



CHECKLIST FOR AN EXECUTIVE SPONSOR

You have been appointed to support and champion an ERG. Congratulations!

The work of an executive sponsor is key to the success of the group. What exactly is your role about?

Executive sponsors provide strategic advice so an ERG can align their goals with the organizational goals, and they build support for the activities of the network. They are a key channel for communicating ERG's mission, goals, and progress to other senior leaders. Your main responsibilities include:

- Ensuring alignment of goals and direction with an overall business strategy,
- Serving as a public advocate and the enabler for the ERG,
- Influencing other company leaders to support the goals of the group,
- Building connections between ERG and key organizational stakeholders,
- Helping ERG obtain the budget and other resources

This is a big responsibility and an opportunity to make an impact in the workplace. Here is a list of things to do when you are starting out in your role:

1. Meet the leadership team of your ERG.

Close collaboration with your ERG is the key to success so it is vital to work with an ERG you believe in and want to work with. The employees who belong to ERG will depend on you for advice and enthusiastic support. So try to find a group you want to advocate for and get to know them better.

TIP:

Ideally, before becoming an Executive Sponsor connect with some leaders and members of the various ERGs at your organization. Employees need motivated sponsors on their side who have time and resources to collaborate with them.



2. Attend ERG meetings.

The most effective executive sponsors take time to attend meetings, show ERG members that they care and try to understand the ERG needs, its goals and people who are ERG members.

3. Educate yourself.

Take the time to listen to people's concerns without jumping into conclusions and help mode. You'll learn more when you simply listen. Additionally, look for opportunities to learn about diversity and inclusion, and topics specific to the group you support.

4. Meet the former Executive Sponsor or talk to somebody who has been an Executive Sponsor outside of your organization.

You can ask questions about their experience and check how the ERG has been doing, what are the biggest challenges and opportunities.

5. Ask how you can become a good Advocate for your ERG.

As an executive sponsor, you are an advocate and a connector. You help your team by being a supportive voice. Listen to your ERG and when you see an opportunity for the group to chat with a company leader, make the connection and advocate whenever possible.

6. Challenge and encourage ERG Members.

ERG members can often be stuck playing small. Marginalized team members face additional barriers in the workplace and they might not realize where to find that support. Some of your employees might not see themselves climbing the corporate ladder, but your connection can give them the confidence to do it.

7. Help Plan and Budget for ERG Activities

You can help the group plan and budget for the activities they want to host. An effective executive sponsor should help groups see the bigger picture and get their events funded the right way.

TIP:

If you don't know something or wonder how to be a better Executive Sponsor for your ERG just ask your people. They will tell you what they need and how you can support them.

