

*The Brimful Life*

# EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG) KICK-START KIT

Best practices to get your Employee Resource Group off to a strong start.



# WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG)?

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Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Typically ERGs represent underrepresented groups, such as people from minority ethnic groups, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. But ERGs can be formed wherever employees see a need.

Benefits include:

- Employees have an opportunity to be heard, valued and engaged.
- Provide cultural support and diversity insight to inform company strategies and operations.
- Foster a learning environment to drive employee engagement, development and retention.
- Help to make your organization more attractive to potential employees.

# GAIN LEADERSHIP SUPPORT



ERGs often get started as grassroots efforts, launched by employees to address employee-identified needs. Despite the grassroots start, ERGs have the ability to drive meaningful change across the organization and create sustainable impact for the company, customers and community. Leadership commitment and support for the ERGs are needed to achieve this level of scale and impact.

Ideally, each ERG will have an executive sponsor who will advocate for the ERG's purpose and goals among the c-suite and act as liaison between ERG leaders and senior-level leadership. The executive sponsor will also provide guidance to ensure ERG activities align with business outcomes and drive sustainable business value.

It is just as critical that the executive sponsor engage with the ERG as an active listener and learner versus the primary driving force. After all, participating in an ERG is a great way for the executive sponsor to develop intercultural competencies and exercise inclusive leadership skills.

# ESTABLISH VISION, MISSION, GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



To clarify purpose, inform strategies and prioritize activities, the ERG needs to articulate a vision, mission, guiding principles and goals.

**Vision:** Outlines the ERG's purpose, what it would ultimately like to achieve in the future and what will be different because of its existence. A good vision statement should be short, simple and articulate how the ERG contributes value to the overall organization.

**Mission:** Defines the ERG's objectives and approach to reach those objectives.

**Goals:** Serve as the foundation for the ERG's business plan and budget and guide the group in carrying out its mission. Goals require annual review to ensure they remain aligned with the mission and vision.

**Guiding Principles:** Goals reflect "what" the ERG will do and guiding principles reflect "how" the group will do it. Guiding principles are values and behaviors that must direct every decision.

# EXAMPLE VISION + MISSION STATEMENTS

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The Latino Resource Group helps improve the company's marketing efforts aimed at the fast-growing Latino population in the US, aids recruitment and retention of Latinos, promotes cultural awareness, and provides opportunities for personal and career development.

The Women's Leadership Network seeks to make a difference for the company by researching and recommending solutions to issues affecting women; raising the visibility of women; providing opportunities for women to develop leadership skills and broaden their network; and reaching out to women, students and teens in our community.

People Like Us (PLUS) serves as a network and a resource for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) employees, fosters general awareness of the comGLBT employees and their contributions, and serves as an advisor to Human Resources and Management.

# BE INCLUSIVE



The underlying principle of ERGs is to foster inclusion and cross-cultural exchanges, bridge differences, and bring employees together. As such, thriving ERGs welcome participation from employees of all backgrounds. It is important the ERG adopts an "you don't have to be to belong" attitude and is welcoming to all in all levels of participation, including leadership roles. After all, the more participation you have, the more ambassadors and advocates you will cultivate.

In addition, the most effective ERGs also actively encourage and enable collaboration between and among other ERGs within and outside of the organization. Collaboration is a great way to share knowledge, build on synergies and maximize resources.

# MAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES ATTRACTIVE



Leading an ERG is hard work. As such, ERGs need capable and collaborative leaders to drive impact and sustain a high level of member engagement. The best way to ensure your ERG attracts top performers is to make the role of ERG leader attractive by:

- Providing leaders with exposure and access to executive sponsors and company leaders.
- Ensuring leadership is an opportunity to learn and hone leadership skills.
- Positioning leadership as a stepping stone for career advancement.

In addition, it is important that the commitment of leadership is incorporated into the leaders performance plan and has the full support of his/her manager.

Finally, ensure you continually cultivate a pipeline of talented leaders and have a clear succession plan in place so that leaders don't burnout as a result of staying in their roles for too long.

# ALIGN TO BUSINESS OUTCOMES AND MEASURE IMPACT

Measurement is essential to effectively understand and articulate the ERG's impact. ERGs should identify key metrics to track and report, reflecting results from execution of goals. Below are examples of metrics to track:

- **Activity Based Metrics** measure how successfully actions have been taken to execute on ERG goals. These metrics are usually leading indicators. Example: X percent of ERG members participated in leadership training.
- **Survey/Assessments** measure the quality and qualitative impact of ERG activities. Example: X percent of attendees rated the ERG presentation 4 out of 5 stars.
- **Outcome Based Metrics** measure the quality of end results as an indication of how successfully ERGs are providing value to business operations. These are lagging indicators. Example: X percent increase in Net Promoter Score as a result of ERG led initiatives.

# MORE DE&I RESOURCES

- **Blog:** Click [HERE](#) to read my blog, "Want to Build a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace Culture? Start with Your Mindset First" to learn inclusive leadership skills.
- **Podcast:** Click [HERE](#) to listen to my recent BizTimes podcast interview where I offer more guidance for companies starting their D&I journeys.
- **Kick Start Kit:** Click [HERE](#) to download my kit for leaders to jumpstart efforts to build a sustainable culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Coaching and Consulting:** Schedule a call to discuss [HERE](#).

# CONNECT WITH ME



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