



**FIRST IN THE REGION TO CELEBRATE SOCIAL DIVERSITY:  
3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL ASIA LGBT MILESTONE AWARDS TO BE HOSTED IN CHINA**

*IBM And Other MNCs Are To Take Part In Its Diversity & Inclusion Business Forum*



**Shanghai - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016:** Asia's well-known periodical LGBT magazine – ELEMENT, headquartered in Singapore, will be partnering ShanghaiPRIDE to organise the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Asia LGBT Milestone Awards & Business Diversity Forum (in short: ALMA Awards 2016) in Shanghai on 26 June 2016.

Previously hosted in Singapore and Thailand, this is the first time the ALMA Awards & Forum will be presented in Mainland China. WorkForLGBT, another non-profit LGBT organisation will also join hands with the organisers to co-host the forum. Grand Kempinski Hotel Shanghai is the official venue sponsor for ALMA 2016 Diversity & Inclusion Business Forum, which will be held in the afternoon on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The Pearl, a historic theatre in Hongkou district will be coming onboard as venue sponsor for ALMA 2016: Milestone Awards Night, which will be held in the evening on the same day. The lead sponsor for the business forum is American multinational technology and consulting corporation IBM.

ALMA Awards & Forum is the region's premier event aimed at commemorating occasions, programmes, activities, and initiatives deemed as key milestone moments for the LGBT community in Asia. This event aims to raise greater social awareness, to engage more public debate and to accelerate the progress of diversity and inclusion in the region. As the region's only cross-border event platform, ALMA Awards & Forum manages to draw a significant number of stakeholders including but not limited to community NGOs, public figures, journalists, entrepreneurs and business leaders in advocating social diversity. This is a must-attend event on the region's LGBT calendar.

Mr. Tony Tenicela, Global Head, Workplace diversity and LGBT markets at IBM and member of the organising committee of ALMA 2016 explained on his decision to sponsor the event, “diversity fosters innovation in the way IBM addresses the needs of our clients and helps the world work better. Given the breadth of IBM’s business across 170 countries, including China, diversity is a competitive differentiator that enables IBM to reflect the global diversity of our customers. We are pleased to sponsor the Business Leadership Forum dedicated to LGBT professionals in China and the AP region.”

Mr. Henk Meyknecht, General Manager, Grand Kempinski Hotel Shanghai and member of the organizing committee of ALMA 2016 added by saying, "It is with great pride that we stand shoulder to shoulder with the LGBT community. By hosting the ALMA Awards, we are demonstrating that Kempinski Hotels, one of Europe's oldest hotel companies, recognises the importance of equal opportunities for everybody regardless of gender, race, religion or life-style. All of us at Kempinski and I are very proud to be at the forefront of equality for all."

The organisers also announced that the event will centre on the theme of 和而不同 (Differences co-exist within harmony), a widely-shared ancient Chinese philosophy by Confucius, which reflects that the Chinese society has long been practicing the notion of “agreeing to disagree” in an effort to obtain social harmony by respecting different opinions as well as other differentiating factors that make one unique.

As China’s foreign investment and international trade have accelerated in recent years following its national strategy of *The Belt and Road*, more conflicts may arise due to varying cultural backgrounds and ethnic differences. It is thus crucial for large Chinese enterprises to see the importance of adopting and implementing efficient workplace policies that embraces differences, as well as creating a competitive workforce regardless of one’s race, religion, gender and as well as sexual preference. IBM, along with other MNCs that are to be present at ALMA 2016 Awards & Forum have successfully demonstrated that embracing workplace diversity has brought about positive results, such as greater competitiveness that can be harnessed for continued growth on a global scale.

As ALMA Awards & Forum arrives in China, it will bring about key opportunities for Chinese corporations to attend and interact with IBM and other global or regional heads from foreign MNCs, who are able to showcase their proven track records on the success of their policies and implementations.

ALMA 2016 Awards & Forum will open two panel discussions with each focusing on two different topics: *The Emergence of China for A Global Pink Dollars Market*, and *The Importance of Workplace Diversity and Inclusion*. Besides IBM, other confirmed keynote speakers include: Mr. Paul Choi from Goldman Sachs and Mr. John Tanzella from International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association. The organisers are also currently seeking interested Chinese business leaders to participate in the two panel discussions.

(Pictured above are those responsible for the success of IBM, Standard Chartered Bank, Goldman Sachs, Stanley Morgan, BP oil, Thailand airlines and other relevant fields of enterprises who have participated in ALMA activities.)

**Event related inquiries. Please contact**

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**About ALMA**

Asia LGBT Milestone Awards & Business Diversity Forum (“ALMA Awards & Forum” in short) is the region’s premier LGBT event aimed at commemorating key occasions, programs, activities, and initiatives deemed to be key milestone moments for the LGBT community in Asia at large, and by which we show our efforts in raising greater social awareness, engaging more public debate and accelerating the progress of diversity and inclusion. It’s the region’s only cross-border event platform that draws a significant number of key interest stakeholders including but not limited to community NGOs, public figures, journalists, entrepreneurs and business leaders in advocating social diversity.

ALMA Awards & Forum is the birth-child of well-known Singapore LGBT magazine ELEMENT. Born in the beginning of 2014, ALMA Awards has quickly gained strong influence over the region by being “the one and only” internationally-recognized LGBT Awards from members of the media, and has evolved into a mega event that comes with both an awards ceremony and as well as a business diversity leadership forum sponsored by IBM, and other international MNCs.

ALMA Awards & Forum often takes place in March or April, and it plans to tour around Asia in different cities and countries. This year, ELEMENT Magazine announced that it will collaborate with ShanghaiPRIDE as its presenter to bring the event to Shanghai, China for the first time. It is to be held on the very last day of ShanghaiPRIDE as part of the Festival. Hirokazu Mizuhara, founder of ALMA Awards & Forum and Vice President of Singapore’s EPIC Media (ELEMENT Magazine’s holding company), made a recent announcement that an organising committee board has been established in order to put together a more community-inclusive 3rd ALMA Awards & Forum.

It is said that ALMA has become in itself a “milestone moment” for the LGBT community in Asia.

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