

You may want to consider carefully who owns the restaurant you wander into the next time you're looking for some fast food that isn't the same old burger. If you're not careful, your money may be supporting a company that does not show respect for the gay and lesbian community.

Here's a look at policies toward gay and lesbian employees at TRICON Global Restaurants—owner of KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell—and several of its competitors. There is a nugget or two of good news to report, but not much.

TRICON is the second largest fast food company in the world. (Tops is McDonald's.) TRICON's three chains have more total locations than the Golden Arches, though, with almost 30,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries.

The company is a 1997 spin-off of PepsiCo Inc., which had acquired Pizza Hut in 1977, Taco Bell in 1978 and KFC in 1986. Pizza Hut now accounts for more than 40 percent of TRICON's units, but KFC has the strongest sales. Taco Bell is the No. 1 Tex-Mex fast food chain and controls more than 70 percent of that niche.

Louisville, Ky.-based TRICON includes the phrase *sexual orientation* in its nondiscrimination policy, but it does not offer domestic partner benefits or have a gay and lesbian employees group, according to company spokeswoman Amy Sherwood.

But she points out that the company does comply with specific laws regarding employing gay and lesbian people in specific jurisdictions.

Sherwood says she doesn't know whether gay

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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and lesbian issues are specifically discussed in the company's diversity training. She says the training "focuses on respect of individuals."

Things are changing at the No. 2 pizza chain. Privately held Domino's Pizza Inc. was recently sold by its founder, Tom Monaghan, who supports Catholic and conservative political causes.

In December 1998, the sale of Domino's to Bain Capital was completed.

Bain, a private equity investment firm, has invested an estimated \$4 billion in more than 115 companies. The firm has a stake in Staples, Totes, Sealy Mattress, The Learning Company and Brookstone, among others.

Domino's has more than 1,700 franchisees who operate more than 6,100 stores in the United States and 64 international markets.

Sexual orientation is not currently mentioned in the company's nondiscrimination policy, but that could change, according to spokeswoman Cozette Phifer.

"I know that it's being considered by the new owner," she says.

The company does not offer domestic part-

ner benefits or have a gay and lesbian employees group, but it does mention gay and lesbian issues in diversity training, Phifer says. "We believe in the Golden Rule," she adds. "We're in business to sell food and treat people the way we want to be treated."

Little Caesar Enterprises is the third largest pizza chain, with more than 4,000 stores in 11 countries. The Detroit-based company is owned by Michael and Marian Ilitch, a married couple who also own the Detroit Tigers baseball team, hockey's Detroit Red Wings and other enterprises.

Little Caesar officials did not return calls requesting information despite repeated requests during a three-week period.

Privately held AFC Enterprises Inc. is the second largest chicken chain. The company owns or franchises 2,500

Churchs Chicken and Popeyes Chicken and Biscuits restaurants. In addition, the Atlanta-based company franchises more than 150 Chesapeake Bagel Bakery restaurants and owns Seattle Coffee Company, Torrefazione Italia and Cinnabon.



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