



Affinity Groups Piloting at the USPTO

**Bismarck Myrick
(United States Patent Trademark Office)**

UNITED STATES
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Employee Groups Grow Business Value

Bismarck Myrick

Director, Office of EEO & Diversity
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Goal: Timely and High-Quality Examination of Patent/Trademark Applications

Levers

Recruitment

Description

On-boarding highly-skilled examiners means that we have the capacity to review more applications quickly with high quality



Retention

Preventing attrition of productive examiners means that we have the capacity to review more applications quickly with high quality



Career Advancement

As examiners advance, they review more applications

Pilot: Using Voluntary Employee Organizations to Help Recruit, Retain, and Advance The Careers Of Examiners

01 INTEREST MEETING

- Advertise a lunchtime interest meeting
- Recruit founding committee
- Start with chapters of well-recognized organizations first

02 CHARTER & BYLAWS

- Assist founding committee in drafting charter & Bylaws
- Non-discrimination
- Elections

03 EVENTS

- Speed mentoring
- Cultural (food)
- Leadership in attendance

04 SUPPORT

- Ethics
- Advertising
- Storage space
- Leadership access
- Executive Advisor Program

05 ADAPT

- Pull groups in during tragedy (George Floyd), corporate initiatives, and special emphasis months.
- Leverage groups to maintain a sense of community during post-pandemic WFH

Results

- Grew from three Affinity Groups (Blacks In Government, Asian Pacific American Network, and Lambda PTO) to an organized network of 30 officially recognized Voluntary Employee Organizations (VEOs)
 - 20 Affinity Groups
 - 10 other officially recognized employee organizations
- Established a new examiner-VEO mentoring program
- FEVS Data



Resources



Resources for starting an
Employee Resource Group



Mentoring Programs and Toolkit



Affinity Group Toolkit



Contact Information

Contact Us



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