and Inclusion

[COMPANY] promotes a religiously inclusive environment where each employee's beliefs are recognized and respected, but where religion or belief is not a matter of force or coercion. Consistent with this policy, an employee may seek, and [COMPANY] will provide, a reasonable religious accommodation that does not create an undue hardship on [COMPANY]'s business if his or her religious beliefs, observances, practices, or requirements conflict with his or her job, work schedule, [COMPANY]'s policy or practice on dress and appearance, or with other aspects of employment.



Action: Make the Pledge

4. Protect and Promote Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Our Communities

[COMPANY] strives to be a leader in promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) among its stakeholders and in the broader community. [COMPANY] gives priority to business partners, suppliers, and contractors who share [COMPANY]'s values, including FoRB. [COMPANY] supports their efforts to promote these values through their business activities. Among other practices that are consistent with this policy, [COMPANY] will strive to support local, national and global initiatives that promote FoRB, and may refrain from doing business with or investing in companies and governments that restrict FoRB.



Our Two Clear Messages

... to current and prospective employees

- You can work here without changing who you are
- [Company Name] respects all employees and will not favor certain employees over others

... and that's good for the business of all.



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