

[Inclusivity isn't just the right thing to do, it's good for business.](#)

By: Cathy Duchamp

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2022 Puget Sound Business Journal "Outstanding Voices" honoree Monty Smith is Chief Growth Officer at John L. Scott Real Estate

This story is part of a series of profiles of Puget Sound Business Journal 2022 Outstanding Voices honorees for their leadership in the region's LGBTQ+ business community. [Here](#) is where you can see the complete list of honorees and register for our Business of Pride celebration, June 16 at 5:30 p.m.

[Monty Smith](#) can tell the story in cinematic detail of the last time he misled someone about his sexual orientation. It was 1992.

"I was in the passenger seat of a car with a colleague, driving to a business meeting," Smith said. Just two weeks into a new job, the colleague started peppering him with relationship questions, which Smith said he was hesitant to answer.

Then came, "You are straight, right?"

"And I just laughed," Smith said. "I didn't say no, I didn't say yes, but as far as I'm concerned that was equivalent to lying."

He immediately felt remorse. "It made me feel small. It made me feel badly about myself, because it just went against my own personal moral code," Smith said.

And from that moment forward, Smith decided to bring his full self into work conversations.



Monty Smith believes that change — whether it be legislative, cultural, behavioral — comes when the LGBTQ+ community relies on, and partners with, its allies

About Monty:

Chief Growth Officer, John. L. Scott Real Estate

- Hometown: Guthrie, Kentucky
 - Residence: West Seattle
 - Family: Husband, Chad Brown, “who grew up 120 miles away from me, though we met in Minneapolis,” and two bearded collies, Seamus and Cosmo
 - Favorite thing about Seattle: the views
 - Favorite restaurant: JaK’s Grill, West Seattle
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Today, with 30 years of experience in real estate, Smith is now chief growth officer with John L. Scott Real Estate. He said he uses the privilege of his position to make LGBTQ+ representation part of the C-suite composition discussion.

“If you’re not paying attention, it’s probably not going to happen,” Smith said.

The first part of LGBTQ+ representation in the workplace is being visible, he said. The second part is helping senior executives understand the value of representation.

“It’s more than just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do for your business,” Smith said.

“Your workforce should more closely reflect your prospective customer base, and if you don’t have those voices at the table at whatever level of the organization, how are you going to make good, informed decisions?” he said.



Smith believes that change — whether it be legislative, cultural or behavioral — comes when the LGBTQ+ community relies on and partners with its allies, something he reiterates as a board member of the nonprofit LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, formally founded in 2020.

“In all the homes I have personally bought and sold over the years ... I’ve never worked with someone who identified as an LGBTQ+ realtor (real estate agent), but I did work with realtors (agents) who knew my identity and were clearly supportive of me ... and the broader LGBTQ+ community, and to me that’s what was needed,” Smith said.

He became great friends with that former colleague in the awkward car conversation. He encourages people who are in similar situations to reveal their authentic selves in the moment. First, today is a much different time than 1992, he said. And more than that, he asks, “Would you want to work in an environment that was not supportive and accepting of who you are?”

“It is part of our expression of who we are,” Smith said.

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