Enhancing an Inclusive Environment: Employee Resource Groups
Best Practices

Leading For Change Conference
June 11, 2014

Alyce Johnson, Manager of Staff Diversity and Inclusion
Bill Kindred, Manager of Diversity and Inclusion
Judith Stein, Organization Development Consultant, HR
ERG Coordinator
Objectives

• Learn about MIT’s best practice for supporting employees through Employee Resource Groups
• Know why change management principles play a key role in this inclusion effort
• Be able to identify and assess the forces supporting and restraining efforts to inclusion in your own institutions.
The mission of MIT is to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century...

...We seek to develop in each member of the MIT community the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind.
MIT Culture

School of Architecture and Planning
School of Engineering
School of Humanities, Arts, & Sciences
School of Science
Sloan School of Management

Research

- Meritocracy
- Data-driven
- Invent + Innovate = Impact
- Excellence
- Inclusion

Values

Major Initiatives
- Cancer
- Diversity
- Energy
- Global
- MITx/Edx
Getting an education from MIT is like getting a drink from a fire hose.

- Telephone booth hack
- Police car hack
- Solar powered subway car hack
Introduction to MIT Lincoln Laboratory

Mission: Technology in Support of National Security

Cambridge, MA

Lexington, MA

Established 1951
**Shared Values**

Integrity Technical Excellence Meritocracy

**Distinctions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIT Campus</th>
<th>Lincoln Laboratory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>• Applied research and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Unfettered transmission of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic research</td>
<td>• Closed environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Creation of new knowledge via research and</td>
<td>– Classified as well as unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholarship</td>
<td>– U.S. citizens only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open environment</td>
<td>• Primarily an engineering culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Unclassified and international</td>
<td>• Strict conflict-of-interest policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Science and engineering culture</td>
<td>– No consulting or “dual hats”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consulting and startups</td>
<td>– Entrepreneurism encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Involvement is acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service to humanity and the nation</td>
<td>• Service to the nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Focus on the nation’s security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impacts on the Nation

Bio-Defense

Advanced Electronics

Tactical Communication

Asteroid Detection
Employee Resource Group (ERG) and Affinity Group/Network are terms often used interchangeably

- For MIT purposes, we defined:
  - **ERGs** as groups that are formally constituted with mission statements, officers, etc. and that are expected to contribute to the mission of the Institute
  - **Affinity Groups** as self-organized, informal networks of MIT employees with common identities or interests
Change Management Lesson # 1

• Tie ERGs to the mission, vision, and values of your organization

• Context does matter

• Know your culture
  – What’s your organization’s readiness for change?
  – What works in your organization?
**Change Management Tool # 1**

**Readiness for Change**

Circle the numbers that best represents the current state.  
1 represents “very little” and 5 represents “to a great extent.”

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How clear are your organization’s incentives (business reasons) for enhancing diversity and inclusion?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. How clear are your organization’s shared values for supporting long-term diversity and inclusion efforts?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. How eagerly will senior leaders be visible in the work that follows, e.g., modeling behaviors and making it part of people’s jobs?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. How easy will it be to resource such initiatives on an ongoing basis (with people, time, funding, etc.)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. To what degree will managers be held accountable for creating a diverse and inclusive workplace?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. How can your organization use a “force and foster “ approach for change management?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change Management Lesson #1

- Tie to the mission, vision, and values of your organization
- Context does matter
  - Know your culture
  - What works in your organization?
    - At MIT -- research protocols: ‘Discovery’ and ‘Pilot’ phase
    - Force and foster
The “ERGs at MIT” story begins in 2010-2011

HR Diversity Inclusion (HRDI) team starts research on ERGs

– Literature search for best practices
– Benchmarking about current ERGs from Ivy+ and Boston Consortium colleagues
– Participation in Cornell University ILR course “Effective Affinity Groups”

ERG Discovery Team begins in the Fall of 2011
Chapter 1: The ERG Discovery Team Begins the Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation of team and effort</th>
<th>Analysis of best practices</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear charter</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Guiding principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team initiation</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Recommended actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Harvard</td>
<td>Implementation considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Wiki</td>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined ERGs/Employee Affinity Groups</td>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MIT Lincoln Lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face team discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-person team from 4 MIT departments, met for 7 months.
Benchmarking at MIT led us to Lincoln Laboratory

2002-2008

- Dr. Eric Evans is a key driver for Diversity and Inclusion
- Professional and Community Enhancement (Work Life committee) / Concert Committee
- Diversity and Inclusion Study
- New position: Manager for Diversity and Inclusion and Affirmative Action
- First Employee Resource Group – Technical Women’s Network
- MIT Work Life policy adopted
The Discovery Team Concludes

• Reported to & received endorsements for recommendations from the HR Leadership Team as well as the leadership within the MIT community

• Identified steps for an ERG to get started

• Identified resources needed to support ERG implementation

• Identified mutuality of relationship between ERGs and MIT
The Discovery Team Creates Guiding Principles

• ERGs should be open to all employees
• MIT should provide Institute-level support for ERGs
• MIT HR should provide guidance for consistent framework for ERGs
• ERGs should provide long-term business benefit to the Institute and professional/personal benefit to participants
Change Management Tool #2
Force Field Analysis

• A tool to help you assess the forces that support your desired organizational change and those forces working against change

• Based on assumption that in any change situation there are both driving and restraining forces that can affect the outcome
At MIT, the goal was to create and support Employee Resource Groups as one concrete strategy for creating a climate of inclusion.
• ERGs contribute to an inclusive workplace by assisting with recruitment and retention; informal mentoring; providing and promoting professional development

• ERGs provide a resource to MIT leadership regarding staff/community issues, needs and policies

• Best Practice Research suggests employee resource groups are an effective tool for organizations
Force Field Analysis
Step 3: List Restraining Forces

• No dedicated resources available to coordinate and support the ERGs

• Competing priorities for staff time/energy

• For some, identity-based ERGs create a perception of exclusion
### Step 4: Put the Forces into a Grid

**DRIVING FORCES**

- ERGs contribute to an inclusive workplace by assisting with recruitment and retention; informal mentoring; providing and promoting professional development

- ERGs provide a resource to MIT leadership regarding staff/community issues, needs and policies

- Best Practice Research suggests employee resource groups are an effective tool for organizations

**GOAL**

- Create and support Employee Resource Groups as one concrete strategy for creating a climate of inclusion

**RESTRAINING FORCES**

- No dedicated resources available to coordinate and support the ERGs

- Competing priorities for staff time/energy

- For some, identity-based ERGs create a perception of exclusion
### Step 5: Weight the Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVING FORCES</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>RESTRAINING FORCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERGs contribute to an inclusive workplace by assisting with recruitment and retention; informal mentoring; providing and promoting professional development</td>
<td>Create and support Employee Resource Groups as one concrete strategy for creating a climate of inclusion</td>
<td>No dedicated resources available to coordinate and support the ERGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERGs provide a resource to MIT leadership regarding staff/community issues, needs and policies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Competing priorities for staff time/energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Research suggests employee resource groups are an effective tool for organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>For some, identity-based ERGs create a perception of exclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 6: Think about Next Steps

- **Pick one driving force**: What is one specific step you can take to help strengthen or leverage that force?

- **Pick one restraining force**: What is one specific step you can take to minimize that force?
Your turn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVING FORCES</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>RESTRAINING FORCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lincoln Laboratory: Why ERGs?

2007 - 2008

- Diversity and Inclusion Study in 2007
  - Manager for Diversity and Inclusion and Affirmative Action
  - Mentoring supports women, minorities and all employees
  - Employee Resource Groups help with inclusion and retention
  - First Employee Resource Group – Technical Women’s Network, started after study completion
Chapter 2: The Implementation Team begins in the Summer of 2012

- All members of the ERG Discovery Team volunteered to continue on the Implementation Team.
- Implementation Team products included:
  - basic introductory documents about ERGs for MIT community
  - Descriptions of specific roles & responsibilities for ERGs
  - List of steps to establish & maintain an ERG
  - Designation of HR ERG Coordinator to support ERG formation & development

MIT ERG web page: [http://hrweb.mit.edu/diversity/ergs](http://hrweb.mit.edu/diversity/ergs)
2008 - 2014

- 2008: Technical Women’s Network Started (LLTWN)
- 2009: New Employees’ Network (LLNEN)
- 2010: Hispanic/Latino Network (HLN)
- 2011: Veteran’s Network (LLVETS)
- 2013: Lincoln Employees African American Network (LEAN)
- 2013: Out Professionals Employees Network (OPEN)
MIT Lincoln Laboratory’s ERGs Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERG Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Women’s Network (LLTWN)</td>
<td>The Lincoln Laboratory Technical Women’s Network (LLTWN) mission is to promote the recruitment, retention, and achievement of LL technical women employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Employee Network and Recent College Graduates (LLNEN, RCG)</td>
<td>LLNEN’s goal is to help new employees transition from their previous environment to MITLL and to improve the quality of life outside of work through social networking opportunities, professional development, and peer support via information sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino Network (LLHLN)</td>
<td>The HLN fosters awareness of the rich Hispanic culture and embraces educational and professional development. It also promotes diversity and inclusion through involvement in cultural, technical, and educational outreach activities within our community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ Network (LLVETS)</td>
<td>LLVETS’ goal is to support the recruitment and retention of US veterans and to help veterans transition from the military to the Laboratory. Additionally, LLVETS will provide outreach to the veteran community and inform members of recent legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out Professional Employees Network (OPEN)</td>
<td>OPEN’s goal is to create an inclusive environment for LGBT-A employees, develop educational programs, workshops and materials and to be a resource for employees, managers and candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ African American Network (LEAN)</td>
<td>The goal of LEAN is to address the concerns and issues faced by African American employees and to help increase diversity and awareness within the Laboratory community. LEAN focuses on recruiting, retention and fostering an inclusive environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: ERGs Begin: Mission Statement Extracts

**Latino Employee Resource Group**

Develop a network within the MIT community to promote the cultural diversity and professional development of its members, and thereby creating a supportive environment for the Latino/Hispanic community and contributing to the success of MIT’s mission.

**Asian Pacific American**

The mission of the MIT Asian Pacific American Employee Resource Group is to foster networking, professional development, mentoring, and leadership opportunities with a focus on the recruitment, retention, learning, and advancement of Asian Pacific Americans at MIT.

**African, Black, American , Caribbean**

ABAC@MIT strives to promote an environment that fosters and promotes productivity and creativity of all its employees. Our goal is to increase awareness of cultural differences within our own community and the MIT community at large.

**Lesbian Bisexual Gay Transgender**

The mission of the LBGT Employee Resource Group is to promote an inclusive community for lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and queer employees.

All ERGs are open to all MIT faculty and staff.
Lessons Learned
MIT’s ERG Pilot Year

• Attendance at ERG events clearly crosses identity lines – “proof of concept” that all ERGs really are open to all employees

• ERGs have become an important part of the fabric of MIT; employees really want these connections and will do their best to be involved

• Formation of a co-leads team created a learning community that has been very helpful across the four ERGs

• More time and resources are needed to take ERGs to the next level of impact
ERGs’ Next Chapter: MIT Campus

• ERG Pilot Report completed May 2014
• Summer, 2014: Planning for the coming year including annual ½ day retreat of ERG Co-leads team
• Requested increased budget support for upcoming fiscal year
• Exploring formation of three new ERGs:
  – Veterans
  – Millennials
  – Women in Technology
• All ERG Working Group
  – Encourages collaboration when planning events and outreach
  – Provides a forum for ERG leaders to share ideas

• ERG Visibility and Communications
  – External website development
  – Brochures/handouts for recruiting and events
  – Internal displays and giveaways

• Formation of new ERGs
  – Asian American and Pacific Islander ERG
  – Disability ERG
Questions and Answers