CHAPTER C – ERG and DEI

What this is:
The importance of Employee Resource Groups and how to create an effective ERG.

Why is matters:
Employee resource groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups formed by employees across the organization with the purpose of raising awareness of relevant issues, sharing ideas, and aligning with the company’s business objectives and goals. ERGs are a great way to support employees and are important in the shared purpose of bringing employees together.

Content:
Benefits of ERGs include:

- Foster a diverse and inclusive workplace
- Increased employee engagement
- Development of future leaders
- Diversity on aspects of business operatives, policies, and procedures
- Increase in retention
- Educate employees and senior leadership
- Support diverse recruitment efforts
- Connect employees at different levels and across departments
- Build a sense of community and belonging
How to create an effective ERG?

Start with a mission statement and discuss and agree to the group’s mission and purpose with the ERG members. Next, it is important to ensure that both the ERG members, HR, and Senior Leadership are aligned regarding the scope of the group and where responsibilities lie within the ERG, HR, and Senior Leadership. Once the mission statement and scope of responsibilities have been discussed, create a clearly defined charter that outlines structure, goals, and guidelines of the group. This can include areas of focus such as belonging, recruitment, internal and external awareness building, impact on business decisions, community engagement, and career development.

Some questions to consider when creating an ERG:

1. What type of ERG do you want to start?
2. Why do you want to start the ERG (what do you want to accomplish through the ERG)?
3. Who will the ERG impact both internally and externally?
4. How will you measure the success of the ERG?
5. Does your ERG understand and align with the company’s goals and objectives?
6. On the ERG’s organizational structure, what types of positions should be included and what are the responsibilities in each of these positions? How does the group conduct elections and choose leadership?
7. Does the group include an executive sponsor who will advocate for the group as well as an HR liaison?
8. On the structure of meetings, how often should they take place and what is the purpose?
9. Will the group have a budget for operating expenses and events, etc.?

Given the potential benefits to ERGs, organizations should be investing in these groups as an important piece to the employee experience and their company’s DEI efforts. When executed successfully, ERGs can create a sense of community and support meaningful change in the organization.
Links to other resources:

https://www.catalyst.org/topics/ergs/
https://www.ergcouncil.com/
https://docplayer.net/19538945-Guidebook-for-establishing-diversity-and-inclusion-employe-
e-resource-groups.html

⁹ ERGs should not be formed or used as a mechanism to address terms of employment for their members.