

DiversityInc Top 50 data and our 14 years of working with corporations demonstrate that resource groups are the most effective means of increasing recruitment, retention, engagement and talent development of people from underrepresented groups in your company. They also are vital conduits to external stakeholders, clients/customers, community groups and suppliers.

Here, we identify the most important components of resource groups: how to successfully start a group, leadership of the group, and the group's goals and metrics.

To start, we recommend you watch our Feb. 26 web seminar on resource groups (www.DiversityIncBestPractices.com/resource-group-web-seminar).

WEB SEMINAR ON RESOURCE GROUPS

In the past 13 years, the explosion of companies participating in The DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity competition has been paralleled by the increasing importance of one diversity-management initiative: resource groups. In our recent web seminar on resource groups, featuring case studies from Dell and MasterCard, we highlighted the best practices in these groups that drive results.

We selected them because of the remarkable success they've had with their resource groups. Dell, which was recognized as Top Company for Resource Groups at our Special Awards last year, has integrated its U.S. and global groups to a degree we've not seen elsewhere. And MasterCard has been using its business-resource groups to effectively improve its inclusive workplace culture and its external focus on emerging markets.

The web seminar started with our presentation on what DiversityInc Top 50 data have shown us about resource groups over the years—and some basics about why groups are needed (recruitment, retention, engagement, talent development, cultural competence, marketplace connections), how you start a resource group,



what they should be called, and the roles of executive sponsors and group leaders.

We examined corporate support of these groups and noted a significant upward trajectory among DiversityInc Top 50 companies in these best practices over the past seven years: CEOs meeting with the groups (doubled); senior executives serving as sponsors (up 26 percent); companies funding groups (up 22 percent); and letting groups meet during the workday (up 36 percent).

We used our data analysis to show trends in groups (veterans, global, generational) as well as how to dramatically increase employee participation in the groups (average participation at DiversityInc Top 50 companies has doubled in the past four years). And we noted the huge increase in companies that track results of resource groups, such as increased retention and engagement of members (up 425 percent in the past seven years).

Guided Questions for Your D&I Staff



What challenges have you encountered starting or growing resource groups at your company?

Discuss the support of senior management in your organization. Examine how visible that support is throughout your organization and how it is communicated.

Why is it important to have consistent “rules” for groups across your organization?

What components should be included in your charters?

How do you measure the success of the groups?

Discuss the validity of tracking retention, engagement and promotions of resource-group members compared with nonmembers.

How do you get remote or hourly workers to be included in the groups? And should the groups be just for the people they represent?

Discuss the benefits of virtual meetings. Talk about how retail and manufacturing companies have created solutions to include union and hourly workers (including off-shift meetings).

STARTING A RESOURCE GROUP

Best practices that have yielded the most effective and sustainable group success include:

- ➔ Have a formal charter that espouses business goals.
- ➔ Groups must be inclusive (anyone can join).
- ➔ Call them “resource groups” to demonstrate their value to business.
- ➔ Start with groups in populations that have the greatest need (lack of diversity in workforce, management, retention problems).

Discussion Questions

Talk about what role these groups have played in your organization and whether they were traditional “affinity groups,” “networks” or “resource groups.”

Discuss what should be in the charter, how you can get people to join (especially those not in the underrepresented group) and how you can publicize their value internally.

For more information, see www.DiversityIncBestPractices.com/resource-groups-white-paper and www.DiversityIncBestPractices.com/starting-resource-group

GROUP LEADERSHIP

Best practices for group leadership include:

- ➔ Have a cross-cultural executive sponsor who is a senior executive of the company.
- ➔ Select group leaders (D&I staff should do this in consultation with HR) who are talented people from various functions and may be “diamonds in the rough.”
- ➔ Give sponsors and group leaders training (cultural competence for both, leadership training for group leaders).
- ➔ Create one- to two-year terms with succession planning.
- ➔ Give leaders cross-functional roles.
- ➔ Have group leaders meet regularly with the CEO and senior executives in informal sessions.
- ➔ Link both executive-sponsor and group-leader compensation to group’s contribution to business goals.

Discussion Questions

??? How can you get your CEO and senior leadership more involved with resource groups?

How can we convince the supervisors of the people we select as group leaders to give them time to work on this?

Should the D&I staff have a person dedicated to overseeing resource groups?

How can the communications staff help get messaging out to senior executives and workers about the value of these groups?

How do we handle hourly/remote workers?

How do we link group leadership to performance reviews?

For more information, see www.DiversityIncBestPractices.com/resource-group-executive-mentorship

METRICS

How do you ascertain the value of your resource groups? What measurements make the case to senior management for the group’s contribution to business? Best practices include:

- ➔ Measure engagement, retention and promotion rates of resource-group members versus nonmembers.
- ➔ Set goals for groups (recruitment, retention, engagement scores) and link goals to compensation.
- ➔ Quantify group contributions to marketplace success (community connection, product vetting/suggestions, innovation).

Discussion Questions

??? What are the greatest challenges in your organization to linking resource groups to business performance?

How can you link these metrics to your current HR system?

How can you compare your metrics with those of other organizations?

For more information, see www.DiversityIncBestPractices.com/5-uses-resource-groups

NEXT MONTH

We’ll address two more topics: **Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month** (for all employees) and **Innovation** (for D&I, HR, Marketing and Communications staff).