

“Advocating for the Planet Means Advocating for the People on it”

Through its internal initiatives and external social media presence, Impossible Foods makes an active and progressive effort to be an inclusive and diverse company. On December 7th, 2018, CEO Pat Brown signed the [CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion Pledge](#), signifying the company's commitment to fostering a workplace that supports employees from all communities, backgrounds, and identities. While the pledge alone is not enough to make a difference within a company, it signifies their commitment to embracing better practices on a company-wide level. The pledge also provides recommendations for diversity training, cognitive bias seminars, important discussions, and other actions they can take to become more inclusive. The pledge has been signed by more than 2000 CEOs across 85 industries. This pledge takes on diversity in every form, most commonly race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, military status, and religion. In my opinion, the initiative of signing this pledge was a significant first step in actually creating change in the company and the industry at large. The pledge first opened in July 2017, so by signing in December 2018, Pat Brown was ahead of the “trend.” It is difficult to know for sure whether or not the company has participated in the training and seminars that are being offered, which is important to note. If they have, then it is clear that signing the pledge was a genuine act, rather than an empty promise for publicity. However, the other initiatives that the company has taken suggest that they are true to their words.

On March 31st, 2021, Impossible Foods announced its partnership with [Vegan Women Summit](#) in creating the [Women Building the Future Campaign](#). They collected nominations and applications for women around the world who have been leaders in sustainability and agriculture, and the chosen applicants were invited to participate in exclusive events with other global leaders. The goal of the summit was to empower women and honor the achievements that have been made by women in the industry so far. Personally, I have mixed feelings about this event. On one hand, I recognize the ways in which it honors women and shines a spotlight on their achievements. I think

this is fantastic because it creates media attention for the [chosen nominees](#), which can inspire younger girls who want to be able to make a difference too. Impossible Foods also supports women in leadership through its own employment statistics. Going into 2019, 48% of their workforce, 52% of their leadership roles, and 25% of their executive board were women. Compared to most other companies, these are highly progressive statistics that show the company's genuine dedication to fostering gender equality. The summit event was a smart addition to their internal actions because it stays true to their mission of supporting environmental sustainability to better the planet while incorporating a social justice issue that they care about. The only hesitation I have about this event was that it highlights people who are already female leaders, rather than trying to support young girls who will be future leaders. However, it can be argued that by shining a light on successful female leaders, young girls will be inspired to do the same.

Through several initiatives and achievements, Impossible Foods has made it clear that they stand with the LGBTQ+ community within their consumers and their employees. In 2018 they established Impossible Pride, their LGBTQ+ employee resource group. The group is run by two co-chairs, Jared Levan and Edward de Leon. “(We) created [Impossible Pride](#) to provide guidance to the broader organization and to ensure that everyone-- in particular, individuals who identify as a member or ally of the LGBTQ+ community -- feels welcomed to be their authentic selves and feels included here,” Levan said. The group has been highly successful, leading to Impossible Foods [earning a score of 100%](#) on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s [2021 Corporate Equality Index](#). The CEI is used to rank businesses on their ability to meet four criteria related to the LGBTQ+ community: 1) nondiscrimination policies across business entities, 2) equitable benefits for LGBTQ workers and their families, 3) supporting an inclusive culture and 4) corporate social responsibility. Earning a perfect score on this report shows that Impossible Foods is true to its words when it comes to creating an inclusive and supportive community for everyone.

Lastly, I believe their social media presence does a fantastic job at preaching their dedication to being an inclusive company, even if it means losing followers who are not as progressive. Since January 2021, the Impossible Foods Instagram account has posted for MLK Day, Black History Month, Women's History Month, #StopAsianHate, Trans Visibility Day and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. These posts really communicate with consumers that the company genuinely cares about these topics, and provide more services than just their products. Their posts always provide the experience and voice of someone who is in the community being discussed, which is very important for the message they communicate. On some of the more controversial topics, such as transgender visibility, the company did receive some backlash. Many comments on the post talked about how they were alienating people who do not agree with the cause and therefore losing followers and customers. Others commented that they followed their account to see posts about the food, not unrelated issues. However, Impossible Foods responded by saying "Advocating for the planet means advocating for the people on it," which I believe is extremely powerful and represents their initiatives as a whole.