RR: NEXT PRACTICE ERG/BRG IMPACT DURING COVID-19
Communities of color and other underrepresented employee groups have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

• According to the AMP Research Lab, the COVID-19 mortality rate for Black Americans is 2.4 times higher than the rate for White Americans.

• In New York City, one of the nation’s COVID-19 hotspots, more than a third of people who have died from the disease are from the Hispanic community. Hispanic unemployment as a result of the pandemic is higher than any other demographic group.

• According to Indian Health Services, per capita, the Navajo Nation leads the country in COVID-19 related deaths.

• For employees with caregiving (eldercare, disability or childcare) responsibilities, stress levels will likely continue to increase as they struggle with balancing new challenges, such as lack of daycare options or fear of exposing the more vulnerable.

• Stress and anxiety are high and may also disproportionately impact LGBTQ, people with disabilities, senior citizens and generation Z who are already more vulnerable to factors of isolation and mental health issues.
Below are just a handful of the questions business leaders will need to address as we return to work post COVID-19. Many have diversity, equity and inclusion implications related to ensuring safety, fostering health and well being, mitigating bias, and ensuring a sensitive response to address the needs of employee groups most at risk.

- How are you ensuring equity in who is brought back to work? Are you measuring the demographic make-up of ‘reopening’ staff to ensure equity? What can you do to mitigate inequities?
- Will there be long-term implications on diverse talent as a result of both the new work environment or the decisions you are making? For example, will women and people of color suffer disproportionate setbacks in career advancement?
- What are the concerns and needs of your employees? Do they vary among different populations?
- Do some employees require special support or accommodations? Is mental health or isolation a factor? What can your organization do to address these issues?
- What supports are necessary to accommodate employees who may no longer have access to childcare, eldercare or disability care when they return to work?
- With a reduced/staggered staff, what skills are required? Can you train and educate to enable proper coverage and ensure populations are not disparately impacted by lack of experience or skills?
- Is there an opportunity to restructure or create new roles and responsibilities to meet business needs while creating new opportunities that did not exist before?

ERGs will be an important asset as these decisions are being planned. They can provide input to the leadership team about unique return-to-work implications for specific employee groups, can help with messaging, and can tap into their employee networks to better understand concerns and fears.
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Here are a few ways ERGs can help during COVID-19:

- Provide a forum and safe space for identifying needs and raising concerns.
- Convene COVID-19 conversations around intersectional identities in order to spark dialogue about differences in impact. Address root causes (privilege, bias, etc.) in order to tackle equity issues.
- Help to monitor the engagement and well-being of their membership and the workforce overall.
- Assist in crafting company communications and response messaging.
- Ensure key information is disseminated in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner.
- Connect with local communities to identify needs and ways the company can assist.
- Serve as a hub for translating information and connecting employees and communities with resources.
- Reach out to local chambers of commerce to see if local small businesses need assistance.
- Sponsor/conduct virtual focus groups (Employee Voice Sessions SM) to understand what challenges and anxieties communities are facing and to understand how organizations can help.
- Mobilize and reach out to partner with other ERGs within your company or with other companies to pool resources.
- Serve as social media ambassadors (e.g., share their experiences and speak directly to customers and communities through social media and other community-based forums.)
- Develop videos and testimonials to share what the company is doing to support employees and communities during this time.
There are also many ways ERGs can foster employee engagement and retention during COVID-19.

- **Create virtual peer mentoring circles**

- Establish reverse mentorships between ERG leaders/members virtually mentoring executives to give leaders insight to what's happening boots-on-the-ground or upskill leaders in virtual technology

- Charge ERG leaders as communication ambassadors to help share your messages, creating a more personal touch to the message

- Utilize your ERGs to work with their members to establish career plans. Where do they see themselves next, what are actionable steps to help them get there?

- Offer virtual career development sessions, especially on upcoming and future skill sets such as data analytics and AI that will likely grow in demand in the emerging virtual workforce.

- Create space for fun! It is important to provide opportunities for your employees to connect with each other beyond their normal day to day work tasks, especially in challenging times. ERGs can organize virtual social meet ups whether it be a virtual book club or something less formal like “meeting” for coffee for 15-30 minutes in the morning to check in with each other.
A new survey of Diversity & Inclusion leaders by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) found three critical functions ERGs/BRGs are taking on:

- In 37% of organizations, ERG/BRG leaders are helping monitor the emotional well-being of group members.
- Also in 37% of firms, ERG/BRG leaders are surfacing needs and concerns of group members, who may represent older workers, those with disabilities, or other employee populations.
- In 34% of organizations, ERG/BRG leaders are being asked to help keep their employee community members connected and engaged.

How is your organization leveraging ERGs/BRGs to help in its COVID-19 response? (check all that apply):

- Encouraging ERG/BRG leaders to surface the needs and concerns of their groups (older workers, workers with disabilities, working parents, etc.): 37%
- Asking them to help monitor the emotional well-being of their groups: 37%
- Asking them to strive to help keep varied employee communities connected and engaged: 34%
- Asking them to help develop and distribute company communications concerning our COVID-19 response: 20%
- Tapping into specific skills and resources their group can provide (translation, assist with setting up virtual workers, childcare support, etc.): 12%
- Asking them to help surface and suggest response to external community needs: 10%
- Asking them to help keep the company connected to the market concerns of their communities: 5%
- We are not leveraging our ERG/BRGs at this time: 37%

Source: i4cp
ERGs that focus on mental health promote diversity and inclusion and provide support for employees managing symptoms of mental health conditions. In fact, the most effective are well-poised to address the three top methods of reducing the stigma around mental health: social connection, education, and peer support.

Despite the significant need for mental health supports in the workplace, these programs are not yet widespread in the United States. Consider that nearly 60% of U.S. employees experienced mental health symptoms last year, and yet eight in 10 workers did not seek treatment due to shame.

Unaddressed mental health conditions cost U.S. companies nearly $17 billion per year in productivity loss.

In terms of hiring and retention, younger employees in particular are demanding change: 50% of millennials and 75% of Gen Z employees have left a prior role for mental health reasons — compared to 34% overall. These numbers will likely rise in during and post COVID-19.

In a recent survey of 1,200 U.S. employees, almost 70% of workers said that the pandemic has been the most stressful time of their careers. In a study of global employees, more than 40% said their mental health has declined since the outbreak.

Source: HBR
Mental health ERGs are just emerging at leading companies. Supporting mental health at work has been shown to translate $4 in benefits to the company for every $1 invested.

Mental health ERGs can be a catalyst for organization-wide change and advocacy. They help employees feel less alone, connect at-risk employees with a community who shares a common experience.

Make it safe for people to share their stories.
Among the most powerful tools that an ERG has is the ability to create a forum for storytelling. Storytelling reduces isolation, creates community, and reduces the stigma of mental health. For employees who aren’t seeking help because they feel ashamed, it tells them “you’re not alone.” For those who don’t know where to get help, it gives them a path forward.

- Affirm, Mental Wellness ERG
- Handshake, Mental Health Allies
- Johnson & Johnson, Mental Health Diplomats
- Netflix, Mental Health Employee Resource Group
- New Relic, NeuRelics
- Ryan Companies, Support Without Stigma
- Squarespace, MindMatters
- Symetra, One DMC: Disabilities, Mental Health and Caregivers United
- Toast, Inc., Complex Carbs
- Verizon Media, Neurodiversity Employee Resource Group
- Welkin Health, MEH ERG

Source: MindShare
FREE TOOLKIT
"Supporting Employee Mental Health During The Coronavirus Pandemic"

This visual guide outlines action-oriented tips and company examples to help managers and leaders support employee mental health during this time.

The guide can be shared with leaders and managers directly or as a presentation to teams.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Resources for Mental Health ERGs

Mind Share Partners has created resources for employee resource groups (ERGs) focused on mental health, neurodiversity, ability, etc. These resources include:

- How to Create a Mental Health ERG Toolkit
- Virtual community for mental health ERG leaders - A Slack community and ongoing resources for leaders of mental health ERGs from over 60+ companies.

Click here to download the free toolkits
Faith-based ERGs a Resource in Time of Crisis

Faith-and-Belief-oriented Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) have a lot to offer in a time of crisis. The Religious Freedom & Business Foundation’s (RFBF’s) online conferences promote freedom of expression about faith and core values in the workplace. RFBF engages companies that do this well to share their stories through the online forum, especially those that encourage employees to bring their full authentic selves to work, including their faith.

In the first of the series last month, representatives from various faith ERGs at American Express described their groups and their activities, and how they’ve helped address the new world we’re living in under COVID-19. Each Amex ERG representative shared from their respective spiritual traditions a thought, scripture or prayer they have found helpful in navigating the challenges we are facing during the pandemic.

This second forum in the series featured insights from Intel. The June 2 call will feature insights from American Airlines.

The online series is free to participants.

Click here to learn more about the ongoing series for Faith-based ERGs
The workplace isn’t the only environment that has changed drastically as a result of COVID-19. Employers and employees have also had to adjust to a new kind of lifestyle at home. From helping their children with virtual learning to working remotely alongside their spouses and pets, employees are facing significant changes within their households. How can you support the parents and caregivers at your company throughout this difficult time?

By starting an ERG for parents and caregivers, your employees who have children can provide resources, share experiences, and serve as a unified voice at your company. This ERG can meet virtually on a weekly basis and create a Slack channel, where they can share insights and even bounce ideas off of each other for things to do with children during this quarantine.

Source: Namely
Disability IN recommends expanding employee groups focused on COVID-19 employee support needs.

Parent groups
- Online kids’ classes or videos
- Family schedules in quarantine
- How to talk to kids about covid-19
- Resources for families with special needs children
- Links to art and science projects

Pregnant employees
Employees that are providing caregiving for family members

Physical wellness and stay fit groups
Mental Health and wellness groups

Source: DisabilityIN
Ways ERGs are Responding to COVID-19 Challenges
**Square Communities**, more commonly known as ERGs, are a central part of our workplace culture. Square Communities have grown over the years to include 14 global groups with 79 Chairs and a robust calendar of programming.

Since the switch to working from home, teams and managers across the company have been working to identify ways to maintain our sense of community and connect employees virtually. Our Internal Communications team rolled out new formats to keep us informed and connected, including regular COVID-19 email updates and a weekly virtual all-hands.

Learning & Programs team developed a range of resources for managers on leading distributed teams and through times of crisis; and our team leads surveyed their teams (and continue to) to keep a pulse on how they’re navigating the adjustment.

Since a number of our in-person Community events shifted to lower-cost virtual formats, our Communities saw an opportunity to reallocate a portion of the funds originally dedicated toward in-person events to come together and give back. Our Community Chairs were excited to partner, so we teamed up with our in-house creative team to develop a swag item (comfy socks— perfect for WFH life) with all sales going towards nonprofits supporting COVID-19 relief.

Though our Communities are generally inclusive and intersectional in their approach, this effort marked one of the first-ever all Communities initiatives — a heartening nod to the fact that, at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

Source: Square
In keeping an eye on our Community Slack channels and staying in close touch with our Chairs, it became clear that some of our Communities could benefit from additional resources on navigating new challenges. In partnership with our Chairs, we identified a few opportunities to provide information and support — and hopefully help Community members feel less alone in the challenges they were facing.

**Resources for Parents** — In partnership with our Parents Community Chairs and our Benefits team, we developed a resource document including tips & tricks on working from home with children, ideas to entertain K-12 children, parental benefits to be aware of, and CDC guidance for parents related to COVID-19. The document was developed to be collaborative in nature, with space for parents to share resources and wisdom, and it continues to grow.

**Mental Health Resource Doc** — The burden of navigating the mental health challenges associated with social distancing, disrupted routines, economic stresses, and health anxiety is sizable. To help prevent employees from feeling further isolated by these challenges and connect employees with resources, information, and one another, we partnered with our Neurodiversity Community to develop a collaborative document including information about our mental health offerings and other resources on caring for our mental health during the time of COVID-19.

**API-Squares Safe Space** — In partnership with our Asian Pacific Islander (API) Community, our Inclusion and Diversity lead and API-Squares executive sponsor hosted a safe space conversation to acknowledge the rising incidents of hate and discrimination targeting the API community. Employees, including allies, came together to share thoughts, feelings, and experiences, as well as to simply listen. Following the discussion, we shared resources focused on educating yourself on the API experience and expressing empathy and allyship.

Source: [Square](#)
Virtual Watercoolers. For the more extroverted among us, Communities have set up ongoing “always open” Google Hangouts where folks can join whenever they feel in need of a bit of connection. The Community Slack channels serve as a nice complement, where Community members can pop in to let folks know they are headed to the “watercooler” if anyone would like to join. These Hangouts serve as a great way to allow for casual, unstructured conversations about whatever!

Hosting Events Virtually — Rather than cancel or postpone in-person events, we have worked with our Communities to host external speakers, movie watch parties, meditations, and more via Google Hangouts. This has allowed Community members to connect in real-time and has had the additional benefit of supporting speakers, artists, and teachers at a time when business, for many, is being negatively affected.

Ask Me Anythings — Playing off of the Ask Me Anything (AMA) format from Reddit, we’ve hosted AMAs in our Community Slack channels featuring executive sponsors, members of our leadership team, and members of other teams of interest, such as Internal Mobility and Benefits. These AMAs provide a fresh way for Community members to engage. Pro tip: Be sure to send out communications about the AMA and get it on the calendar ahead of time. This will give folks the chance to consider questions and be sure to attend.

Photo Contests — For more asynchronous Slack fun, a number of Communities have been hosting photo contents, inviting members to share pictures of favorite meals, work from home set-ups, children, or pets. The photo with the most reactions sometimes receives a small prize ranging from a donation to the nonprofit of their choosing to a gift certificate to a local small business.

Slack Profile Images — To help elevate holidays such as International Women’s Day (which normally we would do through physical installations in our office spaces), as well as to demonstrate solidarity, we’ve been experimenting with sharing digital assets for employees to swap in temporarily for their Slack profile image. So far we’ve only seen these assets used within pockets of the company—we’d recommend clear communications and participation from leadership for it to really take off.
At Cruise, ERGs have been instrumental in multiple ways during the current health crisis.

**Families at Cruise** is a group for working parents and others with familial responsibilities. Active before the pandemic with an internal communications channel where members interacted, the group mobilized to spread word of local school and daycare closings. Group leaders escalated issues to the CEO and his direct reports, driving helpful communication from the CHRO about policies and support for employees with parents. An HR business partner also spoke to the group about topics of interest to parents. At the end of one call, group members took turns unmuting and introducing their children, reinforcing inclusion and authenticity.

**Bring Work to Your Family Day puts a virtual spin on a workplace tradition.** Business professionals are familiar with Bring Your Son/Daughter to Work days, but Cruise adapted the idea for a work world relegated to home offices. Bring Work to Your Family Day saw Families at Cruise members posting pictures of their “coworkers” (employees’ kids at home with them) and sharing family experiences. The event enhanced appreciation for colleagues and their situations, again reinforcing authenticity.

**Employee groups are helping bridge the intersections in workers’ lives.** At Cruise, the company’s Asian Pacific Islander Group commemorated National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month by sponsoring an Origami Night for Cruise employees and invited their children. The group had materials shipped to participants’ homes. The event explored the history of origami and enabled individuals to create and show the items they made while also celebrating culture and emphasizing the intersection of the group with parenting.

Cruise is creating a Harvey Milk and Cookies event, profiling historical figures in LGBTQ history over cookies and is shipping cookies to participants' homes in a show of virtual PRIDE support.

Source: i4cp
How FINRA’s ERGs are Supporting Employees

From hosting webinars, weekly meditation sessions and panel discussions to offering a wealth of wellness resources and sharing opportunities for virtual volunteering, FINRA’s 10 Employee Resource Groups are creating an impact through their programming, constant communication and ramped up mission to make employees feel supported during the COVID-19 crisis.

- FINRA Disability and Wellness ERG (DAWN) provides wellness resources

This ERG was the first to step up and provide resources and the first one to put together a strategy on how to support the organization once COVID-19 hit.

DAWN’s newest program, “Wellness in Stressful Times – Whatcha Doin,” offers virtual sessions with topics like, “staying motivated and active while working from home” and “How are you handling distractions in your daily life, especially now when work and home life are overlapping?”

DAWN’s “Mindful@ FINRA” is a monthly 30-minute guided meditation series that allows employees to manage stress and maintain mindfulness. When COVID-19 hit, DAWN added Mindful Mondays, 15-20-minute meditation sessions geared specifically toward managing through COVID-19.

Source: Diversity Best Practices
How FINRA’s ERGs are Supporting Employees

- FINRA Pride Alliance offers virtual volunteer opportunities

FINRA’s Pride Alliance ERG offers a weekly virtual Thursday programming series for all of Pride Alliance members called, “Meeting the Members.”

It’s designed to serve not only as a way to connect Management Committee Members with Pride Alliance members, but also as a way for the group to just “talk” and lift the spirits of others virtually.

The series began in early April and the ERG is currently discussing topics including virtual “Show Your Pride” events since many in-person Pride parades are now cancelled.

The group is also planning to offer ways to virtually volunteer especially as the LGBTQ population has been affected by the lockdown.

The group will leverage opportunities through sites like volunteermatch.org and other organizations to identify virtual volunteer opportunities.

Source: Diversity Best Practices
How FINRA’s ERGs are Supporting Employees

Top Tips for D&I Leaders in the Wake of COVID-19 from FINRA's Efforts

Visible and vocal support from C-suite leadership is critical
As with prior to COVID-19, senior leadership support and partnering is critical to the success of your D&I strategy. More than ever, having your topmost senior leadership conveying a message of support, empathy, and flexibility is critical during this time, followed by creating ways for a consistent message from middle managers down to all employees.

Include flexibility in your inclusive leadership education strategy
Work-life integration was already important to job seekers and current employees and we will see this theme even more in light of COVID-19. D&I leaders should continue to include topics around managing dispersed teams, remote workers and being cognizant of bias and blind spots in their D&I education strategy. It is more important than ever for organizations to cultivate inclusive leadership.

Check on your employees
We are all working differently and in new ways like never before and things impact people differently. Let’s not assume that we know all the support everyone may need to be successful. D&I leaders should frequently pulse their organizations through focus groups, the ERG platform, and formal pulse surveys to gain feedback from employees to make more informed decisions, obtain recommendations and increase engagement and inclusion.

Think outside the box and continue to innovate!
What got us here won’t get us there! D&I leaders are in a very unique position and play a critical role to support the organization in the response and management of the pandemic. D&I leaders should continue to assess and re-evaluate practices and policies and stay abreast of legal updates and changes as well. D&I leaders should be prepared to address new stigmas, think outside the box, and execute programs differently without decreasing value.

Source: Diversity Best Practices
During this time of uncertainty, the role business resource groups serve in a company's culture has been underscored. The 10 BRGs at ADP are a support system that helps shape the company's culture of inclusion, and are instrumental in allowing everyone to feel welcome and included. They provide the workforce with professional and personal support and help bring people together around shared causes.

ADP provides BRG leaders with guidance "on leading during challenging times," which includes exercises to help promote team dialogue and resources to help families navigate the blending of work and life.

It's critical BRGs have resources and virtual communication tools to continue fostering meaningful engagement. In order to perform that task remotely, ADP has provided BRGs with educational information and resources to use across their virtual communication channels.

BRGs at ADP participate in volunteering as well, even through times of social distancing and shelter-in-place orders throughout the country. The BRGs have compiled lists of volunteer opportunities employees can participate across the nation.

Source: HRdive
At **Astellas**, ERGs are known as EIGs – Employee Impact Groups. The company’s Diversity and Inclusion Governance Council, composed of senior leaders across global Astellas, drove rebranding of ERG as EIGs. As an evidence-based institution employing many physicians and engineers, the pharmaceutical firm focused its groups on creating impactful and measurable outcomes. The name change for its groups reflects that element of organizational culture. In a similar vein, a call attendee noted that their organization uses the title Associate Impact Group.

**Astellas’ Abilities EIG** took a leadership role by partnering with Aetna to provide 4 and 8-hour training (in-person prior to the pandemic and virtual now) designed to elevate visibility of mental health issues, such as depression and how it shows up at work. The sessions aren’t meant to be diagnostic in nature, but rather provide instruction on recognizing symptoms of emotional issues. They empower employees and leaders with tools, scripts, and resources, teaching them how to take action and provide constructive help when needed.

Source: i4cp
Last year at its Adobe for All Summit (an internal, D&I in-person event), the D&I team began a focus on storytelling. A handful of employees were selected from those interested in sharing. The group was provided training and given 10 minutes on stage to do a sort of Ted Talk about their life stories. Audience impact was immense as participants shared emotional stories and their vulnerability. The approach resulted in heightened empathy and appreciation for others and their experiences. Ultimately, in fewer biases and greater inclusion.

The pandemic necessitated adaptation of the storytelling to the remote work environment. The Adobe for All Coffee Break takes place live every Friday at 10 am Pacific Time (with replays available for other time zones). Duration is 30 minutes, and the D&I team invites an Adobe leader (known to have a diverse background) to be interviewed. The interview is streamed on a live platform with the guest seen in her/his home.

**Goal:** build inclusion and empathy through personal stories. Particular emphasis on senior leader participation demonstrates to diverse employees that there are leaders who also embody diversity and share similar experiences. Series is likely to continue until employees return to the workplace or until a drop-off in participation signals waning interest. Average attendance: 1,000 – 2,500 stream the live event, additional numbers view the recorded version. Employees respond well to the informal, unscripted approach, which also includes participating leaders’ responses to a few questions submitted through chat.
Multiple efforts center on normalizing the conversation about mental health. People are still not naturally comfortable talking about different abilities. The pandemic has heightened that discomfort, especially in discussing mental well-being. Some of the company’s strategies include:

• Acknowledging that employees need/want to talk and share their experiences/challenges during the health crisis

• Inviting all company business resource groups (BRGs) to have conversations within the employee communities they represent and across communities

• Representing employees with disabilities and those who are caregivers, Lockheed Martin’s Able & Allies BRG has taken a leading role. Already planning a 2020 focus on mental health, the group has reached out and issued a call to action for leaders and other employees within the company to join that campaign

• Collaborating internationally within the company’s markets to define a mental health strategy

• Collaborating internationally within the company’s markets to define a mental health strategy

• Asking leaders to create a safe environment for dialogues and sharing personal stories about well-being issues
Every month at Best Buy’s campus headquarters, members of its employee resource group (ERG) used to meet to share their stories. In February, the group discussed the black community and mental health. In November, they focused their talk on veterans. In other meetings, the group has examined the relationship between mental health and sexual assault, how members manage OCD, and how mental health impacts women. Recently, the group has been meeting virtually to discuss their mental health during the pandemic. Coming out of a meeting, one employee said, “This is the most impactful thing I have done here.” At Best Buy, the forum is private with “Vegas rules,” meaning information discussed during meetings is confidential.

Organizations looking to ramp up their virtual resources during this time can follow in the steps of companies like RetailMeNot. Their mental health ERG, RMN caRe, educates employees via a dedicated Slack channel, ongoing remote events with outside speakers, and written guidance on mental health benefits and policies.

Source: HBR
Ford’s approach, which started by creating archetype descriptors of workers – similar to F5’s personas – but then using them to design helpful strategies and considerations at different stages of the return-to-work journey (e.g., first day, 0-1 week, 1-3 weeks).

This allowed them to think about how different employees would respond to different experiences at various stages of reopening so they could prepare for those workers needs and concerns. The result was the ability to plan for contingencies Ford may otherwise have missed while ensuring employee safety and confidence.

Think global, act local.

Since Ford has many workplaces that are at various stages of reopening in areas with different risk and governmental concerns, they decided on a global set of guiding principles that could be applied to all return-to-work decisions. They also designed a holistic reentry that includes a cross-functional team for accommodations, a return-to-work playbook and pamphlets, a strategy for ERG contributions, an HR team focused on their Compassion Protocol, and a cross-functional group that put out employee care kits (including mask, hand sanitizer, lip balm, and thermometers). Ford is monitoring the progress of their efforts with weekly representative pulse surveys of 8-15 questions.
Allstate's Intrapreneurs ERG and Asian American ERG are collaborating to support local, Asian American owned businesses in the Chicago area that are struggling.

- Volunteering to help them fill out paperwork to receive loans/federal aid
- Offering translation services
- Providing educational web seminars in partnership with local community-based organizations, local chambers, etc.

The ERGs are also reaching out to local corporations to join their efforts.
How ERGs and BRGs Drive Business Impact
Capgemini’s Millennial Innovation Council (MIC) has built a strong reputation for its use of hackathons to ideate and crowdsource innovative ideas. The hackathons bring together Capgemini employees, partners, clients, students and business professionals from different companies, industries and regions of the world, to generate ideas and solutions around a problem or opportunity. To date, MIC has hosted twelve hackathons, several in partnership with Capgemini clients. The hackathons provide a forum for building stronger relationships with clients, who participate in the events as mentors, judges and/or hackers, or provide their technology environments for participants to use as a platform for the event.

The hackathons have also proven to be an impactful way to showcase Capgemini’s innovation ecosystem and capabilities to clients, and provide a downstream revenue source when ideas generated are developed into full-scale applications. For example, a Capgemini team from the Millennial Disrupt hackathon was tasked with building out their solution from the challenge. The team is currently working to develop a new go-to-market solution for clients.

The hackathons have had a significant impact on Capgemini’s business. As a direct result of the events, the firm leveraged six global alliance partnerships (IBM, Microsoft, AWS, Salesforce, Stibo Systems, and Intel), sold two global client hackathons, and actively engaged with a wide range of industries and sectors. In addition, MIC leaders have commercialized a model approach to deliver hackathons as a managed service for clients. Hackathon as a Service is now an innovation offering for sector leaders and Capgemini’s innovation labs around the world.
J&J’s Hispanic-Latino Organization for Leadership Advancement (HOLA) exposes the company’s brands to more than 7,000,000 people every year, by giving away sample product and coupons at events and providing input into marketing campaigns through the HOLA Advisory Panel.

The HOLA Advisory Panel is a formal body within HOLA that reviews and provides culturally-appropriate and Spanish language input to marketing campaigns, and ensures marketing messages aimed at Hispanic consumers/patients resonate positively and effectively. The input from this panel has contributed to an increase in Hispanic market penetration for company brands.

The coupons handed out by HOLA, in collaboration with other internal ERGs, have generated incremental revenue for the company and contributed to nearly $1,000,000 in donations to advocacy groups for anti-bullying initiatives.

In addition, more than 3,000 people benefit annually from HOLA-supported health screenings at various events, resulting in the timely identification of health issues and appropriate referrals for treatment.
With 34 chapters across the nation and more than 13,000 members, Bank of America’s Hispanic-Latino Organization for Leadership & Advancement (HOLA) has a proven track record driving sustainable business growth while strengthening the company brand through community engagement. The ERG draws on the insights of its members with cultural ties to the Hispanic-Latino market to help inform the company’s marketing, customer relations and sales personnel connect with customers and business partners in those markets.

With 30 percent of new checking account clients identifying as Hispanic/Latino, HOLA has advocated for more resources to be available in Spanish. As a result, the Bank of America mobile banking app is now available in Spanish with more than 1.3M active users. HOLA members have engaged clients and promoted the benefits of the mobile app among clients, resulting in a 33 percent year-over-year increase in 2017 alone. Additionally, the bank’s financial literacy site, bettermoneyhabits.com is now available in Spanish. HOLA members are helping to improve financial literacy both with clients and during community events. These efforts have resulted in clients spending 2.5 more minutes on the site and viewing more pages per session as compared to the English site.
iTournament

- “A Shark Tank for employees”
- Four-month, three-round innovation contest
- Support from key stakeholders:
  - Office of Diversity & Inclusion
  - Innovation Center of Excellence & Innovation Advisory Board
  - Product teams
- Outcome:
  - 100+ participants in the inaugural tournament
    - Among the three winning ideas, one received funding and a full-time development team
  - Innovation Center of Excellence hosted the second tournament in 2019, collecting 300+ ideas.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKhLUck5dAs
Cigna’s ASPIRE ERG Drives Innovation

iEducation

Why? Help employees think outside the cube.
How? Increase exposure and provide safe space to explore.
What? Innovation “TED Talks” + Meetup Groups
  • Design thinking principles
  • Emerging technologies
    • Artificial intelligence
    • Blockchain
    • Robotic processing

Inspiration:
PwC’s Digital Accelerator Program
**iBootcamp**

**Why?** Provide the sandbox for ideas to fail fast.

**How?** Incubator for iTournament finalist ideas.

**What?** Idea development curriculum based on design thinking principles.
Situation

• The PWN wanted to increase opportunities for members to
  • Build business acumen skills
  • Build networks
  • Promote internal mobility

Action: PWN Consulting Initiatives

• Focus on solving existing, real business problems sourced from different leaders and areas
• All projects are reviewed and selected by the PWN
  • Typical scope is 15-18 weeks, 5-7 hours per week
    • Two PWN committee members assigned as engagement leaders
    • Teams of six PWN members are selected as consultants
    • Consultants present their findings and recommendations
## Results

- The initiatives have generated approximately US $1.7M of savings
  - 26 Consulting Initiatives completed across 10 business areas
  - Implementation of tangible business solutions and results
  - More than 156 members have built or enhanced skills
- In 2018, expanded to include externally-focused initiatives in collaboration with the Boston Women’s Workforce Council

## Reflections

- **Lessons Learned:**
  - Quality over quantity
  - One consulting round per year
  - Finalize scope before soliciting consultants
- **Getting Started:**
  - Start with a trusted, engaged executive
  - Understand what is feasible
  - Gauge potential consultant’s availability
Anthem’s PRIDE associate resource group (ARG) has been a sounding board and an important source of cultural insight that has helped refine Anthem employment policies and practices, as well as develop business services and programs that address LGBTQ inequalities in health care.

The ARG partnered with the company’s clinical organization to develop an online course for providers, with the goal of reducing healthcare inequities for the LGBTQ community. The course, *Creating an LGBT Inclusive Practice*, was designed to raise awareness about gaps in care that negatively impact clinical quality and health outcomes of LGBTQ patients, provide valuable information and resources to address those gaps, and offer strategies for enhancing physician-patient interactions.

PRIDE members participated in script development, casting, and course reviews to help ensure the course provider-patient scenarios reflected true LGBTQ experiences and would resonate with the target health care provider audience. In addition, PRIDE’s transgender group contributed to the development of an update to the course, *Understanding Sex, Gender, and Sexuality*, which educates providers to better serve the transgender community.

The learning resource is available at no cost to providers and their clinical staff, and can be accessed from a computer, tablet or smartphone. Providers may apply their completion of the course toward continuing medical education credit certification. Approximately 3,500 people have accessed the course since its launch in 2015. Course evaluation scores have extremely positive: on scale of one to five, the overall score is 4.8 for content, delivery and learning effectiveness.
The company’s Veteran’s Leadership Council (VLC) partnered with the Neuroscience Therapeutic Area around Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury — two of the “signature injuries” of the recent and ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan — to support J&J’s research and partnership efforts in this area. The VLC provided subject matter expertise and other promotional support.

Additionally, The VLC actively engaged marketing and sales colleagues in the Consumer sector to promote sales and promotions through military channels, including on-post Army-Air Force Exchanges (AAFES). In addition, the VLC partners with Corporate Equity and Communications groups to support J&J sponsored baby showers for active duty military families.

The VLC also partnered with the Brand-Aid brand team to develop and market the “Our Veteran Heroes” Band-Aid Brand Adhesive Bandage line that is currently available in stores. A portion of the money from product sales goes to support veteran-related charities such as Team Red White and Blue.

In 2017, the VLC took a leadership role in supporting J&J’s efforts to engage in its marketplace. In partnership with the J&J Office of Supplier Diversity, led an initiative to develop a new strategy for veteran-owned business (VOB) supplier diversity. This strategy refresh resulted in the company joining and sponsoring the leading national VOB-support organizations, piloting a mentoring program that partners veteran J&J business leaders with VOB suppliers, encouraging uncertified VOBs to pursue their formal certification, and authoring an article “Working with Veteran-Owned Businesses” in the leading procurement trade publication to share the company’s lessons learned.
The Veterans BRG at Unilever launched a creative contest within their group to improve the Unilever personal care pallets the company sells to military bases around the globe. The old pallet’s artwork of a solitary soldier and the tagline “Salute to Clean” did not best represent the consumers who shop on military bases, who aside from military personnel include their spouses and families. The winning idea, “From the Field to your Family,” featuring military personnel with their families, was chosen to become the new concept for all military base personal care pallets. The BRG worked with a special pack team within supply chain to implement the new design, and the result has drawn increased demand from military customers.

The redesigned pallets were rolled out in 2017 across eight countries and into approximately 200 commissaries and exchanges. Each pallet holds 247 personal care units across Unilever brands, bringing in close to $300,000 in incremental sales just in the first half of 2017. The revamped pallet has enabled increased distribution and increased promotional activity on Unilever brands, along with stronger placement within the stores. This project also showcases the company’s commitment to diversity and inclusion - listening to every voice, and celebrating every story – and understanding consumers on military bases. Based on preliminary sales, the company forecasts a 25% uplift in sales from the new pallet, each of which holds close to $1,000 of product, as well as increased distribution and in-store visibility.
In an effort to increase access to its customers with family members with autism, American Airlines’ Abilities employee business resource group (EBRG) partners with local autism organizations in the It’s Cool to Fly American (ICTFA) program, designed to help acclimate children with autism to the world of air travel.

The initiative centers around providing a full mock airport experience, where participants check in, maneuver through security, board an actual plane, and taxi around the airport, all without ever leaving the ground. The EBRG works closely with airport personnel to ensure a realistic experience that includes all the sights, sounds and sensations a child with autism might encounter in flight. The ICTFA events are staffed by EBRG members and volunteer airport crews.

In 2018, the Airline hosted 17 events involving 2,576 participants and 1,232 families, with 25 percent of those families reporting they traveled by air following the experience. During that year alone, employees contributed 2,200 hours as volunteers to the ICTFA program.
Following their launch as a employee resource group (ERG) in 2016, Macy’s La Voz was looking for a positive way to impact the business and drive new sales based on the groups knowledge of Macy's business and their insight to the shopping needs of the Latina community.

The ERG reached out to the company’s site merchandising partners with idea of establishing a Quinceañerarar Registry to promote items the company was already carrying in a way that targeted the Latina consumer. The Registry went live in October of 2017. Less than four months later, 158 units were sold with confirmed sales of $55,850.

The project established the start of a potentially much larger business at Macy’s. The company is expanding upon the concept to promote existing product lines around under cultural celebratory events, such as Sweet Sixteen, Cotillion, and Bat Mitzvah.
The Green Team is Verizon’s voluntary, grassroots effort that builds sustainability into everything we do. In 2018, 27,248 employees in 36 countries and territories were part of the Green Team.

Green Team members work to help Verizon reduce our environmental impact at work and to reduce their personal impact at home.

- In 2018, we exceeded our goal to conduct 250 Green Team events – encompassing tree plantings, green space cleanups, beautification projects, recycling events and more. Green Team members in 36 countries pledged nearly 14,000 hours in the month of March.

- Sponsored the planting of more than 82,000 trees in 2017 (in partnership with Arbor Day Foundation) exceeding the goal of 60,000.

- Verizon has a public goal of 20 percent of employees participating on the Green Team by 2020. At year-end 2018 Verizon met that goal early, with 20.4 percent of employees participating, and set a new goal of having 25 percent of employees on the Green Team by 2025.

- Verizon’s ESG Data on Green Team’s environmental impact shows the significant increase in employee engagement between 2016 and 2018

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<th>Green Team</th>
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