Research Request

LGBTQ ERG’s

Focus on:
Community Programs and Initiatives

February 2017
LGBTQ ERG Community Programs and Initiatives

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are often measured by their impact and effectiveness in four key operational areas: commerce, culture, career, and community. When ERG’s focus on community, they provide a platform for positioning a company’s commitment to two critical stakeholder groups—their employees and the communities those employees live and work in. An ERG’s involvement in the community helps deepen relationships and fosters collaboration by supporting the values and programs that are important to all parties. ERG sponsored community programs and initiatives also enable allies to engage in activities in and outside of the workplace and learn more about the LGBTQ community through those experiences.

Historically, externally focused ERG efforts have most often taken the form of volunteering in community events. However, more recent best practices include community activism and advocacy; building the talent pipeline, and expanding business opportunities. In addition, ERG members increasingly serve as liaisons between community organizations and the company, and are often actively involved in consumer referral initiatives which impact commerce and increase the bottom-line. Today ERG members often lead collaboration and benchmarking activities with external ERGs and community thought leaders to expand public awareness and garner support for issues important to the LGBTQ community.

Model Programs and Best Practice Approaches

Talent and Pipeline Development
LGBTQ ERGs often collaborate with local colleges and universities to support and fund student-based LGBTQ organizations. University of Texas Assistant Dean of D&I and Student Affairs suggests building longer term, not ‘one off’ recruitment relationships with these types of student affinity groups. Longer term mentoring and sponsorship relationships have a much higher talent acquisition rate than ‘one off’ recruitment strategies. In addition, ‘Bring a Student to Work Day’ related events allow company employees that serve as student mentors to bring their mentees into the workplace. These types of experiences foster a more meaningful dialogue and curiosity about a future at the company.

Civic Engagement
Many LGBTQ ERGs have become influential at leading internal and external campaigns in support of or against US policies that may impact the community. For example, many companies with strong LGBTQ commitments banded together to sign amicus briefs to various governors (e.g. Arizona, North Carolina, Virginia, Texas) to protest proposed policies and legislation that discriminated against the LGBTQ community. In 2015, ERGs from numerous companies worked collaboratively with local community organizations to fight for the rejection of the Defense of Marriage Act, and prepare LGBTQ communities for potential outcomes.
**Bottom Line ROI**

The LGBTQ community has one of the highest discretionary income pools of any diverse demographic in the US population. The community is also highly educated. LGBTQ affinity groups and ERGs can provide important insights and inroads for tapping into the spending potential of this segment of the consumer market. Whether helping company sales and marketing departments to create LGBTQ friendly ad campaigns; weighing in on LGBTQ specific marketing collateral; or collaborating with product development to create products and solutions that address the needs of the LGBTQ community, the LGBTQ ERG is an important asset tool for expanding the company’s market share.

Below is a representative listing of community based programs and initiatives carried out by LGBTQ affinity groups and ERGs in several US companies that have been recognized for their D&I success.

**Alcatel-Lucent**

- **EQUAL!** is the company's LGBT affinity group
- The work of **EQUAL!** is driven by focus groups that are staffed every year in four discrete areas: education/awareness, visibility, benefits, and membership
- The education/awareness focus group develops educational courseware and implements awareness activities for the year, including IDAHO, GLBTAM, NCOD, and World AIDS Day
- The visibility focus group provides global outreach to identify new members, and handles the external & internal marketing of **EQUAL!** as a pillar of diversity and a recruiting asset in the company
- The benefits focus group identifies benefit and policy gaps as well as opportunities for improvement
- The membership focus group works to grow **EQUAL!** membership, identify opportunities for new chapters, and ensure active participation by existing members
- **EAGLE!** led the Safe Space Program, created to send a message to all company associates that the environment is supportive of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender associates, and that hostility is not tolerated
- **EAGLE!** Leads events to celebrate Transgender Day of Remembrance, with guest speakers who discuss issues faced by transgender employees and make suggestions for how allies can support these employees through their transition
- The group sponsors activities and events throughout Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness Month; all employees are encouraged to watch pre-recorded events posted throughout the month
- **EQUAL!** works with its Employee Business Partner to host ongoing activities that highlight contributions of the GLBT community and raise awareness of the issues faced both within and outside the workplace that impact the lives of GLBT employees
- Managers in supervisory positions are encouraged to take the “Creating a Safe Workplace for GLBT Staff – A Class for Managers”
• EQUAL presents GLBT Webcast Classes, including GLBT 101: Intro to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Issues in the Workplace; GLBT 201: The Invisible Difference; and Creating a Safe Environment for GLBT Staff – A Class for Managers

**IBM** (company uses GLBT and LBGT interchangeably)

• Employee Alliance for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Empowerment (EAGLE) is the company’s LGBTQ affinity group
• EAGLE recognizes and communicates contributions made by and/or for LBGT employees and their supporters at IBM
• EAGLE promotes awareness among members and other employees about the value of diversity in the workforce
• EAGLE is a resource for IBM in identifying and maximizing business relationships in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender market
• EAGLE identifies and participates in corporate, location, and community projects
• IBM dedicates a full-time global procurement resource to focus on the identification and development of gay and lesbian suppliers
• IBM hosts an annual Global GLBT Leadership Conference; GLBT employees from around the world attend
• IBM was the first Fortune 500 company to launch a full-time, dedicated sales team to support the GLBT market
• Out executives and role models serve as visible role models who actively drive GLBT initiatives, including leadership development efforts that focus on developing the GLBT pipeline

**EY**

• Unity is the company’s LGBT employee affinity group, with more than 1,700 members in more than 90 EY locations
• The group participated in development of the “It Gets Better” video in which Unity members, including EY’s Global Vice Chair, tell their stories to LGBT teens at risk, illustrating that things will get better (itgetsbetter.org)
• Unity members are engaged in the Out & Equal Workplace Summit and have cumulatively volunteered more than 2,700 hours of support and been directly involved in leading 97 workshops
• Unity’s “Leading Through Inclusion” lunch-and-learn program builds widespread awareness about the importance of LGBT inclusion in the workplace
• EY US offers corporate sponsorship and support to LGBT-focused non-profits, including the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)
• EY/Unity sponsored the NGLCC gala and conference, with EY’s Global Chairman and CEO Jim Turley speaking about the importance of supporting LGBT-owned businesses as part of the supplier diversity initiative and commitment to LGBTQ entrepreneurs
• A Unity member chairs the board of the NGLCC; another Unity member has demonstrated leadership through the Procurement Council
**AT&T**

- LEAGUE is the organization’s LGBT affinity group
- LEAGUE identifies and implements community based projects that promote awareness, expands member growth, and builds the LGBT talent pipeline
- LEAGUE works directly with AT&T leadership and company unions to abolish harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- LEAGUE works to promote the growth and presence of AT&T in the LGBT community by engaging in external community activities and serving as a liaison between the community and AT&T
- LEAGUE provides recognition awards for LGBT leadership and accomplishments, both in the company and in the community
- LEAGUE created the LEAGUE Foundation, a scholarship fund that has awarded 93 college scholarships totalling more than $157,000 to self-identified LGBT high school students based on a cumulative grade point average; involvement in community service; and acceptance to an accredited US college or university
- Today, the Foundation is a national scholarship fund that reaches all 50 states, with the greatest share of its funding still coming from AT&T and LEAGUE, in addition to individual and corporate contributions
- LEAGUE also created and offers two LGBT memorial scholarships

**Microsoft**

- GLEAM is the company’s LGBT ERG with more than 2,000 members globally
- GLEAM members interact internally and with the community through Ignite talks, lunches, meetings with other LGBT groups, sports events, cultural activities, discussions with community leaders about gender and sexuality, volunteering, and fundraising for local LGBT support organizations
- GLEAM participates in numerous social and educational activities and partners with the LGBT community to promote participation in annual events, including:
  - Celebration events during LGBT Pride Month in various cities and countries
  - The Microsoft Day of Caring
  - Nationwide conferences, including the National Out & Equal Workplace Summit, Lesbian Who Tech Summit, and UK Stonewall conference
- GLEAM participates in sponsorship funding of annual activities, including the Microsoft Giving Campaign, HRC National Dinner, and GSBA Scholarship Dinner
- GLEAM partners with US and international associations, nonprofit organizations, and special interest groups to increase LGBT awareness, drive joint objectives, and help organizations in need
- Microsoft donates software, services, and equipment to numerous LGBT civil rights and service organizations, including the Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA - the Northwest's LGBT Chamber of Commerce), and the Human Rights Campaign (HRD): Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network of the Northwest
Walmart

- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Ally Associate Resource Group is the affinity group for LGBT inclusion in Walmart
- The group helps to maintain strong collaborative relationships with the HRC, PFLAG, SAGE (Service & Advocacy for Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Elders) and the Victory Fund
- Company associates – LGBT and allies alike - represent Walmart in numerous Pride celebrations across the US
- The San Bruno chapter of the group raised more than $270,000 while participating in the AIDS LifeCycle, making Walmart one of the top 20 corporate sponsors
- Following the 2016 Orlando shooting, Walmart and Sam’s Club locations in the Orlando area supported relief and recovery efforts by donating water, food, and medical supplies to area hospitals and local law enforcement
- Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon publicly called upon Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson to veto House Bill 1228 – the company posted the CEO’s position on social media, and it was also carried online by the HRC, LGBT Weekly and several national media organizations
- The strong position taken by Walmart on HB1228 garnered significant media attention and public support

XEROX

- GALAXe Pride at Work is the affinity group for employees who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
- GALAXe Pride at Work is 55% female, 45% male; 87% are full members and 13% are associate members; 29% of the group are straight allies, 25% are gay, 13% are lesbian, 2% are transgender, and 30% have not self-identified
- The GALAXe Education Team develops and provides access to a multitude of training materials, recommended reading, visual presentations, multilingual resources, and an ally-specific track (Visit GALAXe Education to view materials)
- GALAXe Pride at Work sponsors the Xerox Self ID initiative, providing employees the opportunity to self-identify as an LGBT person in Employee Profiles and Employee Engagement Surveys
- GALAXe Pride at Work provides numerous options and opportunities for learning; there are specific events for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people and their families
- The group offers education and awareness for straight employees to learn what it means to be an ally and how to be supportive of LGBT people both in and out of the workplace
- GALAXe Pride at Work broadcasts ongoing ‘all employee’ webcasts to increase awareness and instill inclusion
Visa

- PRIDE is the company’s LGBTQ affinity group
- The PRIDE group developed and launched a social media ad campaign for the company that promotes marriage equality
- The ad was positively featured by Fortune, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, the Consumerist, and the Mashable, among other media outlets
- The ad produced 169,544,437 total media impressions with a 99% favorability rate, including 2,100 retweets of the @Visa’s post, which was significantly higher than any other @Visa post received in the prior three months
- Australia and New Zealand picked up and widely disseminated a DBP article related to the Visa ad; the outreach maintained a 99% positive response rate

Johnson & Johnson

- The Care with PRIDE program is a nationwide anti-bullying initiative founded by Johnson & Johnson in partnership with PFLAG
- Care with PRIDE raises awareness of the harmful effects of bullying, and sponsors and supports community based efforts to make schools safe for LGBTQ students
- The company’s Open & Out ERG plays an active part in planning and carrying out the company’s involvement in the Care with PRIDE program, and in increasing LGBTQ awareness and employee engagement within the company
- The Care with PRIDE program engages Johnson & Johnson employees and community members in public education and awareness, community focused activism, and advocacy and collaboration with program partners, including PFLAG, The Trevor Project, and the Family Equality Council
- Care with PRIDE is volunteer based and includes as its member employees from multiple business sectors in the company, including consumer services, pharmaceutical, technology and devices, corporate offices, and individual business units
- Since its inception in 2012, the Care with PRIDE program raised more than $750,000 for its partner organizations
- In that year, pride festival activations reached more than 500,000 Millennials and the digital campaign garnered 9.3 million digital impressions
- As a result of the program, company brands had increased effectiveness and positivity ratings (measured through the number of online searches, social actions, digital conversations and views)
- The Care with PRIDE campaign has positioned the company as a champion of diversity, inclusion, equality and care for all people in the LGBTQ community