



EQUITABLE ERGs

Your organization has decided to set up Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) – congratulations! ERGs are a well-established practice in the business world and a common part of Diversity and Inclusion work.

One thing to remember is that the core characteristic of ERGs is that they are **created to support employees who face systemic barriers in the workplace and do not have fair and equal access to opportunities**. It means that they are started because a specific group of employees, for example, racialized employees or employees with disabilities are underrepresented in the talent pipe-

line, might be lacking a feeling of safety and belonging in the workplace, and the work arrangements are not designed for their needs.

Because of that, you want to make sure that the setup of your ERGs does not contribute to this unfairness. You don't want to create additional work without compensation, recognition, or reassigning the workload for people who already face barriers in your organization.

Whether you are responsible for overseeing ERGs or are an ERG leader yourself, you can use this tool to help you assess where you are and plan for the future.

TIP:

Ask representatives of different groups involved in the ERGs – ERG leaders, members, HR/D&I practitioners, senior leadership – to fill out the checklist on their own. Meet with this group to compare the results and reflect on differences in the perspectives.



LET'S MAKE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EQUALITY AND EQUITY.

Equity is about fairness and justice. It is about taking deliberate actions to remove systemic, group, and individual barriers and obstacles that hinder opportunities and disrupt well-being. Equity is achieved through the identification and elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that create and reinforce unfair outcomes.

The difference between equality and equity must be emphasized. Although both promote fairness, equality achieves this through treating everyone the same, regardless of need and circumstances. Equity achieves this through treating people differently depending on need, circumstance and consideration of historical and systemic inequities.

Molefi, N., O'Mara, J., Richter, A., (2021). Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World.



EQUITABLE ERGs CHECKLIST

1. Are the needs of the group front and center (the most important)?

While ERG's mission and goals need to be aligned with organizational needs and direction, the group has to have the necessary autonomy.

Employee Resource Groups must also have the autonomy to create safer spaces for people to come together. Allowing the group to do so, provides space to take a break from practices such as code-switching, processing trauma, and fostering stronger bonds. (...) They must also be given the room to push the boundaries of the company's DEI strategy and awareness. Having Employee Resource Groups lead their own path and make their own decisions helps them collectively imagine new ways to push the envelope and enhance your DEI strategy. (2019, Feminuity Team)

- It's a gap
- I am not sure how we address this
- We considered and addressed some aspects of this
- We considered and addressed several aspects of this
- It's an area of our strength
We regularly look into it

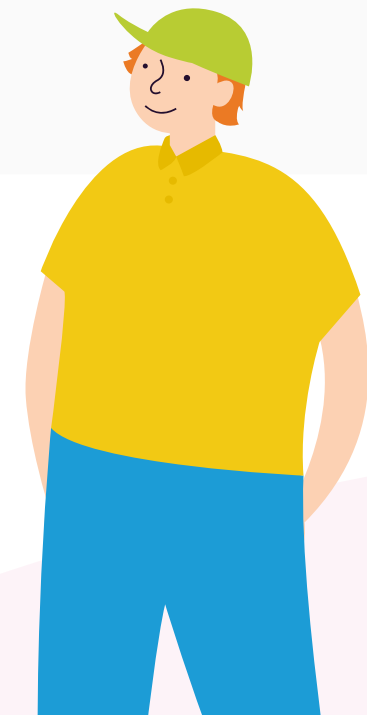


2. Do we provide the necessary space to do the work?

The involvement in the ERG is voluntary but the work should not be simply added on top of the existing workload. Consider the following questions to assess your setup.

- ERG Leaders: Is the work in the ERG connected to their business role within the organization? Is a certain percentage of their job allocated to an ERG? Are the ERG tasks discussed in the performance review?
- Members: Is it clear how much time can they dedicate to an ERG? Are there clear guidelines for managers related to this? Are the ERG tasks discussed in the performance review?

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3. Do we connect it with leadership development?

ERG involvement is a perfect opportunity to develop and practice many leadership skills including strategic thinking, relationship management, managing others, and inclusive leadership.

- Are ERG leaders considered your leadership talent pipeline?
- Are ERGs a part of your leadership development strategy?
- Is acting as an executive sponsor for an ERG a part of the development for senior executives?

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4. Do we recognize and compensate for the work of ERG leaders?

Many organizations are rethinking monetary rewards for the ERG leaders. LinkedIn has recently made headlines when the company announced that they would pay employee networks leaders \$10,000 for each year served². Even without financial compensation, there are many ways to recognize the value and additional work ERG leaders bring.

- Do we provide financial compensation?
- Do we provide additional benefits or gift cards?
- Do we formally recognize the work in a meaningful way?

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- We considered and addressed some aspects of this
- We considered and addressed several aspects of this
- It's an area of our strength We regularly look into it



ANNOTATIONS

¹ Five Fundamentals of Equitable Employee Resource Groups. (2019). The Feminuity Team

² Morris, S. (2021). LinkedIn Joins the Bandwagon by Compensating ERG Leaders For Culture Impacts. Forbes. Retrieved at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonemorris/2021/06/17/linkedin-joins-the-bandwagon-by-compensating-erg-leaders-for-culture-impacts/?sh=3e68a3692811>