



COUNCIL OF INDUSTRY WOMEN

The Council of Industry Women brings together a wide array of organizations representing women involved in all facets of New York's building industry, including engineers, architects, labor, contractors, real estate professionals and policy experts. To help create inclusive environments that support and encourage women to advance their skills and leadership potential through connection, mentorship, collaboration and discussion, the Council has created a guide on best practices for creating a Women's Employee Resource Group within your own organization.

WHAT IS A WOMEN'S EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP?

Women's Employee Resource Groups (WERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

- Professional development
- Amplify the profile of women internally and externally
- Increase diversity and foster inclusion
- Recruitment, retention and advancement of women
- Mentorship and sponsorship

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL WERG

- Identify WERG ambassadors and create a core group
- Research best practices
- Seek support from top executives
- Get employees involved and open to all employees
- Name the group and define its mission and goals
- Design an enduring and sustainable structure
- Develop a budget and secure funding
- Create an innovative business solution
- Overcome challenges
- Maintain momentum
- Leverage relationships with other internal resource groups
- Measure success- the retention, engagement and promotion rates of group members versus those who are not members

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WERG'S?

INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS

- Professional development
- Access to senior leaders
- Networking opportunities outside immediate area
- Potential for promotions, new opportunities to grow and contribute to the workplace
- Greater equity in pay
- Enhance competencies that are transferable to the work environment, including interpersonal and organizational understanding, communication skills, collaboration, and leadership skills
- Ability to influence business results

COMPANY BENEFITS

- Increased retention
- Improved business development and client relationships
- More creative problem solving
- Productive and meaningful changes in company policies
- More women in qualified roles
- WERG members can serve as recruiters by attending conferences and job fairs, offering testimonials on the company website and hosting networking events
- Reduce isolation of employees
- Increase engagement of employees
- Enhance the culture of an organization by building a stronger community

BEST PRACTICES

- Gain support from top executives (both male and female)
- Assign a dedicated individual who is responsible for tracking metrics on retention, turnover, advancement, and promotion and works closely with Human Resources
- Establish training, mentorships and sponsorships
- Ensure continuity through succession planning
- Create opportunities to convene - in person, virtually and even anonymously
- Include segments based on career experiences and life stage

HOW THE BUILDING CONGRESS CAN HELP

- Create a directory of members with ERG's
- Publicize Industry Association opportunities
- Comprehensive website features including on-line toolkit, directory and resources
- Executive lunch-and-learns
- Professional development series with emphasis on networking, presentation skills, negotiating

