

The PPA Guide to Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are employee-led, corporate-supported groups that are organised primarily around a defined diversity or special characteristic such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or generational differences. ERGs provide a forum for employees to come together, share their experiences, and support each other in the workplace.

They aim to promote diverse voices and contribute to the broader corporate strategy by representing the views and interests of all employees. ERGs can help organisations foster a more diverse and inclusive workplace by providing a safe space for employees to express their unique perspectives and experiences. They can also help organisations attract and retain diverse talent and improve employee engagement and satisfaction.

How should ERGs be set up and led?

ERGs should be set up and led with careful planning and attention to detail. Here are some key steps to consider:

- Define the ERG's purpose and objectives: Clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the ERG, and how it aligns with the broader corporate strategy.
- Identify the Chair and Executive Sponsor: Create a role profile for the Chair role of the ERG and advertise openly for these positions. The Executive Sponsor should be a senior leader who can provide support and advocacy for the ERG.
- Develop a business case: Establish a clear business case for the ERG, including its benefits to the organisation and how it will be resourced.
- Establish measures of success: Determine how the success of the ERG will be measured, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and benchmarks.
- Plan ahead: Develop 3, 6, and 12-month plans that focus on contributing to the culture of the organisation and improve visibility of the network. Allow time for ERG leaders and members to undertake their duties during working hours.
- Provide a safe space: Provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and aspirations, and promote a safe space where everyone can share experiences and affect change policies.
- Amplify diverse voices: Highlight important topics and amplify different stories and points of view. ERGs can contribute to cultural change by promoting a more diverse and inclusive workplace.
- Ensure activity ownership: Assign ownership of ERG initiatives and establish timelines and budgets to ensure the ERG strategy is moving forward in parallel with day-to-day work.

- Regular meetings with sub-network ED&I ambassadors: Regular meetings with sub-network D&I ambassadors ensure ERG strategies and initiatives are aligned with other ERGs, localities, and the broader corporate strategy.
- Encourage broad membership criteria: Have broad membership criteria encouraging people that share in the group's defining characteristic and allies. This will ensure that the ERG is representative of the diverse voices in the organisation.

Governance

Executive sponsors

The purpose of executive sponsors is to provide top leadership sponsorship and support for the organisation's ED&I efforts. Executive sponsors are typically senior leaders within the organisation who have the authority, influence, and resources to drive change and ensure the success of the ED&I strategy. Their responsibilities may include:

- Setting the ED&I vision, purpose, and definition, defining minimum standards for ED&I.
- Anchoring the ED&I strategy within the overarching business strategy.
- Approving the annual strategy and plan for the ERG network and sub-groups.
- Providing guidance and direction to the ED&I lead/team, ERG chairs, and ED&I ambassadors.
- Ensuring that the organization's culture, policies, and practices support diversity and inclusion.
- Advocating for ED&I and championing the organization's efforts internally and externally.

Executive sponsors play a critical role in ensuring that the organisation's ED&I efforts are aligned with its overall business strategy and goals, and that they are given the necessary resources and support to be successful. By providing leadership, direction, and advocacy, executive sponsors can help create a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace where everyone can thrive.

ED&I leads and ERG chairs

The ED&I leads and ERG chairs work together to support the organisation's equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) efforts. They are responsible for ensuring that the ED&I strategy is effectively implemented and aligned with the overall business strategy. Their main purpose is to:

- Approve strategic initiatives and deliverables that support the ED&I vision: The leads and chairs are responsible for reviewing and approving the initiatives and deliverables that will support the achievement of the ED&I vision. They also set

success measures for ERGs to ensure they are effectively contributing to the ED&I strategy.

- Ensure strategic alignment across all ERGs: The leads and chairs collaborate to ensure that all ERGs are working towards the same goals and objectives, and that their initiatives are strategically aligned. This helps to maximise impact, minimise duplication of effort, and ensure that resources are being used effectively.
- Share resources and collaborate for greater impact: The leads and chairs work together to share resources and collaborate on initiatives and activities that promote and support diversity and inclusion. This helps to increase the impact of their efforts and ensure that best practices are being shared and adopted across the organisation.
- Establish project plans with clear accountabilities, timelines, and budgets: The leads and chairs are responsible for establishing project plans that clearly define accountabilities, timelines, and budgets for initiatives and activities. This helps to ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them, when things need to be done, and how much resources are available to support their efforts.
- Regular reporting and updates to key stakeholders: The leads and chairs are responsible for providing regular reporting and updates to key stakeholders to evidence success and progress against the ED&I strategy. This helps to build trust and transparency, demonstrate the impact of their efforts, and ensure that the organisation's leadership is fully informed about the D&I initiatives and their outcomes.

Overall, the ED&I leads and ERG chairs play a critical role in implementing the ED&I strategy and ensuring that ERGs are effectively contributing to the organisation's diversity and inclusion efforts by providing leadership, direction, and support to ERGs to ensure their success and impact on the organisation's ED&I efforts.

ERG & ED&I ambassadors

The purpose of ERG and ED&I ambassadors is to serve as advocates and ambassadors for diversity and inclusion within an organisation. Specifically, their purposes include:

- Serve as conduits for two-way feedback: ERG and ED&I ambassadors serve as the voice for underrepresented communities, providing feedback on the organisation's ED&I efforts, policies, and practices. They also provide ideas and proposals for improvement as related to D&I, ensuring that the organisation is aware of the needs and perspectives of diverse employees.
- Support the development and implementation of the ED&I strategy: Ambassadors play a critical role in supporting the development and implementation of the organisation's D&I strategy. They help to shape the vision, purpose, and definition of ED&I, and they contribute to the creation of the annual strategy and plan for network groups and sub-groups.

- Promote ED&I within the organization: Ambassadors help to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion within the organisation. They organise events and activities that celebrate diversity and raise awareness of the issues faced by underrepresented communities. They also provide a safe space for employees to share their experiences and affect change.
- Facilitate an intersectional approach: Ambassadors facilitate an intersectional approach to ED&I, improving the experience of diverse talent and removing adverse impact. By sharing experiences and learning across all ERGs, they help to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all employees.
- Serve as critical friends to the ED&I strategy: Ambassadors are not responsible for delivering the ED&I strategy, but they add much value as critical friends. They provide feedback and suggestions for improvement, and they help to ensure that the organisation's ED&I efforts are effectively implemented and aligned with the overall business strategy.

In summary, the purpose of ERG and ED&I ambassadors is to support the development and implementation of the organisation's ED&I strategy, promote diversity and inclusion within the organisation, and serve as advocates for underrepresented communities. They facilitate an intersectional approach to ED&I and provide valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement.