



PARTNER PROFILE SERIES

Corporate perspectives, actions, and goals

Employee Resource Groups

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Members of the Work & Family Roundtable support and utilize Employee Resource Groups (also known as Affinity Groups, Network Groups, and Diversity Councils) to positively influence both organizational culture and business results. In an increasingly global business landscape, where multicultural competency is a top priority, Employee Resource Groups help to promote awareness in organizations while attracting and retaining employees and customers. This issue of the Partner Profile Series presents the perspectives, actions, and goals of three of our Corporate Partners who consider Employee Resource Groups an integral part of their diversity and inclusion strategies.

AmericanAirlines®

Debra Hunter Johnson - V.P., *Global Human Resources Services*Dottie Mattingly - *Manager, College Recruiting & Staffing Strategies***Perspective**

American Airlines established its first Employee Resource Group (ERG), GLEAM: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Employees, in 1993 and has since expanded to 14 groups including: 40+, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caribbean, Christian, Employees with Disabilities, Hispanic/Latin, Indian, Jewish, Muslim, Native American, Parents AAt Work, and Women in AAiation.

In addition to promoting cultural awareness and enhancing professional development, ERGs at American Airlines help to foster an environment where employees feel secure, involved, valued, and supported. Being receptive to new suggestions from its global workforce allows American to benefit from employees' many different racial, ethnic, religious, educational, cultural, lifestyle, and social backgrounds. Such awareness helps the airline provide quality service to its customers worldwide and remain poised to meet future challenges in a diverse marketplace.

Two representatives from each ERG participate on American's Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), which meets every other month at company headquarters and provides the overall strategic direction for the groups. DAC meetings include conversations on topics such as immigration reform, and opportunities for networking and best practice sharing. Each ERG also has an officer and management sponsor who advocate for member interests.

Actions

"Employee Resource Groups are critical to our business," says Johnson, "through their involvement in supporting our corporate objectives, American Airlines has maximized its service on new

routes, garnered tremendous visibility in the communities we serve, and realized significant cost savings. ERG members also provide input in areas of the business that are outside of their normal scope of responsibilities, helping them gain valuable leadership and analytical skills that position them well for future opportunities."

The success of American's recent Chicago to New Dehli route is due in large part to its Indian and Muslim Employee Resource Groups who not only suggested the flight and assisted with culturally appropriate translations and menu selections, but also helped with marketing and public relations activities. Similarly, GLEAM helped American become the first U.S. airline to launch a vacation package website specifically for GLBT travelers.

Goals

American aims to further utilize ERGs to drive creativity and innovation in the business, which is reflected in its products, services, and technologies. Consciously educating ERG members about the business helps to garner their support for company goals and foster strategic thinking. According to Johnson, "Smart companies are embracing diversity and realize that you have to become culturally competent to compete globally."

American plans to further build bridges between ERGs and form cross-departmental project teams that can easily tap into their expertise and momentum. Ensuring the company has an effective diversity program that people embrace means supporting the "organic" nature of its ERGs, "going with their energy," and allowing them appropriate flexibility to do what they'd like to – from sponsoring a welcome reception for a new board member to signing up as a group for a charity walk.

AstraZeneca

Edwin Martinez - *Senior Manager, Diversity*Andrea Moselle - *Senior Manager, Work/Life***Perspective**

Employee Network Groups (ENGs) have existed in both U.S. offices and the field at AstraZeneca for the past three years and include the following: Adoptive Parent, African American, Chinese American, Eldercare, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual, Hispanic, Pan Asian, Reservist, South Asian, Women's (Divisions: Women in Field Sales, Women in Information Systems, Women in Operations, and Women in Research & Development).

"In addition to providing unique cultural perspectives on business issues, ENGs support AstraZeneca's business case for diversity by helping to recruit, engage, and retain employees of varied backgrounds; building levels of awareness about different cultures to encourage inclusion; and supporting AstraZeneca's community involvement strategies," says Moselle. Many of the

groups are especially focused on mentoring, using both informal and formal approaches to help drive careers at the company.

Each ENG at AstraZeneca has a senior level sponsor, providing members with access to upper management, and educating the company's leaders on diverse topics. AstraZeneca's Diversity Council, comprised of all the ENG leaders, meets quarterly to learn what each of the groups is doing; share best practices; and discover ways to work together to pool resources, such as inviting a speaker to address several groups at one venue.

Actions

ENGs at AstraZeneca are defined as: "voluntary associations of employees who support corporate values and work together to enrich the concept of community in our diverse business environment." ENGs also provide an excellent opportunity for their members to grow leadership skills. Some ENG leaders have objectives in their performance plans that incorporate their work in the groups, efforts that AstraZeneca has recognized and rewarded financially.

In addition to supporting the spirit of inclusion, awareness, and understanding of gender, ethnic, and work/life groups within the company, ENGs work separately and collaboratively to organize events and activities. Examples include the Adoptive Parent and Chinese American Employee Network Groups' joint summer picnic, and the Eldercare Employee Network Group's peer support system and an Eldercare Fair that brings representatives of service providers onsite. An "ENG E-Room" on AstraZeneca's corporate intranet site provides helpful information for employees on membership, programs, and meeting minutes.

Goals

Striving to make an impact in diversity within their workforce, workplace, and marketplace, AstraZeneca realizes that it must operate in a way that mirrors the societies and cultures of its patients. According to Martinez, "Diversity is a journey, not a program."

Next phases along the journey include: creating a Coalition of Women's Employee Network Groups to align their efforts for better impact, further expanding AstraZeneca's other ENGs and forming new chapters, and developing enough ENGs so that there is a group of interest for everyone who would like to participate. An emerging trend is utilizing the power of virtual connections to help groups like the Reservist Network and Women's Networks in the field stay in touch and engaged.



Dorria Ball - *Director, Global Diversity & WorkLife*

Rod Christmon - *Associate Director, Diversity*

Perspective

For over 15 years, Kraft Foods' salaried employees in the U.S. have been able to participate in a variety of Employee Councils that support constituencies at the corporate, site location, and functional levels. Current Employee Councils include: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Rainbow, and Women's.

Kraft's Global Diversity department provides strategic direction and guidance for all Employee Councils, which lead initiatives aligned with the company's mission of creating a work environment that respects the uniqueness of all employees and seeks to leverage their diverse experiences and insights. Senior leadership at Kraft recognizes the power of Employee Councils to: nourish a culture of inclusion, promote retention, provide a greater understanding of the company's multicultural consumer base, and fill in gaps of knowledge for employees.

Ball shared that being an Employee Council Leader "takes business savvy (especially an understanding of how to navigate an organization the size of Kraft), courage, strategic capabilities, and the ability to motivate and lead employees." Employee Council Leaders meet in person three times per year to develop and align strategies, communicate on progress and challenges, and offer creative ideas for networking.

Actions

Kraft's "Jump Start" program, originally created by Diversity management, is a four hour orientation of unwritten rules and tips on how best to navigate through the organization, which helps employees enhance their effectiveness as growing contributors and leaders. This developmental program particularly interested the African American Employee Council who took the initiative to sponsor Jump Start training sessions across the organization, widening the program's reach. According to Ball, "The most critical work that our Employee Councils focus on is the care and feeding of their constituencies by creating sacred space for dialogue, best practice sharing, and benchmarking."

Christmon adds, "When one group finds that 'lightning in a bottle,' does the right marketing, and receives positive feedback, other councils are able to share in their achievements." A one day program called "Communicating for Success," run by the Asian American Employee Council, is a great illustration of such sharing. Focusing on how to break down stereotypes and develop successful communication styles, the program appeals to the interests of many councils and receives continual praise from employees for its effectiveness.

Goals

Kraft believes the insights its Employee Councils provide about how to better connect with communities, customers, and consumers assist the company in its pursuit to help people around the world eat and live better. Kraft will continue to identify opportunities for Employee Councils to contribute to the organization's bottom line.

The company recently began an assessment process of its Employee Councils, working with both internal and external resources to explore how to move Employee Councils to the next level of effectiveness; asking questions such as: Where are our councils today? What aspects of them are still relevant? Where do they need to evolve? What should their role look like in five years and how can Kraft build an infrastructure to get them there?