

DIVERSE BY DESIGN™



HOLA



CONNECT: ERG TOOLKIT

Tools for Building Effective Employee Resource Groups in Your Organization



Diverse by Design.
Inclusive by Intention.™



PRIDE



INTRODUCTION

Af•fin•i•ty

\ə-ˈfi-nə-tē\

AFFINITY: a feeling of closeness and understanding that someone has for another person because of their similar qualities, ideas, or identity

AFFINITY GROUP: a group of people having a common interest or goal or acting together for a specific purpose

Companies have long realized the power of affinity networks to help their employees navigate culture, offer networking, professional and personal development opportunities, and to ultimately attract and retain employees.

This toolkit is a product of the collective knowledge from some of Cincinnati's top employers. In it you will find resources to help you launch, activate, manage and grow Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in your organization. You are welcome to create your own binder by downloading, customizing and using any of the information and templates included in this toolkit.

Each section of the toolkit includes information about a specific topic and important things to consider as you move forward with your organization's resource groups. A list of templates and other resources are also provided.

We thank the individuals and companies who've contributed time and resources to this document: Owen Burke, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; Mary McFarland, Fifth Third Bank; Randall Stokes, GE Aviation; Jaclyn Whitehead, Nielsen; Wendy Trevil, GE; Georgiann Schierloh, Duke; Dan Kasproicz and Reuben Shaffer, Kroger; Gail Manley, Fidelity; and Dena Benesh, Macy's.

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Diverse by Design. Inclusive by Intention.™

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WHAT IS DIVERSE BY DESIGN?

Diverse by Design is a groundbreaking initiative to increase the diversity of our workforce and grow inclusion in the region. Diversity and inclusion have become bottom-line imperatives. Successful businesses — and regions — embrace this idea. In other words, increasing diversity and growing inclusion is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing... this is the foundation for *Diverse by Design. Inclusive by Intention.*™

WHAT IS CONNECT?

CONNECT is a Diverse by Design initiative. Its purpose is to embrace and advance inclusion across the region by leveraging employee resource groups (ERGs) across companies to attract, grow and retain diverse talent, enabling sustainable economic growth for Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

WHAT ARE CONNECT'S OBJECTIVES?

Connect – Link employee resource groups across companies to enhance inclusion, professional development, social and cultural connections and community involvement.
Collaborate – Engage diverse talent across organizations to share best practices, develop initiatives that foster inclusion and capitalize on the power of diversity for the region.
Communicate – Promote the region's vast personal and professional offerings and high quality of life while communicating the impact of diversity and inclusion to our long term prosperity.



Our partnership with CONNECT has allowed us to work with other local companies to share insights and learnings about growing and expanding our Associate Resource Groups. CONNECT has been a valuable resource to us and other companies across the region.”

Reuben Shaffer, Chief Diversity Officer, The Kroger Co

Why Start an ERG?

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP VALUE PROPOSITION

Benefits of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to Employees

ERGs provide employees with the opportunity to:

- Gain exposure and visibility to leadership and within broader internal and external networks
- Learn a broader set of skills by collaborating on projects and initiatives
- Seize leadership opportunities within ERGs that they may not otherwise realize in their current role.
- Contribute to the company's "cultural competency" through diverse employee participation in sales, marketing and product development
- Build support mechanism for those with common interests, identities and goals
- Increase cultural and civic awareness
- Develop a forum for networking and career development opportunities
- Foster mentoring and advocacy relationships
- Make an impact in their work environment and leave a legacy for others
- Increase engagement and a tangible sense of belonging

Benefits of ERGs to the Organization

ERGs provide the organization with the opportunity to:

- Position the organization to experience win-win strategies that result in bottom line impact
- Empower and connect employees
- Build valuable talent pipeline development mechanisms
- Effectively onboard employees and build greater loyalty
- Have access to an enabler of business opportunities
- Drive customer value and build networks
- Offer a broader value proposition to functions and business lines
- Harness diverse workforces for common business goals
- Create a comfortable environment in which new ideas and opportunities can flourish
- Increase value and lower cost of collaboration among professionals

- Efficiently and effectively create avenues for the important exchange of information and knowledge within the group, group liaisons and company leadership
- Assist with core business objectives like recruitment, retention and advancement of employees
- Enhance marketing and advertising to an increasingly diverse customer base
- Discover consumer insights to help enhance products and services to better meet clients' needs
- Establish and nurture community relationships and organizational reputation

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Our ERGs have left their fingerprints all over our company, through contributions both large and small! They plan meaningful programming for our building, provide opportunities for employees to connect, and have influenced company-wide change. For example, our Pride ERG was instrumental in driving the successful business case for providing transgender benefit coverage for Macy's associates, resulting in a perfect score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Corporate Equality Index.”

– Dena Benesh, Director, Talent Management & Acquisition, Macy's

Getting Started

One of the first steps in organizing ERGs is deciding what to call your employee groups.

NAMING

Naming Your Overall Groups

While this toolkit utilizes the name “Employee Resource Groups” throughout, such groups go by a variety of names in different companies and organizations. Some common names include:

- Affinity Resource Groups
- Associate Resource Groups
- Business Resource Groups
- Diversity Councils
- Employee Resource Groups
- Partner Resource Groups
- Affinity Networks

Important Things to Consider:

- In choosing how to position these groups, it is important to think both about common terminology in your organization and how the groups are to be utilized in your organization. Will they have intentional strategic alignment? If so, will something like “Business” explicitly in their title highlight that focus?
- How are employees in your organization typically referred to – “employees,” “associates,” “partners,” etc.?
- Although the naming is simply semantic in some cases, it can also help ensure fit with the organization and lend greater importance to how they are seen.

NAMING INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

Similar to the naming of overall groups, practices on how to name individual groups differ. In some cases, names are straight-forward and descriptive – making sure to clearly define the group(s). Other organizations go in a direction of aspirational names and acronyms that – while potentially less immediately definitive – may be simpler and more memorable. And, again, as with the naming of the overall groups, there is not a right answer. Rather, it depends on what will work well in a given organization and its culture.



LATINO
Business Resource Group



MULTICULTURAL
Business Resource Group



INCLUSION COUNCIL



ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER
Business Resource Group



AFRICAN AMERICAN
Business Resource Group



MILITARY
Business Resource Group



WOMEN'S
Business Resource Group



LGBT
Business Resource Group



- African American Professionals Advisory Council (AAPAC)
- Asian Cultural and Professional Group (ACPF)
- Cincinnati Children's Administrative Professionals (CCAP)
- Clinical Research Professionals (CRPs)
- Dad Connect
- EMBRACE
- EQUAL
- Veterans and Military Family Advocacy Network (VAMFAN)
- Young Professionals (YP)

FOUNDATIONAL ERG CONSIDERATION

Whether starting ERGs from the ground up or looking to revamp existing groups, there are a number of basic considerations that will impact how groups can and should work in an organization.

Grassroots vs. Executive Order

In the grassroots scenario, a critical mass of employees may come together with interest in starting a group. They may start to operate unofficially and eventually seek some formal sanctioning, or may seek such sanctioning as a means of getting started.

Groups can sometimes be initiated by a mixture of grassroots interest and encouragement from an Office of Diversity & Inclusion. In these cases, a Diversity office may support interested employees in identifying the employees who represent the target population to start the group.

For groups started by executive order, leadership of a company/organization has decided ERGs are necessary and tasked an internal entity, office, or individual with starting them. Typically, individuals tasked with starting these groups tend to be related to Diversity & Inclusion, Employee Engagement/Development, or similar such offices.

Important Things to Consider:

- The way a group is started can deeply impact the level of commitment by its members. In grassroots groups, there is an intrinsic level of commitment to the group as it begins. They are there because they want to be and feel it is important/necessary. That commitment may or may not be the same if created by an executive order.
- Regardless of how the group starts, there needs to be space for the members themselves to voice the needs of the group's target population/demographic. That would likely happen naturally in a grassroots group, but should be balanced with strategic intentions for executive order groups.
- Leadership buy-in can make or break ERGs. With groups started from the top, leaders of the company have likely already identified the need, recognize the potential value, and are supportive of employee resource groups. On the flip side, while there is energy among the employees to start a grassroots group, they may not immediately have the buy-in of company/organizational leadership.
- If interest in the group is not grown, that original critical mass of employees may burn out and lose the energy that initiated the group.
- ERGs can sometimes be perceived as self-serving. **Intentionally aligning the group's purpose to the goals of the company/organization is particularly important for success of grassroots groups.**



The Kroger Co. first introduced Associate Resource Groups (ARGs) in 2008. They have become strategic partners in supporting our business strategies. ARGs create meaningful connections among fellow associates, influence product development, store design, merchandising concepts, personal growth, and drive positive change in business results. They provide us insight both from an associate and customer perspective by promoting and supporting our core values of Diversity, Honesty, Inclusion, Integrity, Respect, and Safety.”

Reuben Shaffer, Chief Diversity Officer, The Kroger Co.

Formally vs. Informally Supported Groups

At Fifth Third Bank, employee business resource groups (BRGs) are company endorsed for ten constituency groups: African American, Asian Pacific Islander, Individuals with Disabilities, LGBT, Latino, Military, Middle Eastern, Multicultural, Women’s, and Young Professionals. Employee groups must be reviewed and approved by the Human Resource and Legal department before they can form. Some teams have formed based on wellness, engagement and green initiatives, but are not considered BRGs.

Important Things to Consider

There is a lot of variety in whether companies are interested, willing, and/or able to do non-traditional groups (i.e. groups not based on diversity dimensions). Cincinnati Children’s Hospital has groups for Research Professional, Foster and Adoptive Parents, and Administrative Professionals. Kroger has groups for Cancer Awareness and Veterans.

Participation Guidelines

The level to which employees can be involved in an ERG can depend on many factors. One of the most consistent of those factors across industries, though, is the timeclock. On average, exempt (salary) employees have greater flexibility to manage their own time, while non-exempt (hourly) employees may have greater difficulty leaving their “post” to engage in ERG activities such as meetings, events, volunteering, etc.

In some companies and organizations, anything outside of an employee’s immediate work role is considered non-productive work time. Whether or not ERG work falls within that category can have a considerable impact on if, how, and when employees – particularly those that are hourly – are allowed the time to participate.

Important Things to Consider:

- Equitable access for exempt and non-exempt employees alike takes requires intentional planning and manager buy-in.
- In cases where a subset of employees simply cannot have the same access to ERG involvement as their peers, how can the ERG's structure or operations accommodate them?

Employee Resource Groups And Unions

SINGLE SITE VS. CROSS-REGION STRUCTURE

Companies and organizations of all different shapes and sizes have established successful Employee Resource Groups. Those variations in how a company is structured have to be factored into how the ERGs are structured, just the same.

An example of two Cincinnati employers with drastically different structures is Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and Fifth Third Bank. Cincinnati Children's is a pediatric healthcare facility with a main location central in the Cincinnati region, and several smaller satellite locations throughout the area. Fifth Third, on the other hand, services 15 regions across 13 states, with more than 1,300 locations.



While the large majority of our Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center employees are at our main location, we want to be sure to make our ERGs inclusive of our satellite sites. Even considering our satellites, though, our footprint is within the same general region. As a result, we do not have a need for chapters within each of our ERGs. Rather, our groups make intentional efforts to garner engagement from the satellites. The majority of meetings are held at our main location, but with options to video- or teleconference in to participate. Events, on the other hand, are held throughout the region – offering not only opportunities to welcome employees from all sites, but bringing in employees' families that live throughout the Greater Cincinnati area.

Even within our main location, availability to connect in ways other than in-person is vital for our ERGs. We are a 24/7/365 operation with which comes challenges in employees being able to leave their work role, even for short periods sometimes. Whether it is across our sites or within our main location, finding creative ways to make the groups accessible and inclusive of anyone has been an important and intentional part of operating our ERGs.”

Owen Burke, HR Specialist, Office of Cultural & Language Diversity, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

At Fifth Third Bank, options for the ten different employee business resource groups (BRG) exist in each of the regions. The individual BRGs that exist in each region may vary depending on the local demographics and numbers of employees. Guidance and support was provided to each of the regions as the BRGs were formalized to provide a consistent

model and framework across the enterprise. Each BRG works on the same four focus areas, conducts strategic planning annually and uses the same set of tools and resources. The BRGs are connected to each other through regular Community of Practice Calls, where the BRG Chairs get together to share best practices, opportunities and upcoming events. Virtual training is provided to new BRG leaders on a quarterly basis to ensure all leaders are on boarded properly, working toward the four focus areas and aware of the resources and tools available to support them.

Budget Considerations

When creating an Employee Resource Group your organization may need to determine a budget structure and review process. The stance on budgets varies greatly across organizations; grass roots typically start with borrowed funds from teams or no funds, company-created groups may start with a very structured budget allotment or go through a budget proposal process. Your budget should be structured based on what's best for supporting and implementing your vision.

Things to consider when creating a budget:

- Will there be a budget for the ERGs?
- Who owns the budget? – Diversity & Inclusion Office, Office Manager, Individual Teams, etc.
- How will you track expenses or review the budget impact? On what interval will there be reviews?
- Will your organization vary the budget for groups on any key points? Size of membership, events proposed with impact to vision, growth potential. etc.
- Ask ERGs to budget based on planned initiatives rather than giving them a set amount to spend.
- How will ERGs access budgeted funds?

Some Do's and Don'ts of Budgeting:

- DO: Ask for buy in from local leaders and potentially their assistance
- DO: Ask for teams to account for use of funds (drives impactful events)
- DON'T: Charge membership fees. In a survey with ERGs from the Cincinnati area we found that those groups who initiated membership dues as the budget were not successful at gaining membership (excludes participation)

Strategic Alignment

The initial reason your organization decides to create an ERG may be for team members of like backgrounds and/or interests to come together. However, as your organization begins the process of starting Employee Resource Groups or if the time arises to prove their value back to management there may need to be a discussion on how the groups align with company strategy.

Can you make a case for how this group will improve the company internally and externally? This is also a great way to open up dialogue with leaders to determine what they want help with from the teams that would benefit their offices or the larger organization.

Example A: Every company wants to retain their work force, whether salaried or hourly. It's best for the future of the company, the stability of the employees, and it's best for maintaining a balanced budget. ERGs of all kinds enable employees to get to know other team members, learn more about the company they work for, celebrate their interests, and grow in their roles. This environment encourages stronger teams and may improve retention of team members who may otherwise be disconnected and lacking visibility to the value of their organization. If your leaders call out retention as an issue then this is a great way to aid in improving those numbers.

Example B: Other areas to show value are by impacting the company through the products your company sells and/or the audience or consumers they serve. If you are a major consumer products manufacturer you may be underserving a market or demographic without realizing. An ERG of team members from that group can come together, propose a plan for a new or altered product, and help the company recognize growth in an area they otherwise may not have known they were underserving.

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In 2015 our ARG's completed over sixty internal and external projects. Notable achievements were bilingual training, an Associate Guide for New Parents, skin cancer awareness, clothing drive for homeless veterans, personal branding, network speed dating with executives, and transgender health benefits. We view our ARG's as game changers and we believe game changers create momentum.”

Reuben Shaffer, Chief Diversity Officer, The Kroger Co.



The Cincinnati Individuals with Disabilities Business Resource Group have a robust focus on business development. The members of our BRG are involved in an on-going quarterly operating rhythm with members of our retail product development team, our marketing team, our talent acquisition team and our facilities team. The purpose of these meetings is to provide our member's perspective on the inclusion of individuals in our workforce, our workplace and in our marketplace. Our members are actively involved in focus groups on new products and services, conversation centered on the accessibility of our buildings and banking centers, and ways that our organization can tap in to the untapped market of professionals with disabilities to make our workplace and culture one of inclusiveness for individuals with disabilities.”

*Mitch Morgan, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Manager, Project SEARCH,
Fifth Third Bank*

ERG Leadership

Each ERG will need to have a group of leaders that is responsible for the creation of events and connecting the members with each other and with the broader organization. The make-up of this group structure can vary based on your organization's size, your group's size, and involvement from your Executives. Ultimately your goal is to have support from as high in the organization as you can get involvement.

Important things to consider:

- How will you guide your leadership structure?
- Chair – Vice Chair – Finance Chair – Communications Chair
- How will you select your local leaders?
- Do you want to have minimum requirements like Band Level, HR Ratings, Union allowances, hourly worker allowances, etc.?
- As this will likely be a 'second hat' you want to consider that your leaders will need to be great jugglers and that they will need their managers approval.

- Are you tracking and rewarding leaders in personnel reviews?
- Most organizations have a formal review process at least yearly; will these leaders be enabled to share their leadership for ERGs?
- Can you position the leadership role as a development program to enable discussions with leaders about improvements in your day job, new skills learned through leadership, etc.?
- Some companies have created a review process just for their ERG leaders and these get shared straight back to Executive Leadership for higher visibility.
- How will you plan for replacing your leaders and is there a 'term limit'?
- Some companies have a very organized structure in that they have a leader currently in office and an 'at bat' leader that is shadowing and ready to replace at the end of a term.
- Other organizations replace as needed and this may be based on a smaller refill pool, industry turnover, or smaller office.
- Consider preparing in advance for when a leader inevitably steps down and what will they need to have upon that move for effective Succession Planning.

[See Resources: CCHMC ERG Guiding Principles](#)

ERG Leader Training/Development

[See Resources: BRG Leader Training](#)

Connection to Executives

After creating a structure for local leadership it's important to determine how you want Executives involved with the ERGs.

Executives can be great enablers for ERGs:

- Their network is larger and farther reaching
- They can share your group's efforts and causes at a higher level
- They can benefit themselves from learning from the group
- They can break down walls that team members at lower levels may not be able to knock down.
- They can be sponsors for specific groups.

Grass Roots - Campaigning for Executive involvement can be a hurdle for ERGs that are starting from the bottom and working their way up. This is where nailing down your strategic alignment to the business will help in creating executive buy-in. This could take several conversations and you will likely need to lean on your local leaders first to get at the table and

sell your idea farther and farther up the organization. It can be done, and it has been done before!

Executive Order - If your ERG is starting from the top and trickling down then you have the benefit of pre-existing Executive alignment, however, this needs to translate into involvement. It's up to the leaders and the Executives to make an impact with these ERGs. Impact can come in the form of improved internal metrics, business and team growth, increased involvement within your community, and connections with other organizations and their ERGs.

Important things to consider:

- How will you utilize the Executives?
 - Engagement is more likely to happen when there's a plan. **Example:** If your goal is to improve team member development through company led training programs, you can ask for help through having their voice available and their support to pitch these programs. They may even be able to lead the conversation for the group.
- How do you want to stay in contact with your Executives and how often?
 - It's important to give them updates on progress with larger goals and where you may be struggling, but balance that with what is a reasonable cadence. Does that mean monthly touch base calls? Does that mean quarterly overviews?
 - They can share your successes with the organization and help with course correcting.
- How will your Executive benefit from the connection? (WIFM – What's in it for me?)
 - What is your vision for how they will also grow in their roles through this sponsorship? Will they learn about a new team of employees, about a different social or demographic group, etc.?
 - There may not always be a clear benefit that they get from leading outside of the mentorship of the local leaders and helping them succeed
- What other unique things should you consider in aligning with Executives?
 - Some companies are seeing a benefit in aligning allies as Executive Sponsors: for example having an Asian Executive sponsor the African American ERG, having a straight Executive sponsor the LGBT ERG.
 - Connecting with an Executive Sponsor can break down walls between offices. There are some sponsors that make sure to reach out to leaders whenever they are visiting a different office or if there is an opportunity they see for their group.

[See Resources: Inclusion Council Guidelines](#)

Employee Resource Group Outreach: How to Connect People

ERG KICK-OFF

Once an ERG is first formed, a kick-off is held to officially launch the ERG. This provides an opportunity to welcome members, have leaders endorse the ERG and explain its mission, and share the vision for the upcoming year. This may be an opportunity to gain insights from members to set the strategy for tactics for which the ERG may be responsible.

ERG MAILBOX

At the beginning of an ERGs formation, it is a good practice to create a way for members to communicate with the ERG leadership. It is common for the leaders in an ERG to turnover due to internal organizational moves, career changes, workload shifts, etc. Therefore, it is recommended that an email/mailbox be created in the ERG's name that can be administered by the current ERG leaders. This presents a seamless transition to the members.

ERG MEMBER FORM

Companies who are tracking ERG members well are using intelligent survey tools (e.g. Survey Monkey, Survey Gizmo) to create dynamic membership forms. The surveys provide the ability to create links for employees to join the ERGs that can be used in a variety of communications vehicles, reports can sort the data in different ways, and changes to the form can be made as needed. This allows the ERGs have current distribution lists, for the employees to feel counted, and for accurate reporting to executives.

ERG INTRANET LANDING PAGE

If your organization has an internal intranet landing page, it can be beneficial for your ERGs to have a presence there. Common information that is posted on a website include the definition of an ERG, the mission, vision, purpose of the ERG, a calendar of events, list of ERG leaders, how to get involved, link to ERG email, pictures of recent events, etc.

ERG FLYERS

As your ERG becomes active, it may be helpful to have a flyer with key information to share with employees. These can be helpful tools in providing information about the ERG and attracting new members. Work with your marketing and communication partners to create these as you may also want to develop external flyers as a recruiting tool.

ERG DOCUMENT STORAGE

A good operating rhythm is to identify a centralized repository for all of the ERGs documents. Not only is this a solid business practice for creating efficiency and streamlining information, but it will help with succession planning in the future. As new leaders transition, they will

know where to find an archive of the previous work that has been completed and not have to recreate everything from scratch.

ERG STAGGERED COMMUNICATIONS

A common complaint many organizations with ERGs have is that so often employees don't seem to be aware of the existence of the ERGs. A staggered ongoing communication strategy about the ERGs is highly recommended. These communications can include executive insights, special interest stories, employee highlights, ERG spotlights, and holidays/heritage months.

Below is an **example** of a schedule of ERG Spotlights or diversity holiday months:

January: Multicultural ERG, Martin Luther King Day

February: African American ERG, aligns with Black History Month

March: Women's ERG, aligns Women's History Month

April: Middle Eastern ERG, aligns Celebrate Diversity Month

May: Asian Pacific Islander ERG, aligns Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

June: LGBT ERG aligns National LGBT Pride Month

July: Military ERG, aligns with Independence Day

August: Young Professional ERG, International Day of Indigenous People, Women's Equality Day

September: Latino ERG, aligns with National Hispanic Heritage Month

October: Individuals with Disabilities ERG, aligns with National Disability Employment Awareness Month

November: Native American ERG, aligns with Native American Heritage Month

December: Winter Solstice, Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa

An example only. This is not an exhaustive list of ERGs or diversity related holidays.

ERG NEW HIRE WELCOME LETTER

When new employees enter an organization, ERGs are a helpful lever to onboard, engage and retain employees. It is helpful to have a new hire welcome letter template available that can be sent shortly after a new hire arrives that explains the definition, purpose of an ERG and then details how to get involved.

SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICE!

Often there is pressure from the ERGs to provide a report of new members from that specific constituency so they can send out a welcome letter and recruit new members. Since demographic data in most organizations is confidential, a best practice is to send one ERG welcome letter to all employees. The letter would include a list of ALL the ERGs that exist in the organization and would go to ALL employees. The letter would welcome employees to join the ERG(s) which they feel the most connected. This is the most inclusive technique because humans are more than one diversity element. There maybe someone who fits into several of the ERGs in your organization. It is up to that individual to decide which ERG means the most to them. Likewise, there may be an employee who isn't in the constituency

of any of the ERGs in your organization. However, they may feel strongly about being an ally for a specific group and you would want to make sure they feel included.

ERG Membership

Membership in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) is typically open to all employees within that organization with the approval of the employee's manager. While it is common for most members of the ERG to be associated with that particular constituency, the organizations involved in the creation of the ERG Toolkit recommended that "allies" are welcome to join who support the group.

For those in ERG leadership positions (e.g. Executive Advisors, Chairs, Committee Leads, etc.) it is recommended that discussions occur with Human Resources and the manager to ensure the employee has their leadership's endorsement and commitment to fill an ERG leader role and attend necessary meetings. Discussion should take place with the employee to convey the importance of their role on the ERG.

ERG MEETINGS

Meetings are often attended by the ERG Leaders and Committee Members. In some cases organizations compensate ERG members for their time pending their manager's approval. Managers need to manage their employee's involvement by determining whether it is possible for the employee to participate in the ERG work given the current work situation and what accommodations are needed to allow the employee to participate.

Types of ERG Events

- Kick-off Events are held to launch new ERGs and are typically open to all employees. Some companies considered these events compensable time. Employees should work with their managers to ensure their work schedule permits attendance. Managers need to manage their employee's involvement in the kick-off by determining whether it is possible for the employee to participate given the current work situation and what accommodations are needed to allow the employee to attend. Suggested wording for communications includes, "This event is considered an approved organizational function and employee time is compensable. Employees should work with their manager on their availability to attend."
- ERG Development Events, just like developmental programs that employees would register to complete through the organization, some additional offerings are being made available in partnership with the ERG. In many companies, employees have the option to take advantage of the ERG development offerings pending their manager's approval. Some organizations choose to compensate employees for this time. Employees should be having ongoing discussions with their manager to determine what development opportunities are appropriate for their growth. It is recommended that these events are entered into the organization's Learning Management System (LMS) just like other developmental opportunities.

- ERG Signature Events are often open to all ERG members and some organizations consider them compensable time. Employees should work with their managers to ensure their work schedule permits attendance. Managers need to manage their employee's involvement by determining whether it is possible for the employee to participate given the current work situation and what accommodations are needed to allow the employee to participate. Suggested wording for communications includes, "This event is considered a work function and employee time is compensable. Employees should work with their manager on their availability to attend." It is recommended that registration for large events be entered into the organization's LMS to reinforce the event is an endorsed function and for ROI tracking purposes.
- ERG Business Events, like selling product at a booth or recruiting on behalf of the organization, is considered work time by law. Suggested wording for communications includes, "This is a business development event for the organization. Employees should work with their manager on their availability to participate."
- ERG Optional Events, include volunteer events and networking/development events scheduled during non-work hours. This is not compensable time and would be open to all employees pending no work schedule conflicts and/or manager approval. Examples of volunteer events would be walks, marches, parades and festivals. Suggested wording for communications includes, "This event is a volunteer opportunity and employee time is not compensable." Or, "This event is a volunteer opportunity and employee time is not compensable. Employees should work with their manager on their availability to volunteer as this event takes place within normal business hours." Examples of networking/development events schedule during non-business hours would include breakfast networking sessions, lunch and learns or happy hours. Suggested wording for communications includes, "This event is a networking/development event scheduled outside of normal business hours and employee time is not compensable."

NON-EMPLOYEES:

In many organizations ERG membership is exclusively extended to employees of that organization (e.g. does not include vendors, contractors, or other organizations working closely with the organization).

There will occasionally be opportunities for non-employees to participate in public events in which ERGs are involved. These volunteers may include friends and family members of employees, as well as contractors.

Event examples may include community activities such as parade and festival participation, organized walks and rides.

TRACKING ERG MEMBERS

Tracking membership is a challenge and therefore a majority of organizations find themselves either not tracking at all or having membership data that is incomplete and outdated. Other organizations make a conscious decision not to track based on keeping the confidentiality of their employees. This was at one time particularly sensitive for members of the LGBT and Individuals with Disabilities ERGs.

The trend is now moving toward self-disclosure efforts across broader diversity elements and organizations wanting to have more metrics regarding their ERGs. Companies who are tracking ERG members well are using intelligent survey tools (e.g. Survey Monkey, Survey Gizmo) to create dynamic membership forms. The surveys provide the ability to create links for employees to join the ERGs that can be used in a variety of communications vehicles, reports can sort the data in different ways, and changes to the form can be made as needed. This allows the ERGs have current distribution lists, for the employees to feel counted, and for accurate reporting to executives.

Success Stories of World-Class ERGs

This is an opportunity to share your organization's stories about connections to the community, product input, and industry-specific successes.

Employee Resource Group Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Employee Resource Group?

Employee resource groups (ERGs), also known as employee network groups, are company-sanctioned constituencies of employees and often allies, providing a sense of community within the organization while often contributing to the business strategies. These groups provide opportunities to network with colleagues, provide community service, develop talent pipelines and help shape multi-cultural products and marketing strategies.

How do ERGs work together?

The ERGs together implement initiatives focused on professional development, business networking and recruiting and retention.

What is the purpose of having an ERG?

ERGs are strategic business platforms that foster an inclusive environment to achieve superior business results. They are comprised of employees who serve as an advisory board and partner with the organization's leadership to implement inclusion strategies. The ERG members implement strategic inclusion initiatives based on analysis of diversity trends and benchmarking data. They are typically aligned with the organizations Diversity and Inclusion function.

What is the value of having an ERG, BRG or Affinity Groups for employees?

ERGs provide employees with multiple opportunities – See Employee Resource Group - Value Proposition (Refer to: Why start and ERG?)

What is the benefit of having an ERG for an organization?

ERGs provide the organization multiple benefits – See Benefits of ERGs to the Organization (Refer to: Why start and ERG?)

What types of ERGs exist?

The ERGs vary by organization, but, among others, could include the following:

- African American
- Asian-Pacific Islander
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Latino
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT)
- Middle Eastern
- Military
- Multicultural
- Women’s
- Young Professionals

This is not an exhaustive list. Check with your organization for additional ERGs.

What companies participate in CONNECT?

The following companies participate in CONNECT:

Accenture	General Cable	PNC Mortgage
ArtsWave	GE Global Operations	Procter & Gamble
Ashland, Inc.	Givaudan	ProKids
Barnes Dennig	Greater Cincinnati Chinese	Sixth Circuit USC of
BHDP Architecture	Chamber	Appeals
BiWorldwide	Growth By Export	St. Elizabeth Hospital
Cincinnati Children’s	HYUR/ProLink Staffing	St. Xavier High School
Hospital Medical Center	Services	Taft Stettinius & Hollister
Cincinnati Reds	Indian Chamber of	The Christ Hospital Health
Cincinnati USA Regional	Commerce	Network
Chamber	Johnson Investment	The Kroger Co.
Cintas Corp-Corporate	Counsel Inc.	

Headquarters	Lexmark International, Inc.	The Nielsen Company
Cintas-Cincinnati Division	Luxottica	THE XPOINT LLC
Citigroup	Luxottica Retail	Total Quality Logistics Inc.
Consultant On the Go	Macy's, Inc.	Toyota
Duke Energy	Melink Corporation	U.S. Bank
Easter Seals Tristate	Miami University	United Way of Greater Cincinnati
EY	Paycor	University of Cincinnati
Fidelity Investments	Partners in Change LLC	University of Cincinnati
Fifth Third Bank Cincinnati	Patina Solutions	College of Nursing
Frost Brown Todd LLC	Per Scholas	WCPO
GE Aviation	PNC Bank	YMCA of Greater Cincinnati

Resources for ERGs

Appendix PDF

- Guidelines - CCHMC ERG
- Guidelines - Fifth Third Bank Inclusion Council
- Guidelines - Kroger ARG
- Infographic - Duke Energy ERG as Business Partner
- Overview - Fidelity Investments ERG

Electronic Editable File Links

- [BRG Leader Training Deck - Fifth Third Bank](#)
- [BRG Strategic Planning Session In a Box - Fifth Third Bank](#)
- [Template - ERG Budget 1](#)
- [Template - ERG Budget 2](#)
- [Template - ERG Budget CCHMC](#)
- [Template - ERG Meeting Planner](#)
- [Template - ERG Planning Form](#)
- [Template - ERG ROI Recap](#)
- [Template – ERG Strategic Planning](#)