**University of Arkansas Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) Facilitation Guidelines**

**Slide 1: Introduction Slides**

**Slide 2 The Value of Belonging at Work**

**Narrative:**

Belonging at work is more than just feeling included it's about being truly connected and valued within the organizational community. When employees experience a sense of belonging, they are more engaged, motivated, and committed to their work, which ultimately benefits both the individual and the organization. Here are several key reasons why fostering belonging in the workplace is so important:

**1. Enhanced Well-being and Job Satisfaction**

When employees feel they belong, their overall well-being improves. They experience lower stress levels, higher self-esteem, and greater job satisfaction. This positive mental state contributes to a more harmonious and productive work environment.

**Example:** Employees who feel connected to their team are more likely to participate in collaborative projects and support their colleagues, leading to a more cohesive and supportive workplace.

**2. Increased Engagement and Productivity**

Belonging boosts employee engagement. Engaged employees are more invested in their work, leading to higher productivity and better performance. They are more likely to go the extra mile, contributing innovative ideas and taking initiative to solve problems.

**Example:** A team where everyone feels they belong will likely see members who actively participate in meetings, contribute creative solutions, and take ownership of their tasks.

**3. Improved Retention and Loyalty**

Employees who feel a strong sense of belonging are less likely to leave the organization. They develop loyalty to the company and a desire to stay and grow within it. This reduces turnover rates and the associated costs of hiring and training new employees.

**Example:** Companies with a high sense of belonging often have long-tenured employees who serve as mentors to new hires, creating a stable and knowledgeable workforce.

**4. Fostering Diversity and Inclusion**

Belonging is a cornerstone of diversity and inclusion efforts. When employees from diverse backgrounds feel they belong, it enhances the overall inclusivity of the workplace. It ensures that all voices are heard and valued, leading to a richer and more innovative work environment.

**Example:** An organization that prioritizes belonging will see diverse teams that are empowered to share their unique perspectives, driving creativity and problem-solving.

**5. Strengthened Organizational Culture**

A strong sense of belonging contributes to a positive organizational culture. It fosters trust, respect, and collaboration among employees, which are essential for a thriving workplace. This culture attracts top talent and reinforces the company's reputation as a great place to work.

**Example:** A company known for its inclusive culture and sense of belonging will attract candidates who seek a supportive and dynamic work environment.

**6. Encouraging Personal and Professional Growth**

When employees feel they belong, they are more likely to take advantage of opportunities for growth and development. They feel supported in their career aspirations and are more likely to pursue additional training, take on new challenges, and advance within the organization.

Example: Employees who feel valued and connected are more likely to participate in professional development programs, leading to a more skilled and capable workforce.

**Conclusion**

Fostering a sense of belonging at work is essential for creating a positive, inclusive, and productive workplace. It benefits both employees and the organization by enhancing well-being, increasing engagement and productivity, improving retention, fostering diversity and inclusion, strengthening organizational culture, and encouraging personal and professional growth. By prioritizing belonging, companies can build a resilient and thriving workforce that is equipped to achieve its goals and drive long-term success.

**Slide 3: Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Understanding ERGs
3. Getting Started
4. Establishing the ERG
5. ERG Life Cycle
6. Operational Framework
7. Programming and Activities
8. Communication Strategy
9. Measuring Success
10. Challenges and Solutions
11. Closing

**Slide 4: Understanding ERGs**

* ***Definition:*** Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups formed around shared interests, backgrounds, or experiences. They serve to provide support, enhance professional development, and foster a sense of community among members. ERGs play a crucial role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within an organization by addressing the unique needs and perspectives of various employee segments, especially those from protected classes.
* ***Example:*** A Women’s ERG might focus on empowering women in the workplace by providing networking opportunities, mentorship programs, and professional development workshops.

**Slide 5: Formation of ERGs**

* **Definition:** The formation of an ERG involves the initial steps required to establish a new group within the organization. This process includes proposing the idea, gaining organizational approval, and setting up the foundational elements of the ERG.
* **Example:** To form a LGBTQ+ ERG, a proposal is submitted to OEOC outlining the group's purpose, expected benefits, and alignment with company values. Once approved, initial steps include recruiting interested employees and planning the first meeting.

**Slide 6: University of Arkansas Employee Resource Groups**

1. Armed Forces
2. Asian American Pacific Islander
3. Black
4. Disability
5. Indigenous
6. International
7. LGBTQIA+
8. Latinx
9. Parents & Caregivers

**Slide 7: Getting Started**

* ***Defining ERG Objectives:***
  + **Definition**: ERG objectives are the specific goals and purposes that the group aims to achieve. These objectives should align with both the needs of the members and the broader organizational goals. Clearly defined objectives guide the ERG’s activities, programming, and overall direction.
  + **Example:** For a Veterans ERG, objectives might include providing support for transitioning from military to civilian life, offering career development resources, and organizing events to honor veterans.
* **Identifying ERG Leadership:**
  + **Definition:** Identifying ERG leadership involves selecting individuals who will take on key roles within the group, such as the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Effective leaders are essential for guiding the group, facilitating meetings, and ensuring that the ERG achieves its objectives.
  + **Example:** A Multicultural ERG may appoint a Chair to oversee meetings, a secretary to manage communication and documentation, and a Treasurer to handle budgeting and financial matters.

**Slide 8: Diagram – Example of Starting an ERG**

**Slide 9: Establishing an ERG**

* ***Charter Development: Operating Principles, Bylaws, etc.***
  + **Definition:** The ERG charter is a formal document that outlines the purpose, goals, and operational procedures of the group. It includes the group's mission statement, objectives, membership criteria, and governance structure. The charter serves as a foundational reference for the ERG’s activities and ensures clarity and consistency.
  + **Example:** A Disability Inclusion ERG charter might include a mission statement focused on advocating for accessibility improvements and creating a supportive environment for employees with disabilities.
* **Membership Recruitment:**
  + **Definition:** Membership recruitment involves attracting and enrolling individuals who are interested in joining the ERG. This process includes promoting the ERG, reaching out to potential members, and managing the application or registration process.
  + **Example:** An ERG for Working Parents might recruit members through internal communications, such as emails and flyers, and host an introductory event to explain the benefits of joining.
* **Initial Meetings and Events:**
  + **Definition:** Initial meetings and events are the first gatherings of the ERG to introduce the group, establish rapport among members, and begin discussing goals and activities. These events are crucial for setting the tone of the ERG and fostering engagement.
  + **Example:** The first meeting of a Newcomers ERG could include an introduction to the group’s objectives, a networking session, and a discussion on potential future events and initiatives.

**Slide 10: ERG Life Cycle:**

* + **Definition:** The ERG life cycle refers to the stages of development that an ERG typically goes through, from formation to maturity and potential dissolution. This includes the initial setup, growth, stabilization, and eventual review or closure.
  + **Example:** An ERG for Early Career Professionals might start with a focus on establishing itself and growing membership, eventually evolving to offer advanced career development resources as it matures.

**Slide 11: Operational Framework**

* ***Roles and Responsibilities:***
  + **Definition:** The operational framework includes defining specific roles within the ERG and their associated responsibilities. Roles may include leadership positions, committee chairs, and other functional roles. Clearly defined responsibilities ensure that tasks are managed effectively, and that the ERG operates smoothly.
* **Example:** In a Sustainability ERG, the Chair might oversee overall strategy, the Event Coordinator plans and executes events, and the Communications Lead handles outreach and social media.
* **Sub-Committees:**
  + **Definition:** Sub-committees are smaller groups within the ERG that focus on specific areas, such as events, communications, or membership. Sub-committees allow for more specialized work and provide additional support for the ERG’s activities.
  + **Example:** A Diversity ERG could have sub-committees for programming, community outreach, and advocacy, each focusing on different aspects of the group’s mission.
* **Budgeting and Funding:**
  + **Definition:** Budgeting and funding involve managing the financial aspects of the ERG. This includes creating a budget, seeking funding from the organization or external sources, and tracking expenses to ensure that resources are used effectively.
  + **Example:** An ERG for Arts and Culture might create an annual budget for events and exhibitions and apply for grants or seek sponsorships to support their activities.
* **Meeting Schedules and Formats:**
  + **Definition:** Meeting schedules and formats refer to the planning and organization of regular ERG meetings. This includes setting dates and times, determining the format (e.g., in-person, virtual), and creating agendas to guide the discussions and activities.
  + **Example:** A Health and Wellness ERG might hold monthly in-person meetings for brainstorming and quarterly virtual meetings for broader participation, ensuring regular engagement and flexibility.

**Slide 12: Programming and Activities**

* **Definition:** Programming and activities refer to the events, workshops, and initiatives organized by the ERG to engage members and achieve the group's objectives. This includes planning, executing, and evaluating events to ensure they meet the needs and interests of the members.
* **Example:** A Professional Development ERG might organize skill-building workshops, guest speaker events, and networking mixers to help members advance in their careers.

**Slide 13: Communication Strategy**

* **Definition:** The communication strategy involves planning and executing how the ERG communicates with its members and the broader organization. This includes internal communication (e.g., updates, newsletters) and external communication (e.g., promoting events, sharing achievements).
* **Example:** A Technology ERG might use a combination of email newsletters, a dedicated Slack channel, and social media to keep members informed and engaged.

**Slide 14: Measuring Success**

* **Definition:** Measuring success involves assessing the effectiveness and impact of the ERG’s activities. This includes evaluating how well the group is meeting its objectives, the level of member engagement, and overall satisfaction.
* **Example:** A Leadership ERG might measure success through member surveys, tracking attendance at events, and analyzing feedback to determine the impact of their programs.
* **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
  + **Definition:** KPIs are specific, measurable metrics used to evaluate the success of the ERG. Examples of KPIs include membership growth, event attendance, member satisfaction ratings, and achievement of specific goals.
  + **Example:** KPIs for a Young Professionals ERG might include the number of new members each quarter, participation rates in professional development workshops, and member feedback scores.

**Slide 15: Challenges and Solutions**

* **Definition:** Challenges are obstacles or issues that may arise in the operation of the ERG. Solutions involve strategies and best practices for addressing these challenges and ensuring the continued success of the group.
* **Example:** A common challenge for an ERG focused on Remote Workers might be low engagement. A solution could involve implementing virtual networking events and increasing interactive elements in meetings to boost participation.

**Slide 16: Best Practices and Solutions:**

* + **Definition:** Best practices are proven methods and approaches that enhance the effectiveness of the ERG. Solutions for common challenges might include strategies for increasing engagement, managing conflicts, and securing resources.
  + **Example:** For managing conflicts within the ERG, best practices might include establishing clear conflict resolution procedures and facilitating open, respectful dialogue among members.

**Slide 17: Closing – Have Fun**