

The Shambhala Organisation: established to promote and support LGBT business leaders

The Shambhala Organisation was established by Dale Pudney in response to the lack of openly LGBT individuals in top-level business leadership positions.

The recent coming out of Apple CEO, Tim Cook, as the only openly gay CEO in the Fortune 500 is testament to the discrimination that is rife in the business world globally. It is no different in South Africa. There is a perception in the LGBT community of 'glass ceilings' and discrimination against LGBT individuals in the corporate world. This has also been experienced by Dale Pudney, a company MD doing business in Africa; he is acutely aware of the risks to business if clients in Africa were aware of his sexuality.

Potential LGBT business leaders face all the standard challenges of getting ahead in business, like lack of finance for entrepreneurial ventures, insufficient funding for appropriate education, and needing mentoring and coaching to enhance career performance. These are compounded by rife discrimination, none of which are challenges that can be overcome overnight.

The Shambhala Organisation seeks to help high potential LGBT individuals break through these 'glass ceilings' and take their rightful place in business leadership positions. The Shambhala Organisation is a network of initiatives that seek to promote and support proudly LGBT business leaders. These initiatives include scholarships, private equity funding for entrepreneurial ventures and career performance enhancement. With such a specific target market, these initiatives would struggle if each acted alone, but together they can start to make a difference for LGBT business leadership.

Shambhala Scholarships enable further study towards a career in business leadership. To provide the foundation for business leadership we offer scholarships that assist LGBT students study further toward careers in business leadership. Recipients must pay-it-forward through community service to the LGBT community and preferably the LGBT business community. Seven scholarships, to a total value of R200,000, were awarded for the 2015 academic year.

Shambhala Private Equity invests in high performance entrepreneurial businesses. To enable entrepreneurial business growth, we offer private equity investments into LGBT owned and managed high potential businesses including funding to grow acquire an existing business. The investment is combined with mentorship and support to help the business achieve its objectives.

Shambhala Performance provides coaching and mentorship to improve career performance. To improve human performance, we identify the causes of underperformance in any organization and / or individual, and assist them reach their potential by addressing those factors. Interventions include coaching, mentorship, learning, placement, development, business systems and processes.

This network of initiatives will grow as more people lend their time and talents to the common objective of promoting and supporting proudly LGBT business leaders. Together, these initiatives hope to tilt the scale in favour of the LGBT community.

For more information, please visit www.shambhala.org.za or www.facebook.com/TheShambhalaOrg, email info@shambhala.org.za or follow @TheShambhalaOrg