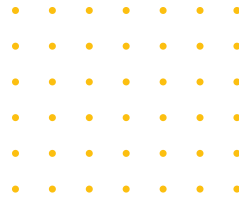


ESTABLISHING AN LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK GROUP

Establishing an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group



This guide examines how to effectively establish an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group. An LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group serves as a crucial platform for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. It provides a space for LGBTQ+ employees to connect, share experiences, and support each other. Additionally, it raises awareness about LGBTQ+ issues, encourages allyship, and helps ensure that organizational policies and practices are inclusive.

By following the steps outlined in this guide, you will be equipped to:

- **Build a Strong Foundation:** Learn how to consult with LGBTQ+ employees, create an effective operational structure, and set clear aims and objectives.
- **Secure Organizational Support:** Understand the importance of gaining backing from your organization and learn strategies for securing necessary resources.
- **Develop a Business Case:** Craft a compelling argument for the benefits of an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group, highlighting well-being, productivity, recruitment, and retention.
- **Launch and Grow Your Network:** Discover practical tips for finding members, planning activities, and holding impactful events.

Let's get started on building a community that celebrates diversity and champions equality within your organization.

The Importance of LGBTQ+ Network Groups

These groups play a crucial role in supporting LGBTQ+ employees and enhancing their overall work experience. Let's explore how these groups make a significant impact:

01 Peer Support

An LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group offers a safe space for employees to connect and support each other. Members can share concerns and experiences openly, without fear of judgment. This community reduces isolation, boosts confidence, and enhances well-being and job satisfaction by fostering mutual understanding and support.

02 Raising Awareness

An LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group raises awareness about LGBTQ+ issues, breaking down stereotypes and combating prejudice. By educating employees through workshops, training, and discussions, these groups foster empathy, allyship, and a more inclusive, respectful workplace culture.

03 Accountability

LGBTQ+ Employee Network Groups serve as a vital voice, ensuring inclusive and fair policies. They offer feedback and suggest improvements to better support LGBTQ+ employees. This ongoing dialogue embeds inclusion into the organization, making it more equitable and ensuring diversity and inclusion remain priorities.

04 Building Workplace Culture

When LGBTQ+ employees feel supported and valued, they bring their authentic selves to work, leading to increased energy, better performance, and stronger relationships. Hiding one's true self harms mental health and productivity. Establishing an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group fosters a positive, inclusive culture where everyone thrives.

05 Creating Allies

An effective LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group benefits LGBTQ+ employees and creates allies. Allies support and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, even if they aren't LGBTQ+ themselves. Through network activities and education, allies learn to better support colleagues, fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace.

06 Driving Change

LGBTQ+ Employee Network Groups are powerful change agents. Working with leadership and HR, they influence policies and initiatives benefiting the entire workforce. By advocating for inclusive health benefits, organizing pride celebrations, and contributing to diversity training, these groups drive meaningful progress toward a more inclusive workplace.

Building a Strong Foundation

Where to begin?

Creating a successful LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group starts with a solid foundation.

To ensure your group is effective and inclusive, follow these essential steps:



Consult with LGBTQ+ Employees

Before making decisions, consult with LGBTQ+ employees to understand their needs and concerns. Use anonymous surveys and focus groups to gather honest input and valuable insights. This ensures your network group is inclusive, supportive, and relevant to all employees, regardless of their specific roles or locations within the organization.

Create an Operational Structure

Your network group's structure depends on your organization's size and nature. Decide if online or in-person meetings work best. Choose between a single chairperson or a larger committee with designated roles. Ensure diverse representation to reflect your community. A clear structure ensures smooth operation and that all voices are heard.

Set Clear Aims and Objectives

Define your network's aims and objectives from the start. Set specific, measurable goals for the first year, such as organizing events, changing policies, or increasing meetings. Clear goals guide activities and measure success. Break objectives into manageable tasks and assign them to members to keep everyone engaged and accountable.

Secure Organizational Support



For your network group to thrive, securing support from your organization is vital.

This support can take various forms:



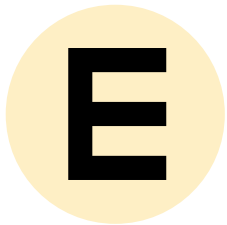
SPACE

Ensure you have a regular, private meeting space. Confidentiality is crucial, especially for members who may not be out at work.



TIME

Advocate for policies that allow employees to attend meetings during work hours. This demonstrates that the organization values and supports the network.



EXPOSURE

Increase your group's visibility within the organization through internal communications, newsletters, and announcements from senior leaders.



FUNDING

A budget can greatly enhance your group's activities, enabling you to host events, invite speakers, and run awareness campaigns.



Revisit your aims and objectives regularly to ensure they align with your members' needs and your organization's goals.

Presenting a Strong Business Case



Gaining Support

To secure the support you need for your LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group, it's essential to present a compelling business case. Highlight the numerous benefits that such a group can bring to your organization.

Here are key areas to focus on:

Wellbeing

An inclusive work environment greatly enhances employee well-being. Nearly one in five LGBTQ+ employees have experienced negative comments or conduct due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Many feel unable to be open about their identities. An LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group offers support, reducing isolation and improving mental health, job satisfaction, and workplace relationships. This highlights the need for a supportive and inclusive environment.

Productivity

LGBTQ+ inclusion significantly boosts productivity. LGBTQ+ employees who can be themselves at work are more than twice as likely to be satisfied with their sense of achievement (84% vs. 38%). Inclusive environments foster greater job commitment, satisfaction, and collaboration, driving organizational productivity.

Recruitment

LGBTQ+ inclusion boosts your ability to attract top talent. Job seekers value diversity and inclusion, and an active LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group signals a supportive environment. This commitment attracts candidates who care about equality and enhances your brand with customers and service users.

Retention

Network groups promote healthy work-life integration, making employees more likely to stay. They also offer professional development opportunities, helping LGBTQ+ employees overcome career barriers and making your organization more attractive to work for.

Getting Your Network Group Off the Ground

Prepare for Launch

Creating an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group is a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive workplace. Here's a detailed guide on how to start your network group, ensuring it becomes a supportive and effective part of your organization.



Maintain Momentum

Revisit your aims and objectives regularly to align activities with goals. Engage members through meetings, newsletters, and social media. Encourage feedback to refine activities and ensure the network remains relevant and valuable.

01. Membership Base

Identify and recruit members by promoting your network group through emails, intranet posts, newsletters, and posters. Clearly explain the group's purpose and benefits. Engage allies to help increase visibility and support.

03. Launch Event

Kickstart your network group with a launch event. It can be an informal gathering, networking event, or discussion on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Create a welcoming atmosphere with visible signs of support. Ensure attendees feel safe and respected, considering confidentiality and consent for photos. A successful event generates excitement and builds membership.

02. Plan Activities

Begin with small, impactful activities to build momentum. Organize informal gatherings like lunch-and-learns to share experiences. Use educational workshops and training sessions to raise awareness and foster an inclusive culture. Gradually expand activities as your network grows.

04. Delegate Tasks

Effective delegation ensures sustainability. Share responsibilities to manage workloads and provide development opportunities. Create roles or committees for tasks like event planning and communications, leveraging diverse skills to enhance effectiveness and impact.

Challenges, Benefits, and Moving Forward



The Road Ahead

Creating and sustaining an LGBTQ+ Employee Network Group is rewarding but comes with challenges. Be prepared to face and overcome these to ensure your network's success.

Common obstacles include resource constraints, such as funding, time, or space. Clearly communicate your needs and seek support from senior leaders and HR, explaining how their backing benefits the organization. Consider applying for per-event funding and using low-cost solutions like virtual meetings.

Building support can also be challenging. Articulate the network's purpose and positive impact on employees and the organization. Highlight how inclusive environments enhance well-being, productivity, and retention. Use data and examples to back up your points, and engage allies to amplify your message and recruit members.

Innovative solutions, like lunch-and-learns and virtual events, can engage employees without significant resources, fostering a sense of community.

Despite challenges, the benefits of such groups—providing support, promoting understanding, and driving positive change—outweigh the obstacles. Inclusive workplaces improve productivity, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

Start today to create a workplace reflecting respect, equality, and support for all. Your efforts will make a meaningful difference.



Discover great resources on our dedicated [Pride 2024 playlist](#)