

II EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

Almost all DiversityInc Top 50 companies use their resource groups to identify talent (externally and internally) and help develop leaders. The groups themselves offer a tremendous opportunity to cross-train people with new skills as well as to give them chances to work with other business units and have exposure to senior leadership, often through the executive sponsors.

The selection process for group leaders is important and should involve HR as well as the individual's manager (to get buy-in). It is very difficult for employees to succeed as resource-group leaders unless they have support from their supervisors and are given sufficient workday time. Data correlations and interviews with leading companies show value in linking the employee's performance as resource-group leader to performance reviews. For more information, see our recent [Meeting in a Box on Employee Resource Groups](#).

Discussion Questions for Staff

» **How do you select your employee-resource-group leaders? Does HR have a role? Are you limiting the group leadership to people who have already demonstrated leadership within the organization?**

Employee-resource-group leadership is critical to talent development. Having employee-resource-group leaders meet periodically (four times a year is most common) with the CEO and senior team allows group leaders to develop confidence and contribute at a higher level. For best practices on using groups for diversity recruitment, see [5 Reasons These Companies Hire 50% More Blacks, Latinos and Asians](#).

» **Are you using your groups to help recruit new talent? Do they attend job fairs at colleges and professional organizations? Do they help on-board new employees?**

Employee resource groups have proved invaluable at helping to engage new employees and make them comfortable in the corporate environment. They also help acculturate families and improve retention rates. See [this video](#) on how AT&T uses employee resource groups to on-board new employees.

» **Do you use your employee resource groups to have frank discussions about “elephant in the room” topics, including racism, sexism and homophobia, which could impede retention and talent development?**

It is very important, especially in these times, to be open about different views and to ensure top leadership makes it clear that your corporate culture is inclusive in every way. For best practices on this, see [Frank Office Talk About Race—How ERGs Can Help](#).