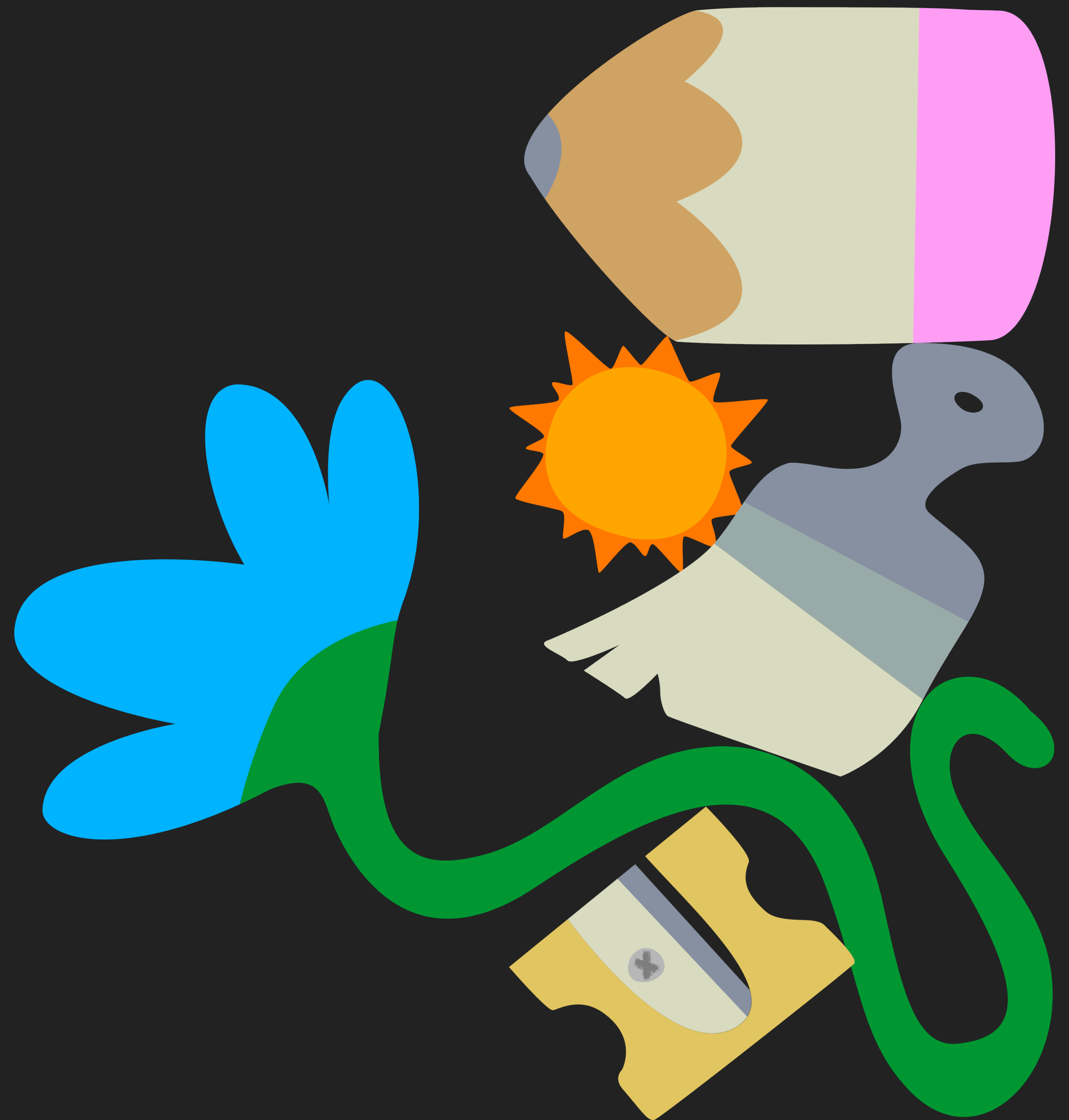


ERG Starter Kit

How to Increase the Power and
Influence of Your ERG



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“

**This is bigger than a social club.
It's as big as a movement.
We mean business and
can drive business.”**

We are Black@, an ERG at Airbnb focused on providing a safe meeting space for Black employees and allies to discuss racial and ethnic diversity in recruitment, retention and community efforts at Airbnb.

The last few years have laid bare the need for Black Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). The last few years have laid bare the need for Black Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

In 2020 alone, during a summer of racial reckoning, we saw people participate in marches and spontaneous protests against racism and anti-blackness all around the world. While acts like these are important and help to underscore the power that can come from unity, there is more that can be done to truly advance the cause of justice. If we are to advance that cause, we must act not only when we are enraged but also in the quiet moments.

It is in the quiet moments that an ERG can build an enduring playbook for action. An ERG will always serve as a safe space for employees in response to racial discrimination. But it can do this and more. Done right, an ERG can position itself as a power player. It can be a home base, a ladder, and a megaphone. An ERG has the potential to build influence, leverage its authority and accelerate change within a business. It can launch and sustain careers.

But first, you must know how.

Here are steps to set up your ERG as an agent of positive change. Whether you're starting your ERG or already have one, you don't want to miss opportunities to make an impact. The goal of this document is to encourage you to demand more of your ERG, your workplace, your community, and most importantly, yourself. Become more active in your group. If you don't have one, build it! Use this guide as your foundation.

It's not enough to open any doors that lock you out— you must remove them from their hinges. The next generation is counting on you just as you counted on those before you. Let's get to it.

Get Started

“

You don't have to be one of those people that accepts things as they are. Every day, take responsibility for changing them right where you are.”

Write a Mission Statement and Goals

The importance of a strong mission statement cannot be overstated. Your mission statement serves as a guide to your ERG. It defines your values and helps you track success.

Ideally, you'll start with a workshop to define principles and core values with your membership. From there, you can shape how your ERG will govern strategic decisions.

Think both short-term and long-term. Consider strategic goals that go far beyond creating a safe space for fellowship and engagement.

Here's an example:

Our ERG strives to advance a diverse and inclusive work environment with a focus on belonging. By leveraging the power of a comprehensive network of members, we drive internal and external activities that help attract, retain, empower, and inspire members.

Make a Business Case

A business case for your ERG is an important step to establish and set expectations for your organization. Your business will want to know what's in it for them, how it will positively impact the bottom line, and how soon they can expect to see results.

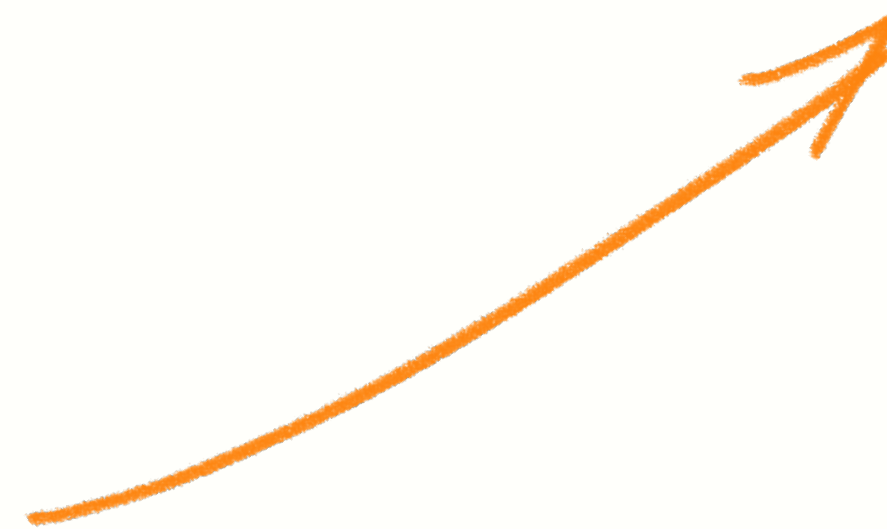
Also, you don't want to give any reason for your ERG requests to be denied, so hit every point carefully.

To build your business case:

- 1 Start with a review of your organization's Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
- 2 Point out how your ERG will support these goals and fill any gaps.
- 3 Define specific, tangible metrics for success. Select measurable goals.
- 4 Demonstrate how your ERG will positively impact the bottom line.

Other points to consider:

- Reduce attrition rates across demographics
- Create additional visibility for high-potential talent
- Increase in innovation
- Enhanced productivity



Find Funding

Your ERG should be funded annually just like any other day-to-day business operation or deliverable.

Consider it the cost of the benefits the ERG provides. When factoring in cost, don't forget to include member engagement, external speakers, learning modules, development programs, and tools.

Budgets reflect values and your organization's investment makes a statement to members, peers, and customers.

Recruit Members

ERGs provide a unique opportunity to add value to the organization and the communities in which your business serves, and members are the backbone of any ERG. Ensure that you share your vision with prospective members who are interested in fellowship and connection to create a meaningful impact.

Key opportunities to highlight to prospective employees include:

- Executive visibility
- Networking
- Professional development
- Stretch assignments
- Personal branding
- Community service
- Expanding the talent pipeline
- Building community and connections

It is important that you advocate for time for ERG leaders and members to participate as a part of their ERG duties. This time is used to complete projects, tasks, and necessary travel for the ERG.

When ERG work is considered extracurricular, like a company sports league or holiday party committee, the group is greatly diminished and inaccurately labeled as optional. Propose a formal program that protects and recognizes time spent on ERG leadership and participation.

Encourage members to share their involvement with their managers to help create additional capacity and a culture where diversity and belonging are valued.



Appoint an Advisory Group

Consider creating an Advisory Group that includes Black senior leaders and previous group leads at the company. The ideal ERG advisors are at the Director-level and report to an executive or are two levels away from someone in the executive level. (We do not recommend an executive for the advisor position given their limited bandwidth. They are best suited for the Executive Sponsor role.)

Given their position amongst leadership, advisors can use their influence to advance the mission of your ERG, provide their expertise to consult on high-priority initiatives and how to navigate various parts of the business, and can advocate on your behalf in cases where you do not have a seat at the decision-making table. Advisors can also act as mentors to the ERG Leadership Team as they continue to grow in this skill area.

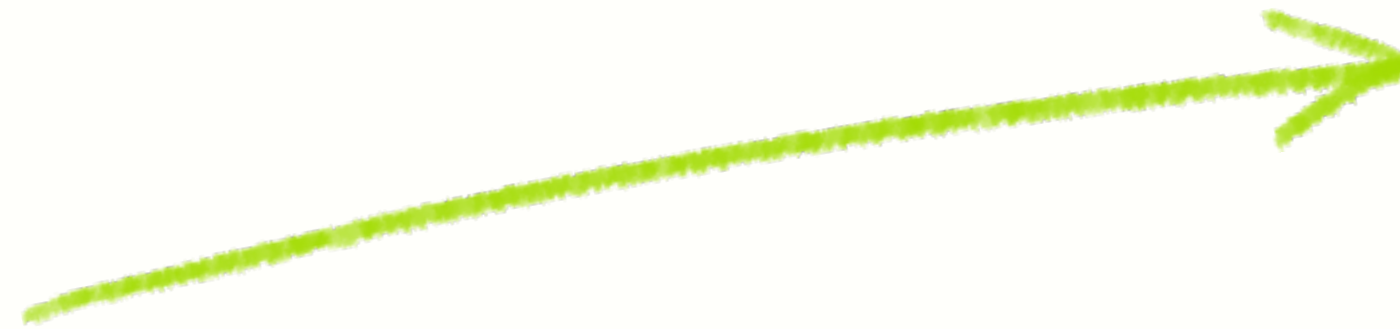
In order to have an effective Advisory Group, we recommend meeting on a regular cadence. This should be at least on a quarterly basis, ideally monthly or bimonthly. This is an opportunity for advisors to share updates from their part of the business that directly impact Black employees, identify major projects/initiatives in the company's roadmap that you might want to influence, problem solve for major issues impacting the ERG, and make requests.

As with any other organization, leadership roles and duties must be defined with a clear line of succession. You should know who is in each role and what happens when that person is no longer available.

Choose an Executive Sponsor

An executive sponsor is a key resource for the ERG because the sponsor is an amplifier for the ERG Leadership. The sponsor's role is to proactively offer strategic guidance and reactively help to overcome blockers or obstacles, using their organizational power.

In addition, ideally, they use their influence to advance the career of outstanding Black employees. The sponsor uses their altitude and experience to provide actionable feedback concerning advancement readiness of key Black talent, actively opens their networks and makes new introductions, and uses their own reputation as a platform to create access and opportunities for Black members. ERG sponsors may consider facilitating annual meetings with the CEO in which ERGs present year-end results and plans for the upcoming year.



Sponsor Accountability

Serving as the sponsor of an Employee Resource Group (ERG) is an honor. With that honor comes a responsibility to support the ERG by being a meaningful ally, including listening, being present, providing counsel, and engaging in advocacy.

Sponsors can best be held accountable by the leadership of the ERG through having an initial conversation with the sponsor to establish reasonable expectations. In the situation where an ERG sponsor is not providing the support needed, the ERG leadership should seek a conversation with the sponsor to discuss the needs of the organization as it relates to their sponsorship. If the support continues to be lacking, the ERG leadership should then contact the manager responsible for overseeing the ERG program to address the challenge.

Create Impact

“

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

ERG Leadership as High-Potential Talent

ERG leadership should be considered high potential talent. If you can successfully run an ERG then you've demonstrated the skills needed to run projects, departments, and other groups. Running an ERG provides stretch opportunities and projects that may not otherwise be available in an Individual Contributor's (IC) role creating personal growth. It also develops connections with company leadership giving ERG leadership higher visibility and exposure to more strategic decisions.

Positioning your ERG leadership as high-potential talent also cultivates validity and makes it more difficult to be dismissed as a social club. Effective leadership in the ERG will develop trust and credibility within your organization, creating a siphon for other opportunities to collaborate broadly. Be proactive in identifying an Executive Team sponsor and position your ERG Leadership in a way that creates visibility and tackles essential employee needs from the start.

Collaborate closely with ERG leadership to identify high potential talent that should be considered for professional development opportunities (internal / external). Some of examples of these programs include:

- Executive Leadership Council
- McKinsey Management Accelerator
- Extensive internal leadership-development programs for ERG officers and members

These opportunities provide a unique opportunity for active ERG members to expand their skill set and develop their leadership capabilities. Ideally, this will define a comprehensive set of metrics to track the available performance information of ERG officers and members including:

- Identification of high potential talent that is shared with that ERG officer / members' leadership team
- History of upward mobility of these members throughout their career journey with the organization
- Developing high potential talent to serve as brand ambassadors for the organization

Service to Members

Seek out professional development programs for your members including workshops, courses, and share-outs. Hone your resources to give members every opportunity to be successful, including:

01

Education

Tuition support to earn a Bachelor's or Master's degree or access to university courses. This can be part of compensation packages or case-by-case basis.

02

Compensation

Your ERG can be at the forefront of advocating for fair compensation practices, including advocating for parity in promotions, performance management, and leveling across identity groups.

03

Safe Space

Your group can be more than just a community, but also a safe environment for understanding and navigating your workplace, especially as it relates to the unique experiences Black employees face.

04

Welcoming New Members

Work with your Recruiting team to surface your organization's ERGs early with all new employees. Have a welcome process ready for every Black employee who wants to join your ERG, they should know what your ERG can do and how to get involved. Consider activating members in each part of your business around welcoming their new teammates.

Recruit New Black Employees and Senior Leaders

Sourcing Candidates

In your business case, point out that your ERG can support inclusive sourcing and recruiting processes and best practices. Then do everything necessary to fulfill that mandate.

Partner with your organization's Employment Legal team to ensure appropriate practices and considerations are taken with regard to sourcing candidates.

Find out how your company sources candidates, and wherever possible, offer suggestions to Recruiters, Sourcers, and/or Recruiting Managers directly on ways they can broaden their reach in looking for talent.

- ☑ Are they partnering with HBCUs or consulting with Black-owned recruitment agencies?
- ☑ Are they restricting their searches to large tech companies or folks with Ivy-league backgrounds?
- ☑ Is your Talent team partnering with product leaders to conduct live, non-traditional bootcamps/workshops with under-represented talent on HBCU campuses?

Recruiting teams are constantly looking for ways to find new pools of talent, but they must also confront the reality that they don't have all the answers.

ERGs can influence the way a company grows by filling in those gaps and offering creative ways to connect with communities they may not otherwise know to tap into.

Engage Candidates

Opportunities for involvement in active ERG communities can be an attractive value add when candidates are considering their next place of employment for all the reasons listed in ERG Member Recruitment.

Partnering with recruiting teams can facilitate insight into ERG communities by showcasing your ability to connect members, sharing your mission and strategic priorities, and by highlighting examples of your ERG's impact and influence. Similarly, are there ERG-led programs that can be shared with candidates – e.g., mentorship, sponsorship, and developmental programs? What cultural events and other kinds of programming can illustrate both the vibrancy of your ERG culture and its influence on company culture more broadly?

Partnering with Recruiting leadership can help ensure that sharing this kind of information with candidates becomes a standard practice throughout your company's recruiting organization.

In addition to allowing recruiters to speak about the group, if ERGs are surfaced to candidates during the recruiting process, then consider a step that allows candidates to connect with ERG leadership or ERG ambassadors to get deeper insight into the experiences of your ERG community.

If part of the member experience is being able to voice feedback to company leadership and this feedback has had a demonstrable effect on decision making, share this with candidates! An ERG positioned in this way can help inform a candidate's view of company leadership as well as affirm the importance of your ERG and it's members' perspectives to the company.



Referrals

It is very easy for companies to rely on referrals to build up their workforce, and in many ways, that may seem like the right thing to do. The notion that “good people know other good people” is widely held; and many believe that hiring by referral is the simplest and best way to ensure a company’s culture is preserved while it grows.

However, few companies recognize the negative implications of adhering too tightly to that way of thinking. Referrals in a traditional sense will rarely result in drastic change across broad swaths of an organization. Rather, they are more likely to perpetuate what already exists. And in a society where people socialize in mostly homogenous groups - or in a company that desires change and does not yet have the internal diversity it seeks - a heavy emphasis on referrals will in most cases not help a company diversify its workforce.

ERGs can function as a critical exception to this rule.

By uniting groups of employees who tend to be underrepresented company-wide, ERGs can generate networks of talent that reach far beyond what a Recruiting team can tap into or what an organization can do through its traditional referral channels.

If a Recruiting team truly prioritizes developing a pipeline of diverse candidates, it can seek to establish a healthy partnership with ERGs in soliciting referrals.

Within that partnership, ERG members should work with Recruiters directly to set up channels for surfacing up talent, if those do not already exist.

On the recruiting side, recruiters can provide ERGs with lists of open roles and related requirements so they can pass along candidates with confidence that they have the right skills/background to be successful. Where possible, they could also seek to ensure there are mechanisms in place to track the progress (and eventual end result) of ERG-referred candidates in the hiring funnel.

A healthy relationship between the recruiters and ERGs helps keep apathy at bay. If employees are unable to see the fruits of their labor in referring talent, they’ll be less inclined to refer in the future. And if ERGs are continually tapped to refer folks in their networks while never seeing that same talent get hired, they’ll eventually lose faith in a company’s recruitment efforts as a whole.

Along the same lines, ensuring best practices and a positive experience throughout the recruiting process can be critical to the future of a healthy and mutually beneficial partnership in which trust exists between ERGs and recruiters. While still being evaluated on competency-based hiring criteria, candidates who are referred by ERG’s or any other active employees should be provided a candidate experience that honors the source of their referral in that they’re handled with care and attention.

At a minimum, your recruiting partners should commit to timely, responsive, and transparent communication when stewarding referrals through the hiring process.

Recruiting Processes



Work with your Diversity and Inclusion Officer to understand the degree to which the Recruiting team is accountable for the company's diversity goals. Here are a few questions to explore:

- Are there specific diversity goals that your ERG can help them achieve?
- How are candidates vetted?
- What training is given to hiring managers?
- Are hiring managers provided training to mitigate bias in their decision making processes?

Beyond diversity goals, ERGs can help illuminate disparities in candidate experience across demographic groups. Establishing a close partnership with key leaders within the Recruiting organization is especially key here, as your ERG can be positioned as a thought partner in working towards solutions.

Allyship

Defining what is expected of allies can help relations with leadership, employees, and other ERGs as your role in the organization grows.



Ally Opportunities

Individual Contributors

Allies can volunteer time and help ERGs in whatever capacity is needed.

Managers

People leaders can support ERG leads:

- ☑ Ensure familiarity with what ERG members are working on (this can be done by creating space in team meetings or one-on-ones for ERG members/leads to share updates and cascade information)
- ☑ Attend events
- ☑ Help ERG leads and members make room in their schedules for their ERG efforts
- ☑ Find formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their contributions

Leadership

One of the most effective allyship actions is to amplify ERG efforts. Call on the leaders – both leaders in your hierarchy and informal leaders who have great influence – to use their visibility to amplify the efforts and campaigns of ERG events. More importantly, their presence, prioritizing these events, and their participation sends an even stronger message that your work is significant to the company.

Attend Events

We realize this may be awkward at times, especially for those that don't personally identify with the Black ERG. In these cases, we lean into the discomfort of the role reversal of being "one of the few" which is an experience that is very familiar to folks of color and other minority groups.

Build Relationships and Relate on a Human Level

Think about what relationship you would need to build with someone to feel comfortable inviting them to a dinner party at your house (covid notwithstanding). Allies are encouraged to make the first moves to begin building mutual respect and comfort; the type of comfort that is expressed when we invite someone to our homes for dinner.

Spend Time Reviewing Our Allyship Guide

[Black@ Allyship & Activism Guide 2.0 \(NA Only, Weblink\)](#)

[Black@ Allyship & Activism Guide 2.0 \(NA & EMEA, PDF\)](#)

Increase Influence

“

**If they don't give you a seat
at the table, bring a folding chair.”**

Keep on Message

Messages can be amplified through channels only available to leaders, making it a priority with their peers across the company, and advancing your mission through their own unique stories and ways of supporting you.

You want to be able to call on your company's leaders to participate in a planned event or to activate and give power in an unexpected moment inside the walls of the company or with events happening out in the world.

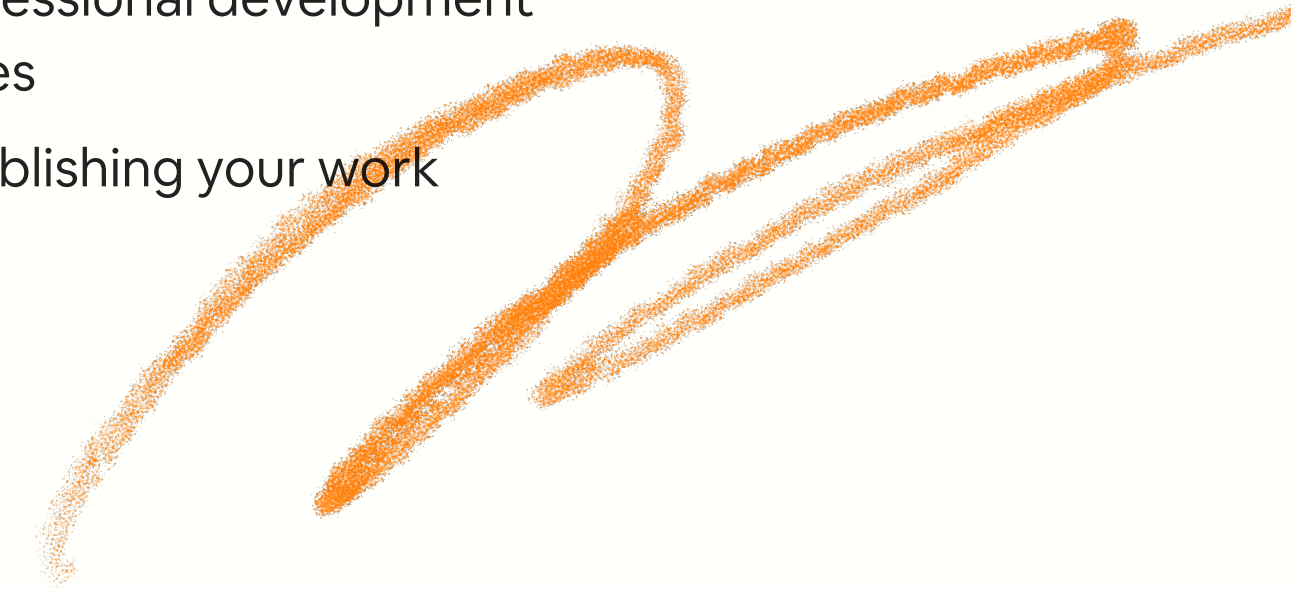
Having leaders who are engaged will make the difference in how quick, broad, and effective their impact is when you call upon them to support you.

Keep company leaders informed of ERG initiatives you're calling on them to support, messaging they can help amplify, and moments when their actions are paramount.

Remember, leaders are juggling numerous priorities, so be respectful of their time, specific with decisions or actions you need from them, and timely with information that will keep them prepared.

Keep the following in mind as you strategize:

- Align initiatives with company priorities
- Invite senior leadership to participate
- Report on your successes
- Provide professional development opportunities
- Consider publishing your work



Hold Effective Meetings

Run meetings like any other business unit: set an agenda, start and end on time, focus on your action plan. You'll also have to find ways to balance the social and cultural aspects with getting the work done.

Your members are human beings that need care, so weekly lunches and happy hours help the group feel attached and bring in new members. In addition, be ready to call voluntary meetings to decompress and support each other when there are police shootings, protests, unjust court verdicts, scandals, or anything else that negatively impacts the African diaspora.



Bottom line:
Every meeting should have a goal. That goal can be business-related, a fun get together, or communal support.

Create a Roadmap

Principles

The process of defining the strategy for your ERG must begin by clarifying the guiding principles for your team. This is useful for establishing a clear vision of the micro-culture that you are building for a “high-trust” team. Carefully consider the core values that you would like to define not only your initiatives, but ways of working.

An example of guiding principles may include:

- Confidentiality
- Commitment
- Connection
- Character
- Communicate respectfully, mindfully and candidly
- Challenge the status quo

These principles help define the approach for selection of strategic priorities, objectives and key results (OKRs), and guide the ways of working as team members prioritize initiatives.

Strategy

While the strategic priorities may evolve with guidance from the organization, the following evergreen themes often closely align with OKRs:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Professional development
- Celebrate culture and heritage
- Business impact
- Employee engagement

Once the strategic priorities have been defined along with the OKRs, it is recommended that ERGs lead workshops to define various initiatives that, if delivered, can achieve the defined key metrics for success. Consider breaking out sessions with membership to further discuss the strategic priorities and what initiatives should be prioritized.

Roadmap

The purpose of a roadmap is to lay out what’s necessary to transform your ERG’s vision into reality. Your roadmap can be as detailed or abstract as you need it to be; however, a successful roadmap is action-focused with timelines that help you track progress over a month, quarter, or year. Not to be confused with a business plan, your roadmap focuses on strategies including goals, initiatives, milestones, and dependencies.

As you think through your roadmap, consider creating tailored versions for various audiences. Each document can emphasize what is most important to your members and sponsors.

Projects & Initiatives

The projects and initiatives that appear on your roadmap should be grouped within each of the strategic priorities that your ERG has defined. Some examples may include:

- Recruitment: HBCU on-campus recruiting events
- Retention: Inform employee recognition program
- Professional development: Sponsorship program
- Celebrate culture and heritage: Black History Month panel
- Business impact: Collaborate on a Marketing campaign
- Employee engagement: Host monthly ERG lunches

Avoid these Pitfalls

From discussions with ERG members across organizations, we found a few common pitfalls:

Narrative Balance

Discern what is best for your members vs. what is setting the narrative for the broader company. As a business unit, your ERG is expected to make positive changes. You must be mindful of tokenism and being the face of the company only in February.

Reliability

When you set out to create or continue an initiative in the ERG space, plan to execute solo from end-to-end. Like Maya Angelou said - “prepare for the worst and hope for the best.” People will likely join in your efforts but people might not, so you must be prepared to execute end-to-end if you want something to take place.

Resistance to Truth

Do not be afraid of speaking your truth in any space you access. You never know who is listening that can help your hopes/vision come true.

Burnout

Do not be discouraged for how much you achieve or don't achieve. Any contribution to the ERG space is valuable and meaningful, even if it is just holding the space for the group to exist and maintain the safe space for the members of the community you represent.



Examples of Positive Influence

Here are a few success stories on how ERGs have positively impacted members, leaders, and allies:

Name withheld

“I don’t quite know if this counts as a success story. After starting at Airbnb, [a member of Black@] mentioned the sponsorship program to me. I was nervous and brushed it off.

The next week, you held a Black@ meeting and covered the benefits of the program and all the things that come from it. But you clearly said it might be uncomfortable at the start but to give it a try. So I did.

I was assigned a great mentor, who has helped me outline and clearly communicate what it is I want to achieve. I was even able to use that to clearly detail this information to my manager. I have since been assigned my stretch project. This ties directly into my goal of moving into project management. This is 100% a result of joining and trusting the Black@ community and group.”

Name withheld

“As an ally, I joined Black@ last year. Joining has added to my general awareness and understanding of the issues. I attended trainings and wonderful discussions throughout the year. I feel more confident in how to address injustices when I see them. As a person of privilege I always felt I didn't know how to help. I am still learning but being a part of this affinity group teaches me something almost everyday. I may seem like a lurker but I am listening and learning. I want to teach my daughter the true history and about racism - I never was. I want to hear your stories so if I can help I know how. Thank you all for sharing with me.”

Desmond Meray

“Black@ Leadership AMA (ask me anything) sessions are very similar to Reddit's question and answer format where we encourage all questions for the featured leader and try not to limit the session to professional topics. This is an opportunity for attendees of the AMA sessions to get to know leaders within the organization and within black@ on a more personal level.

Over the past year, we've had the privilege of learning about Directors, Senior Managers, VPs, and a CIO within the company. Through this program, I've seen the community feature leaders across Engineering, Global Communications, Business Affairs, and Trust to discuss a range of topics from book recommendations, favorite albums, the impact of mentorship, and even retrospective self advice.

Getting to know our leaders on a more personal level has been tremendously impactful to my experience here at Airbnb and has been inspirational for my career growth as well.”

Christina Matthew

“Black@ Emerging Leaders Sponsorship Program has been one of the best things that I've been exposed to at Airbnb. I've had a safe space to learn, be sharpened and advocated for by a Sponsor who is a Black Leader. When I look at my Sponsor's face, I see a world of opportunities at Airbnb that can include me- a strong Black woman. I am the future of Airbnb and this program allows me to dream about it and prepare for it.”

Navigate Challenges

“

**Do not get lost in a sea of despair.
Be hopeful, be optimistic.
Our struggle is not the struggle
of a day, a week, a month, or a year,
it is the struggle of a lifetime.**

**Never, ever be afraid to make
some noise and get in good trouble,
necessary trouble.”**

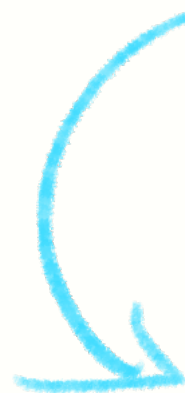
Measure Your Impact (OKRs)

The metrics don't have to be complicated, but they should be tailored to your short and long-term goals. Here are a few metrics you can use to measure the impact of your ERG.

| Metric | Questions |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Membership growth | How well are your ERG recruitment efforts working? Do you know why potential members and allies decline invitations? What could you do differently? What are other ERGs doing? |
| Inclusive company recruitment | What changes have been made to recruiting practices for the company? How have those changes made an impact? How can your sponsors or members help? |
| Event | How has participation increased? How well are events being received? Have you covered the minimum in Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Black History Month, Juneteenth, and Kwanzaa? |
| Surveys | Are you getting feedback? Although satisfaction levels can be misleading, you can still use surveys to measure feedback? |
| Retention Rate | At the beginning of the year, track the number of community members in Slack and attendance to recurring community events. Use this number to measure your positive or negative progress, noting who has stayed and/or joined. |
| Contributing/Active Members | How many members are truly engaged? Track members who contribute to: Event planning and execution / Offline resources (documentation) / Public outreach |

Overcome Pushback and Reluctance

There is a wide gap between an organization wanting to support and engage an ERG and actually doing so. The lack of consistency in codifying and treating this work as a merit-worthy endeavor for all employees will threaten its success.



Pushback, stonewalling and reluctance are demonstrations of casual violence and can appear in overt and covert ways, such as:

Teams will fail to receive adequate staff and financial resources to create programs and initiatives designed to improve employees' experiences and workplace outcomes.

The group may be asked to take on a seemingly impossible set of goals yet often lack the power and authority to drive change processes.

Members at all levels of the organization outside of the ERG will not be committed and engaged in doing the work. Research suggests that a percentage of middle managers may have to work harder to understand diversity and inclusion efforts.

To mitigate these issues,
you can:

Have the Work be Actionable, Measurable, and Evidence-based

A common defense against doing ERG work is that it is abstract or not practical. To chip away at these obtuse notions, we must make sure that the goals are concrete and measurable. The work should provide evidence revealing the costs of not supporting, participating and pushing back. Once evidence is provided, it is what it is - the goalpost is harder to be moved.

Elevate the Work Internally and Externally

To marginalize someone or something means “to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group.” In comparison, to elevate someone or something means to “raise in rank or status.” To elevate ERG work, the very top levels of leadership must spearhead and support these efforts and also increase the visibility of it as well as the people who will be needed/those who are already executing it.

Identify Leaders and Non-managerial Employees Willing to Serve as ERG Sponsors

ERG members should not be the only people speaking up in support of their goals and work. Executive sponsors or “champions” are key. One option would be to create complementary roles for non-managerial employees who can work with ERG to implement goals and consistently support the work.

Treat ERG work as Core Rather Than Peripheral

For this work to be sustainable, all need to shift their mindsets and their practices from treating ERG work as an unrewarded “side hustle” (i.e. peripheral work) to treating it as merit-worthy work (i.e., core work). To accomplish this, ERG members need to have titles and reporting relationships that align with the importance of their work. This is in addition to leaders, managers, and employees who have traditionally treated ERG work as “extra” work being evaluated based on their performance directly connected to compensation, promotion, and bonuses.

Avoid Tokenism

As more organizations take the initiative to create communities that foster diversity and inclusion, it's important to make distinctions between elements of representation vs tokenism. While representation typically involves a holistic effort on the part of organizations to pair diversity of expertise with social diversity, tokenism trends towards a conciliatory approach of implementing hiring or policy practices to satisfy diversity quotas within an organization.

Though representation and tokenism are often conflated, it's important to understand some of the signs to watch in order to properly push back and level set on new approaches for engagement:

- ✗ Colleagues looking to a tokenized employee to provide feedback on issues of diversity and inclusion.
- ✗ Limited upward mobility within an organization in order to manage demographic tokenism within teams.
- ✗ Narrow hiring processes that systematically exclude social diversity initiatives, regardless of expertise.

ERG leaders have the ability and advantage of developing inclusive and compassionate teams, but also a significant advantage to stay competitive as organizations become more globalized and demonstrate the need for localized presence around the world. Inclusive recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes creates a diversity of thought, while garnering a host of unique skill sets that will reach across your organization.

Work with Other ERGs

Tackle Similar Challenges

The challenges your ERG is facing might be similar to those of other ERGs at your company. Consider meeting with the leads of the other ERGs to discuss how you can work together to solve similar issues. There is also a lot of strength and power when multiple ERG leads show up to leadership as a united force.



Celebrate Intersectionalities

The Black community is not a monolith - intersectionalities provide a great opportunity to collaborate with other ERGs. Black leaders have pushed and led change in all parts of society - from the Haitian Revolution in Latin America to the Stonewall Riots and its impact on LGBTW rights. Work with other ERGs to ensure the Black community is also acknowledged and celebrated during the many heritage months throughout the year.

Here are few commonly recognized events and holidays:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Women’s History Month | March |
| Pride Month | June |
| Caribbean Heritage Month | June |
| Immigrants Heritage Month | September |
| Latinx & Hispanic Heritage Month | Sep 15 - Oct 15 |
| Disability Awareness Month | October |
| Transgender Day of Remembrance | Nov 20 |

Host Meet & Greets

Build community among the people of color in your company by planning a few casual meet and greets. In order to ensure attendees have something to discuss, we recommend identifying a conversation topic - this can be something fun or a more serious topic that impacts both of your communities. Meet and greets are also a great way to learn about others' experiences and share your own, creating more connection and empathy among our different groups.



Collaborate

Collaboration and support do not have to be complicated. As with anything else, you can start small and build over time.

- Amplify each other's events
- Create mentorship relationships across ERGs
- Collaborate on key proposals
- Co-host informal social events

Provide Career Guidance

Learning from Senior Leadership

Hosting workshops, fireside chats, or AMA (ask me anything) sessions can provide valuable career insights and expose ERG members to more senior leadership. It also allows senior leaders a chance to provide mentorship and guidance.

1

Ideas for Career Workshops

Now What? Navigating the Feedback Loop
The Art of Persuasion
The Art of Arguing

2

Host an Ask Me Anything

This is an even less formal way of getting to know a senior member of your ERG
Identify a host/moderator to facilitate the conversation
Create a forum to collect questions in advance
During the session, encourage engagement and have fun!

3

Bring in Experts

Identify external experts to host live sessions for your team

Develop Sponsorship Programs

A sponsorship program offers senior Black leaders a chance to cultivate relationships with, and advocate for, junior-level Black employees and protégés. It is a research-backed method for developing existing talent through the power of relationships. However, people of color are 63% less likely to have a Sponsor compared to white people¹.

Sponsors provide critical leadership development, feedback, challenging assignments, and emotional support that can foster growth and change, and increased visibility to the junior level Black employees. This sponsorship can contribute to the junior employees' career development and leadership growth.

The Sponsorship relationship is mutually beneficial to the sponsor as it provides an additional avenue for professional development & legacy building. Sponsors with protégés will be known as someone who attracts and develops talent, which is a fundamental quality of leaders.

A sponsorship program focused on Black talent can support your company as a systemic solution to remove barriers and provide opportunities for career advancement and retention of junior level Black employees who are en route to leadership.

Help Members Navigate Performance Reviews

Your ERG can play a key role in demystifying the performance review process. Your members can benefit from resources based on lived experiences of other members, including guidelines, workshops, and one-on-one assistance..

Here's an example of a set of guidelines provided to members of Black@:

Documenting accomplishments should be an ongoing practice—don't wait for the review cycle to start—and your contributions to the ERG should be included in your manager conversations and performance reviews. Use software that you're comfortable with (spreadsheet, Word document, Slack, etc) to keep track of data and documents that demonstrate your impact.

Types of Impact

Your roles and responsibilities may impact more than one type.

- Career Growth & Learning: Professional certification, company-specific courses, external panels or conferences.
- Influenced: Across the team, across the organization, across the company.
- Changed: A roadmap, a metric, a product.
- Relationships: Build trust with key leaders/partners, peers, senior managers, and directors.

Examples of Impact

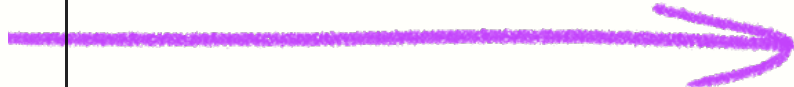
These may help you build your case—be sure to add specific/numbers for your review.

- Unlocked key learnings.
- Influenced the roadmap.
- Built a new system, sunsetting an obsolete tool, or improved security.
- Created a report that was widely distributed or used.
- Presented insights to senior leadership.
- Interviewed a number of candidates who received offers.
- Ran a workshop, hosted a remote event, taught a class, or mentored a teammate.

How to Get Started Writing Your Review

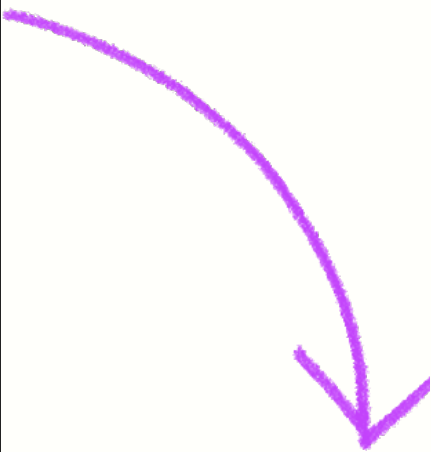
1

Write down any impactful task, accomplishment, or project you have participated in (in order of importance).



2

Go through your calendar and email (especially your sent folder) to jog your memory.




3

Read through your company's leveling doc and make sure you address key attributes.
Bonus: Keep a journal of key contributions throughout the year.


4

Remove weaker examples. ~~X~~



5

Organize the remaining items into themes tied to the Leveling Doc.



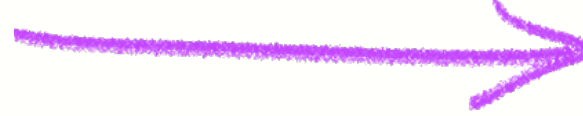
6

Draft your self-review.



7

Get feedback from a trusted source.



8

Revise & repeat until you have an organized and fine-tuned review.


Key Recommendations

Your performance review is not an assessment of how you spent your time—it's the story of the impact you had

Don't bury the lead—put the impact up front. Don't tell the story of your analysis with the impact buried in paragraph three.

Use powerful action verbs as you would in a resume.

 Avoid:
Worked on, updated, and talked about

 Focus on:
Led, drove, and launched

Show what you finished, which can include key milestones of larger projects.

Maintain accuracy. If you use data, don't exaggerate—be upfront. If sample size is small or if there are caveats, disclose them. (don't go overboard and use your judgment)

Bolding can be effective to increase readability—consider using for numbers or names (i.e., presented to Nate B.)

Peer Reviews

Begin by informally asking peer reviewers about providing feedback for the upcoming cycle.

Ask for peer reviews using the request tool but also follow up with an in-person or face-to-face meeting and highlight confirmed accomplishments.

Use clearly structured, detailed, and objective examples when reviewing someone's work

Key Point: Don't write a peer review if you don't feel you have a basis of evaluation. Decline the review or respond with: "I've only recently begun working with this person and don't have enough basis for comment."

Use consistent criteria and language for evaluating others in the same role.

Focus on giving feedback that aligns with your peer's career goals.

Go Global

This guide has helped you learn a lot about challenging your ERG. Growth may require you to make your efforts global.



Why Go Global?

A global lens can help bridge the gap and broaden thinking when it comes to how certain things impact a particular segment of the population. It's a good way to align and collaborate on moving an initiative forward.

When Should You Consider Going Global?

- Does your organization have employees in multiple countries?
- Is the ERG ready to take on the work for expansion and does it have full leadership support?
- Can you tie the work of the ERG back to a company goal or initiative?

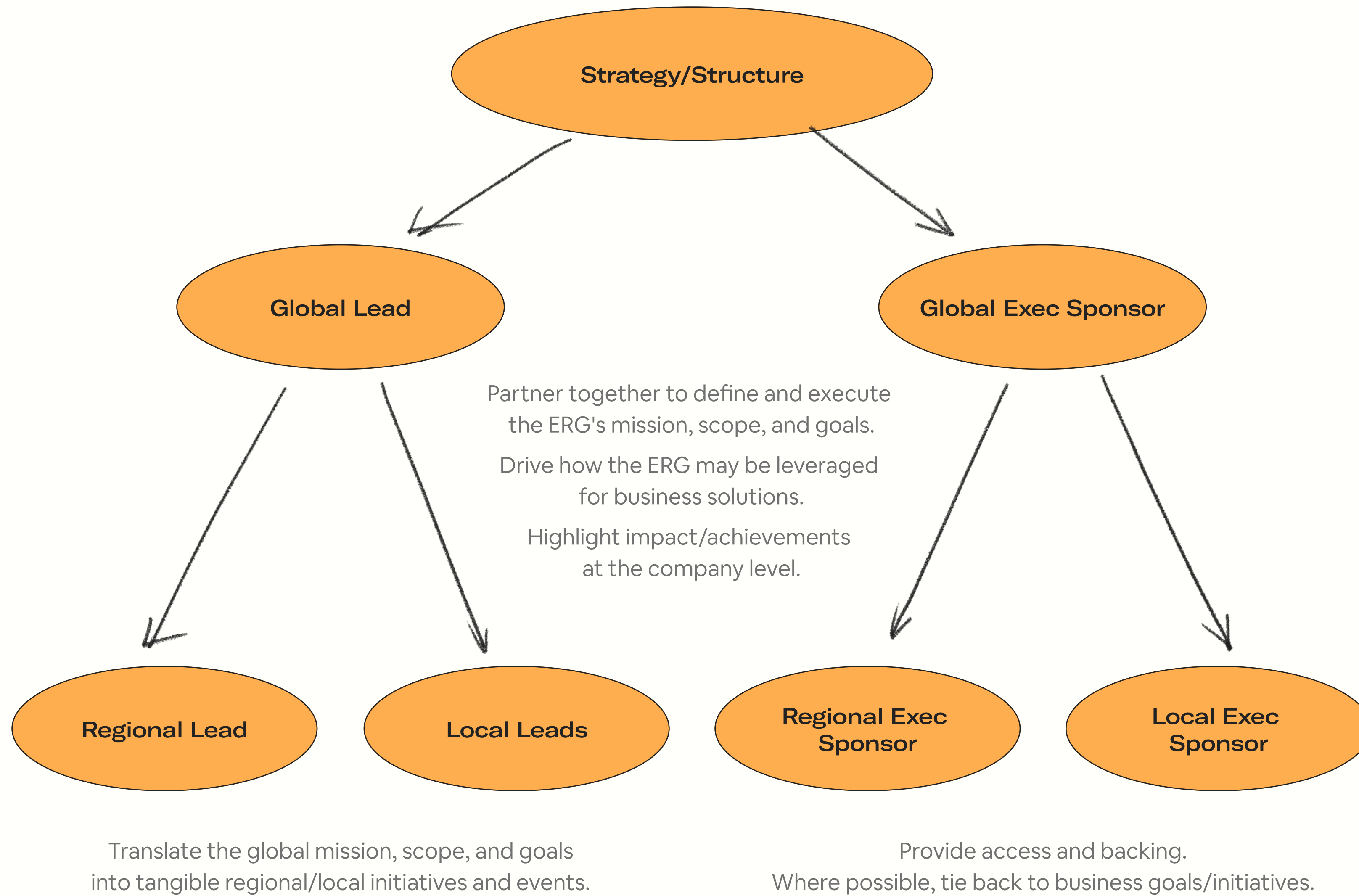
If you answered yes to any of these questions, consider taking your ERG global.

Creating a Sustainable Structure

Before deciding to go global, the ERG should define its mission, scope and goals. These are all key elements in ensuring everyone is aligned on why they are there and what the ERG hopes to achieve.

One of the biggest challenges in creating and managing a global ERG is evaluating effectiveness. People can tend to think in a localized mindset without evaluating how it translates to partners across the state or across the globe. So while geographical and cultural nuances have their place, it's important you all share the same north star.

Going global means there are not only multiple time zones to consider but having proper representation in each location. Everyone plays a part in a successful global program. It's important to establish a leadership board that helps to translate global ideals into tangible local initiatives and actions. It also does the same in reverse by providing a way for local teams to share feedback, ideas and solutions for achieving the ERG's mission and goals.



Once a structure is established, it's important that you stay connected.

- Use your tools; video conferencing, chat, among others.
- Be time zone sensitive and create a cadence of regular meetings and events both at the leadership and member level.
- Share what's happening; wins, challenges, achievements not just within the ERG but making sure your executive sponsors are getting the word out.

The Benefits

Global ERGs create more opportunity for cross collaboration and diversity in the workplace. It can also be a great tool for attracting and retaining talent.

More Work to Do

“

When we're talking about diversity, it's not a box to check. It is a reality that should be deeply felt and held and valued by all of us.”

There's still a lot of work to be done on defining the responsibilities, impact and recognition of the work of ERGs. In our experience as Black@, we believe the below areas still need to be defined by organizations with more detail across the industry, leading to best practices.

1

Compensation Structure For Leads

2

Internal / External Leadership Program

Who is getting promoted? What level are active members? How are we treating their referrals?

3

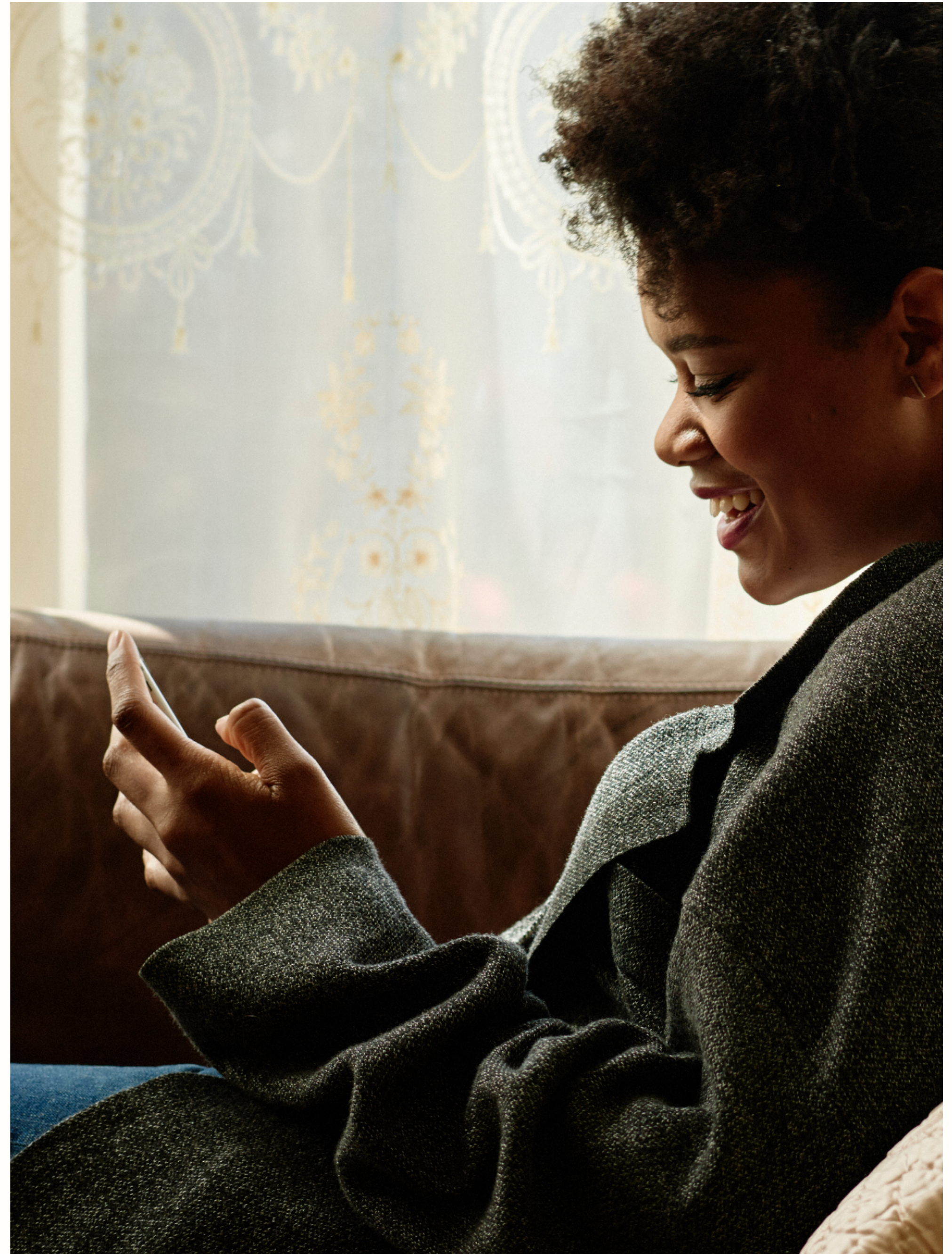
Formalize High Potential Talent Pipeline Tracking

Flagging candidates through managers and ERGs who may require separate paths due to difficult experiences with their manager (hidden gems).

Share Your Thoughts

[Take our survey](#)

Please share your feedback! We are very interested in collaborating to strengthen our community, deepen partnership with your ERG, and ensure that we are visible in the product we build.



Appendix

References

[Why Sponsorship Programs Are Vital In Advancing Underrepresented Groups](#)

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[The Five-Year Resume: A Career Planning Exercise](#) Journal of Management Education

[Too many diversity initiatives are neglecting junior Black employees](#), Fortune

[Want More Diverse Senior Leadership? Sponsor Junior Talent](#), HBR

[Why sponsorship is key to helping Black employees advance](#), McKinsey

[Want to Be a Better Manager? Get a Protégé](#)

Books

[Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: Fast-Track Your Career](#)

[The Sponsor Effect: How to Be a Better Leader by Investing in Others](#)

[Social Chemistry: Decoding the Patterns of Human Connection](#)

[How Finding a Mentor—or Even Better, a Sponsor—Can Accelerate Your Career](#) (Excerpt)

[Disrupt Bias, Drive Value: Diverse, Engaged, and Fulfilled Talent](#)

Coqual.org

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[Mentorship Is Not Enough: Exploring Sponsorship and Its Role in Career Advancement in Academic Medicine](#)

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