

The Importance of Engaging Middle Managers in ERGs

A lack of engagement and support from middle managers for employees' involvement in ERGs is a recurring pain point for ERG leaders and others interested in ERG membership. Often, middle managers are not well-informed about the benefits of ERGs to the business and to the professional development of their direct reports. Instead, they see participation in ERGs as a distraction from their employees' main tasks.

Middle managers are key to the success of ERGs and the people involved in them therefore it is essential that ERG leaders and their executive sponsors help middle managers understand "what's in it for me" AND that organizations put structures in place to encourage middle managers to participate in ERGs and broader D&I efforts. Engagement from middle managers in ERGs

- supports D&I strategic efforts
- aligns business imperative speak with behaviors and actions
- provides credibility to D&I Efforts
- fosters collaboration between middle managers and ERG leaders on driving business impact; and
- middle manager coaching and support helps to develop a diverse talent pipeline.

The WIIFM (What's in it for Me) Factor

Middle managers can benefit from engaging with ERGs as this can lead to

- increased visibility to senior executives
- greater credibility and "brand" reputation with employee population
- enhanced personal and career development opportunities
- improved relationship building cross-functionally and with direct reports; and
- greater productivity creates a better relationship with upper management.

Ways Middle Managers can Engage with and Support ERGs

- Allow 10-20 percent of ERG leaders time to be spent on ERGs and build and write into performance objectives and deliverables
- Coach and advise ERG leaders on how to drive for business results by engaging others informally without official authority
- Attend activities and events, actively champion to others and bring a peer to activities
- Open doors for ERGs with other leaders and decision makers (e.g. help pitch for funding, speakers, guests, resources)
- Identify opportunities to provide leadership and career development training to support their leadership roles
- Volunteer to speak about your business, role and/or career
- Reward and recognize leadership and engagement efforts of your ERG leaders

Action Steps to Engage and Recognize Middle Managers for their Engagement with ERGs

- Tie D&I accountability into performance objectives including developing diverse talent pipeline, advocating for ERG participation, enabling 10-20 percent of performance to employee participation in D&I
- Develop comprehensive communications plan and actively execute
 - Ensure outreach to all stakeholders
 - Include business case, update on progress, current and future objectives
 - Provide visibility for your ERG leaders to present to upper management
- Reward and recognize middle managers for their engagement and support of D&I/ERGs and their impact on the development of a diverse talent pipeline (e.g. nominate them for Diversity Best Practices Above and Beyond Valued Ally Award)