

Religious Employee Resource Groups

Religious ERGs and Company Values

Outreach to 47 organizations that responded to Seramount's [2022 Inclusion Index](#) as having religious ERGs yielded 10 respondents willing to share information on how they align their faith-related ERGs to company policies, missions, and intended work culture. High level data shows:

- 9 companies have executive sponsors for their faith-related ERGs
- 9 companies have clear procedures for how to report religious-based discrimination in the workplace
- 9 companies promote their faith-related ERGs to create business impact through initiatives tied to other business units
- 9 companies allow their faith-related ERGs to market events/meetings internally to all employees
- 9 companies have opportunities for their faith-related ERG leaders to attend religious diversity conferences
- Companies created faith-related ERGs for a few reasons, including employee interest, DEI initiative goals, results from self-ID surveys, and reaching critical mass for a variety of groups
- 6 companies have interfaith ERGs, 3 have faith-specific ERGs, 1 has both an interfaith and faith-specific ERGs, and 2 have an interfaith council

See the report in the link above for more information, including detailed case studies from the 10 responding companies.

Interfaith ERGs

Religion and spirituality are increasingly being recognized as significant dimensions of diversity in the workplace. There are two models for religious Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): religion-specific ERGs and interfaith ERGs where all religions are celebrated in one group. The Interfaith ERG is emerging as the preferred model for large companies. It may be more difficult for large organizations to manage the business goals of multiple faith-specific ERGs. Furthermore, given the diversity of religious beliefs and practices across the globe, companies could be challenged by the number of employees wishing to form separately operating religion-specific ERGs. Interfaith ERGs are an inclusive way for all employees to connect over their beliefs and learn about others, while reducing the possible tension that arises when religion enters the workplace.

There are potential challenges that arise when establishing these groups, including the organization being seen as promoting religious beliefs and theological disagreements between employees. It may not be clear to employees why a faith-based organization is necessary. Employees who identify as atheists or agnostic can

feel alienated or threatened by the presence of religious groups. To address this, companies should make it clear that they are not promoting specific beliefs but creating a space for all employees to bring their full selves to work. They also must ensure that anyone, regardless of religious beliefs, can join the interfaith ERG. Furthermore, the leadership of the ERG should be composed of employees from a variety of faiths. ERG leaders and executive sponsors should have a strong communications strategy that clearly expresses why the group is needed, emphasizes the inclusivity of the ERG, and specifies the behaviors you want members to engage in. Collaboration between the interfaith group and other ERGs is always recommended.

Employee Resource Groups Are Taking a More Collaborative, Intersectional Approach—and It's Working

Bridges welcomes employees of all religious backgrounds—FINRA purposefully decided against launching separate faith affinity spaces “because we felt as though we would be opening the gap more,” Fields explains. “There’s so much opportunity that could be missed.” Some companies have focused on launching and expanding broad-based ERGs—multiracial, multifaith or multigenerational ones, for example—which, potentially, can recruit more members. Having more members can mean more impact. Read this article to see how several companies are utilizing a multi-community approach to create community in the workplace.

2021 Above and Beyond Awards

The Above and Beyond Awards are currently called the ERG Impact Awards.

Winner of the Culture Impact category: Cross Religion and Faith ERG Leadership Alliance, Intel

- Intel’s Cross-Faith and Beliefs ERG Leadership Alliance of seven belief-based ERGs (Atheist/Agnostic, Baha’I, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh) started late 2019 just prior to the occurrence of challenging divisive forces that broke out globally such as isolation and loss during COVID, escalated racial violence, and extreme nationalism that hindered cooperation needed to prevent common challenges.
- Rather than making strongly held beliefs a point of contention, the alliance holds up differences as a means to understand and support one another and work together in a manner that showcases each member’s talents and interests.
- Recently, an international organization, the [Religious Freedom & Business Foundation](#), recognized Intel as being number one among the Fortune 100 for “Religious Equity Diversity and Inclusion.”
- The group plans to do a world tour within Intel, visiting all their 30+ sites globally, through virtual call-in meetings. They will have a panel of leaders from different faith groups to talk about a given area.

2023 Inclusion Index Data

In the 2023 Inclusion Index, the following financial-services companies identified they have religious ERGs:

- [American Express](#)
 - Jewish Employee Network

- Muslim Employee Network
- Christian Employee Network
- [Fannie Mae](#)
 - Christian Salt and Light
 - Muslim
- [Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco](#)
 - Christian ERG
- [Goldman, Sachs & Co.](#)
 - Religion and Culture Forum
- MetLife
- [PNC Financial Services Group](#)
 - Interfaith EBRG
- [Standard Chartered Bank](#)
 - Origins, Nationalities and Ethnicities
- State Street Corporation