

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) 101

The workplace practice

There's a spectrum of different types of “affinity groups” that form at companies around shared identities, and they can range from casual to formal. Within that spectrum are Employee Resource Groups, also known as ERGs. They are usually focused on building community, fostering inclusivity and offering support for professional development. They’re often voluntary and employee-led, with the blessing of HR and leadership.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY

Then there are “Business Resource Groups” (BRGs) which usually have the same goals as ERGs PLUS they are aligned with the businesses’ strategic goals. They may be used by the business to support decision-making, recruitment, or problem-solving in the company. And they’re often more formally recognized and supported by senior leadership.



The origins

Today, groups like ERGs have launched at 90% of Fortune 500 companies. So, if this many companies see a value in having affinity groups, why isn't there a standard "right way" of getting them going? Maybe because that would require pinning down if this is a leadership-led, top down initiative....or if they should be led by employees, from the ground up.