



Creating an employee resource group

General overview and guidelines

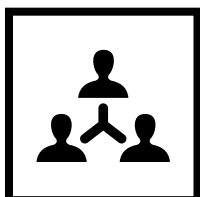
CEO Action has curated the below set of insights and tips from signatories designed to help organizations consider what type of group best suits your employees and business needs and further focuses on creating an ERG.



Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): ERGs are employer-recognized groups led by employee volunteers who aim to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace. Generally designed to bring support to employees, these groups can also help employees come together, offer mentoring opportunities and bring awareness to issues facing certain demographics and marginalized populations.



Business Resource Groups (BRGs): As an ERG develops and matures, it can become more valuable to an organization and evolve into a BRG. The goals shift from a more social aspect, and focus on aligning to the business objectives. There are specific goals around recruitment and business development and these groups can help to implement strategic inclusion initiatives based on the business strategy, focusing around business networking, career advancement, recruiting and retention.



Inclusion Councils (ICs): Much like the resource groups, an IC is a group of employee volunteers, including senior leaders and executives, whose goals are to connect the organizations D&I efforts to the overall business strategy. Typically, these councils work directly with leadership around the overall business strategy and help to support and drive the overall D&I objectives.

While all three can be beneficial, this guide is specifically focused on creating an ERG.

COMMON ERGS:

ERGs may be formed based on a shared identity, affinity, demographic, life stage, or life experience. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Race
- Ethnicity/Nationality
- Sexual Orientation
- Veteran
- Shared Interest
- Caregivers
- Mentoring
- Religion
- Gender
- Disability
- Social or Economic Causes
- Remote Workers
- Professional Development

COMMON BENEFITS AND VALUES:

- Increased cultural awareness
- Increase in employees feeling more valued and respected
- Increased employee engagement and job satisfaction
- Increased professional development opportunities
- Improved relationships between new and existing employees
- Improved company branding
- Increased retention and
- Improved recruitment, specifically within diverse populations

COMMON GOALS:

- **Cultural Awareness:** Focusing primarily on marginalized populations within the organization, these groups come together to celebrate their differences, build a sense of inclusion and create an environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged to bring their authentic selves. Some ways these groups raise awareness may be to create an event highlighting a particular culture, sharing traditions along with related cuisines. Primarily focused around race, religion, ethnicity/nationality, sexual orientation and disabilities, these groups may organize and promote specific celebrations around LGBTQ+ Pride, Black History and National Hispanic Heritage Month or Americans with Disabilities.
- **Volunteering and Community Engagement:** These groups focus on supporting a specific cause and in giving back to the community, while promoting a sense of community in the workplace. Their organized events tend to increase awareness and raise money to help support a specific cause or charity. Employers will often choose to match donations and/or participate in promoting these events.
- **Shared Interests and Hobbies:** Purely focused on social elements, these groups connect employees on a personal level. Common examples would be social clubs, book clubs, writing circles, biking and walking groups, wine clubs and working parents. The purpose of these groups are to bring employees closer together and build relationships.
- **Professional Development:** The main purpose of these groups are to connect employees at all levels and departments in order to provide opportunities to share experiences and help advance those wanting to improve their skills. Mentoring programs are often a part of professional development groups.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Assess your needs.** Each ERG has a specific purpose and goal. Evaluate which groups of employees might be underrepresented, look for trends in retention and recruiting, as well as professional development and employee morale. Understanding these areas will help determine which ERGs may have the most impact and value within your organization.
- **Write your mission statement and define your goals.** A mission statement is an action-based statement that defines the purpose and goals of your group. Within a few sentences, it should paint a clear picture of the 'what', 'who' and 'why'. Along with the mission statement, you will need to define both the short and long-term goals and identify a tentative plan to accomplish those goals.
- **Create a roadmap.** In addition to goals, there should be a clear vision around the planned impact of being a part of the ERG. This will help individuals see the benefits of engaging and becoming an active member. Some more common focus points are around career enhancement and professional development, serving the community, company culture and business success.
- **Identify an executive sponsor and champion.** Executive sponsors are a great way to help make your ERG successful. Along with offering support by acting as the voice to the rest of the organization and leadership team, they can provide strategic guidance and advocate for change. Many groups will often designate an executive champion as well. This individual is not a member of that specific group however their involvement can largely impact organizational awareness and participation. For example, an ERG focused on women in the workplace would benefit greatly from having a male ally at the executive level.
- **Develop a budget and secure funding.** While some organizations offer financial support to ERGs, not all will. If financial support is offered, prepare the preliminary budget needed to accomplish your goals and submit to leadership for review and approval. If your organization does not currently offer financial support for ERGs you can:
 - Create a proposal that demonstrates how your ERG is good for the business and request financial assistance be implemented. Be sure your budget is reasonable and you provide direct examples of how your ERG can positively impact your organization. Leveraging your executive sponsor and other department leaders for support can help strengthen your proposal and demonstrate the value in supporting your ERG.
 - Look for outside funding sources. While some groups by nature, are already connected with the community and may be able to obtain funding that way. Others may need to rely on donations and private funding by the members.
- **Name your group.** When considering names, look at options that clearly define the group, are inclusive to all of the members and are not too complicated or confusing. Acronyms can be a creative way to shorten a group's name however, they can also be confusing. Focusing more on what the group is about can increase awareness and participation. The group name should clearly tell employees what the group is about. ERGs are open to all employees and need to comply with the organizations D&I policies.
- **Start small.** There are no set requirements around the number of members needed in order to start an ERG. All that is required is a passion about the group and a desire to learn more and show support. Focus your energy on the mission and goals of your group, build a strong foundation and you will grow over time.



**Want to see
related actions
shared by the
coalition?**

[Click Here!](#)

- **Promote your brand and recruit.** In order to grow and increase participation, the group will need to promote the brand. Leveraging your company's intranet, newsletter or other communications and announcements are great ways to increase visibility. Some organizations will choose to include a list of active ERGs in their onboarding documents as well as their recruiting material. If there are other established ERGs, build and leverage those relationships. Cross group events can also help increase awareness and interest.
- **Measure Success:** Ultimately each group will need to define how they measure success. The goals and criteria needs to be clearly defined, support the mission and be measurable. A few common ERG metrics are an increase in members, additional planned events throughout the year along with an increase in participants. From a business perspective, the success of an ERG may be more focused on if they directly helped to increase company profitability, provided opportunities for employees to grow and develop and if the development of the ERGs positively affected recruiting, retention and employee engagement. There will be successes that are not trackable with metrics. For example, a sense of belonging, of community, a common purpose, relationship building and networking. It is equally as important to highlight and celebrate these wins.

FAQS:

How are ERGs established?

ERGs are formed by employees and established by submission and approval by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion or Human Resource department.

Who manages the ERG?

ERGs are self-governed groups of employee volunteers. An ERG Champion will also be appointed. Typically a senior executive who supports the ERG, they are responsible for holding the group accountable, adding value and acting as an advocate.

Can anyone become a member?

Any employee within the organization can choose to participate and become a member. This includes new employees, temporary employees, short-term employees and interns.

What are the benefits of offering and participating in ERGs?

ERGs help to promote a more diverse and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to succeed. Some common benefits are:

- Promoting equity and social justice
- Establishing a support group
- Enhancing the corporate culture
- Enhancing individual and professional growth
- Tackling company-wide challenges
- Bringing employees together
- Strengthening workplace productivity
- Improving work conditions
- Identifying and developing leaders
- Employee satisfaction

Can employees be a member of more than one ERG?

Yes, employees can join and participate in as many ERG's as they would like.



Signatory-Shared Actions:

- For signatory shared experiences, check out these related [Action](#) categories.
- Consider sharing with your peers your employee-led success stories by submitting an Action. Reach out to Marcie Murakami (marcie.murakami@pwc.com) for additional information.