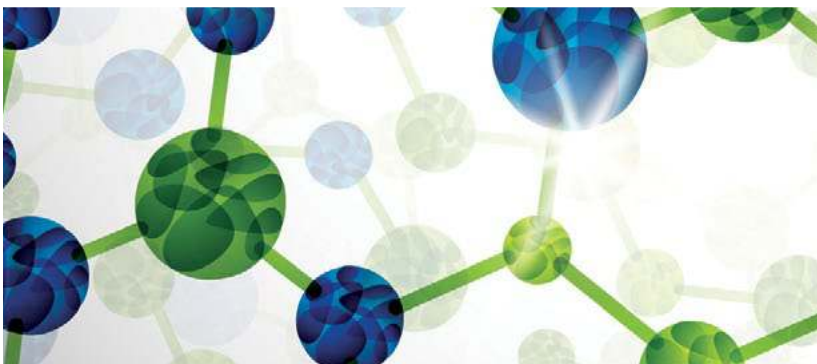
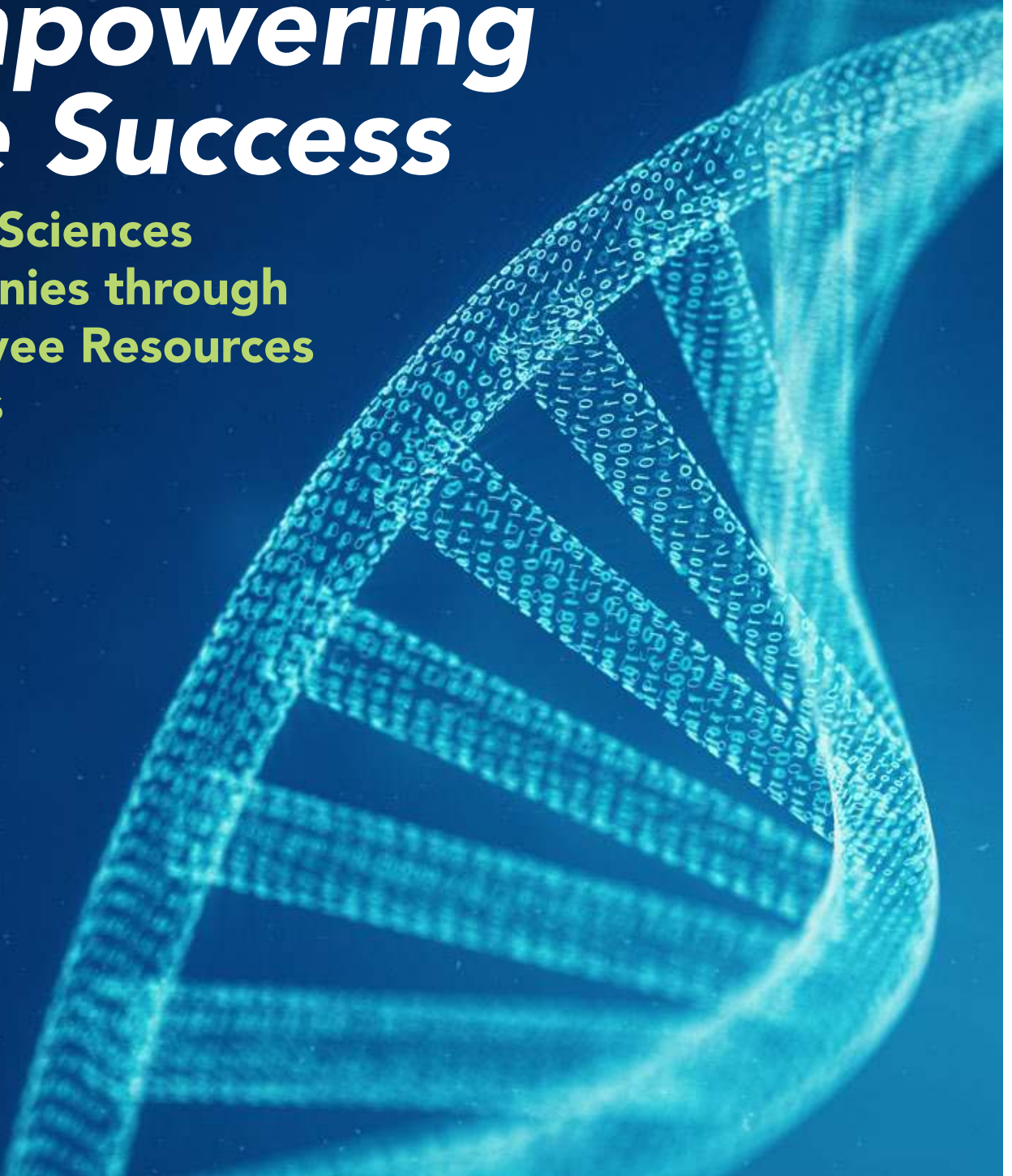


# *Empowering the Success*

of Life Sciences  
Companies through  
Employee Resources  
Groups



**MassBio**<sup>®</sup>

MASSACHUSETTS BIOTECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

## Empowering the Success of Life Sciences Companies through Employee Resources Groups

The Association of ERGs & Councils defines employee resource groups (ERGs) as, “voluntary groups of employees who join together in their workplace based on shared characteristics or life experiences and serve as a resource for members and organizations by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational goals.”

The value proposition of ERGs, without question, is undeniable. They present an opportunity for employees to gain critical skills, contribute unique insights, and be part of a sustainable life sciences community that inspires loyalty to that organization.



If ‘people’ are an organization’s most precious asset, an ever-evolving, diversified employee population (multi-cultural, multi-generational, neurotypical, etc.) must feel appreciated and have opportunities to contribute to growth strategies that will lead to rewarding career paths. ERGs, when done right, can facilitate that as well as any other D&I, workforce, or HR strategy.

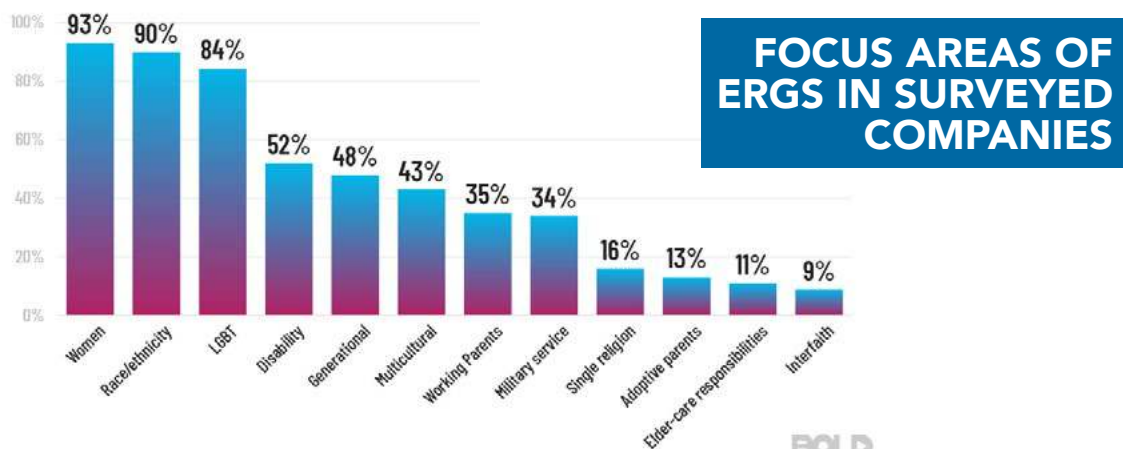
### Employee Resource Groups are comprised of several subsets:

- Employees from traditionally underrepresented groups
- Allies who support these groups
- People who share a common purpose, interest, or background

### Other common names associated with ERGs include:

- Affinity Groups (AGs)
- Business Impact Networks (BINs)
- Business Resource Groups (BRGs)
- Employee Resource Networks (ERNs)
- Employee Network Groups (ENGs)
- Inclusion Councils (ICs)

The implementation of ERGs across industries is vast. Bentley University’s Center for Women and Business (CWB) reported that approximately 90% of Fortune 500 companies have ERGs. The scope of ERGs is also growing, according to a recent survey administered by CTR Factor—a leadership, diversity and inclusion firm that focuses on linking D&I to business imperatives and results—and published by Bold Business. From the chart, 93% of survey respondents have a women’s-related ERG; 90% have ERGs for race/ethnicity; and 84% for the LGBTQ community.



SOURCE: CTR FACTOR, INC.

BOLD  
BUSINESS

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## Assessing the Value of ERGs

As their creation and growth inside life sciences companies continues to expand, executive sponsors, C-suite leaders, and ERG participants are all asking the same questions: “How are our ERGs performing compared to others internally and those at other companies?”; “What are other company’s ERGs doing better and how can we improve our ERGs?”; and, “How can we measure the true impact of ERGs toward our company’s D&I’s performance metrics?” Yet, no clear answers exist to these questions because ERGs are siloed within companies and there are no clear means to share best practices about implementation, growth, and measuring success.

There is little doubt that ERGs have huge potential to create business value, improve employee engagement, talent development, ideation, and close D&I gaps for a company. The question is how to do it right.



## MassBio’s ERG Exchange

To address these questions and develop the appropriate solutions, this paper seeks to clearly outline best practices, as presented by leaders and participants of various ERGs across the life sciences industry during MassBio’s June 2019 ERG Exchange event. While the needs of each organization differ, we believe the lessons that come from shared best practices will benefit the industry and, more importantly, the patient population that we all work every day to serve.

### Barriers

- Lack of funding or sustainable funding
- Lack of senior leadership and middle management “buy-in” to treat ERGs as a strategic tool toward broader inclusion efforts
- Limited to no link between an ERG’s mission and a company’s strategic growth objectives
- Not giving employees adequate time to lead and participate in ERGs
- Identifying ways to include all employees such as hourly, or remote workers, or employees that have other diversities that make it harder to participate such as neurodiversity; visual/ hearing impairment; or physical challenges

### Best Practices to Launch and Sustain ERGs

- Make real, lasting, and standardized investments in each ERG to show that the organization cares about all their employees, and that the company truly values inclusion
- ERGs should have a clearly articulated mission that aligns with business and D&I objectives and not simply act as a party planning committee. Examples could include: acting as a resource for management to help drive D&I, workforce, and HR decisions; or advocating internally for policy changes (e.g. gender-neutral bathrooms)
- Successful ERGs need executive support, such as executive sponsors who participate on a regular basis
- Managers need to encourage ERGs’ success beyond supporting passive programming. They must actively encourage employees at all levels to participate
- Create a succession plan for new ERG leaders. Don’t assume ERGs are self-sustaining
- To ensure success, ERGs should build five pillars into their structure: career, community, culture, commerce, and cuisine





## Improving Employee Engagement in ERGs

- ERG leadership and participation should be included in an employee's performance review
- Plan ERG events in advance and make every effort to make them available and accessible to all employees inside and outside of the office. This can be done by listing the event on the company network and global internal calendar and allowing for remote participation through video conference or otherwise
- All ERG event attendees should bring a plus one to increase attendance and exposure
- ERGs should engage and partner with other ERGs inside and outside the company to further intersectionality
- ERGs should be hosting multi-demographic events, such as speaking events with other groups outside of their affinity group, to drive participation
- Employee's participation in ERGs should be considered part of their job, and not something that takes away or is extracurricular. This will create adequate time for employees to meaningfully engage with ERGs and for ERGs to grow



## Measurement & Metrics

- Goals for an ERG must align with the company's D&I and business goals, with consistent KPIs, and measurements
- Executives and leadership must be aligned with ERGs about what metrics to measure and how to determine success over time
- Measurements must also focus on ERGs' impact to people—recruitment, retention, advancement. Consider such metrics as:
  - *Are employees participating with ERGs? Track the number of times employees engage with ERG-related events or meetings*
  - *Are employees who participate in ERGs advancing their careers in the company at the same rate as those who do not?*

## Activities and Programs Suggestions

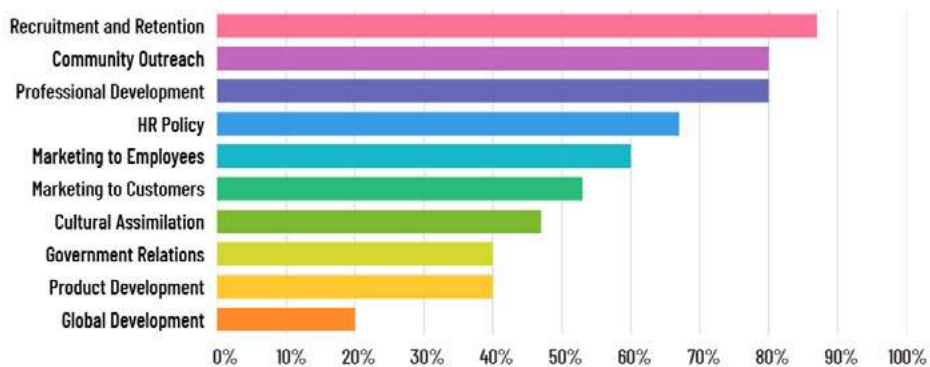
- Develop a career or professional development component, such as mentorship, reverse mentorship, and/or allyship programs, as well as community service events tied to the ERG's/company's mission and values
- Implement a guest speaker series
- Host ERGs' multi-demographic panel discussions
- Assign a book or movie selected by ERG for everyone to read/watch that can be discussed at the next company gathering
- Add pronouns to signatures
- Offer e-learning opportunities



## Conclusion

The presence of ERGs is growing, along with the desire of organizations to measure their impact. ERGs are not just D&I window dressing or there to plan the next fun event. Organizations can leverage the insight of ERG members to close talent gaps and improve practices and efficiencies within the company. Investing and funding ERGs will pay long-term dividends, thus transforming the current climate on how we do business. This will allow life sciences companies to be stronger and to provide better futures for sick people around the world.

## BUSINESS IMPACT AREAS



SOURCE: CTR FACTOR, INC

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to our table moderators who facilitated an excellent discussion among the 120+ participants at the MassBio ERG Exchange:

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- Devin Poor, QC Analyst II at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Co-Chair for SAGA (Sexuality and Gender Alliance)



## Additional Resources

Sample Employee Resource Group (ERG) Charter Templates

- [Cisco Resource Guide for Developing and Sustaining Employee Resource Groups](#)
- [NASA Office of Equal Opportunity Programs: Guidance for Developing Effective ERGs](#)
- [U.S. Department of Energy ERG Charter Template](#)
- [Washington Technology ERG Charter Template](#)

### [Thought Leadership on Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

The Gloria Cordes Larson Center for Women and Business at Bentley University (CWB) develops curated research reports that synthesize current literature, practical research, and solutions to key issues impacting workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. Topics include ERGs, Metrics and Intersectionality which might be helpful follow-up information from the ERG Exchange discussion.

### [Psychology & Structure of “Inclusion is THE Competitive Advantage”](#)

League of Allies help organizations realize, and benefit from, the accretive power of parity, balance, and inclusion. Our purpose is to help our clients best engage the talent required to create sustainable, ethical, and market-beating returns.

### [Employer Assistance and Resource Network \(EARN\) on Disability Inclusion: A Toolkit for Establishing and Maintaining Successful Employee Resource Groups](#)

EARN is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy. For more information, visit AskEARN.org.

### [BIO’s Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](#)

As part of BIO’s Right Mix Matters D&I initiative, they provide a selection of resources to support Employee/Business Resource Groups (EBRGs), and examples about the mission, roles and priorities of EBRGs.

### [Optimizing Employee Resource Groups](#)

Charlotte Hughes, a diversity and inclusion consultant, offers her insights about how to optimize employee resource groups and patient care.

### [Human Rights Campaign: Corporate Equality Index 2019](#)

The Human Rights Campaign CEI is the national benchmarking tool on corporate policies and practices pertinent to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer employees, consumers and investors for over 1,000+ businesses.

