

**BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST :**

# **How to make your employee network flourish**



## Introduction

This document provides a checklist of Cityworks' best practice tips on how to help your employee network to flourish, ensuring that both employees and the business benefit from a more inclusive working environment. Our guidance is based on our research and our observations and experience of working with organisations in the City.

Do you have ...?	Examples
<b>A clearly articulated purpose and reason for being</b>	<p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To raise issues</li> <li>✓ To give feedback</li> <li>✓ To develop practical tools</li> <li>✓ To provide support to new joiners</li> <li>✓ To develop cross-business relationships</li> <li>✓ To hold interesting events</li> <li>✓ To drive cultural change</li> <li>✓ To provide a forum for like-minded people to connect</li> </ul> <p>Many organisations are choosing to combine networks into a single inclusive network, with different strands to focus on different priorities, or they are leveraging industry-wide networks</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <i>The Diversity Project and Gender Inclusion Network for Insurance are good examples of industry-wide networks.</i></li> <li>★ <i>Nationwide's Employee Network Groups is an example of one inclusive network with different strands</i></li> </ul>
<b>A clear understanding of your target audience (including any allies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Many networks are choosing names that avoid labelling specific demographic groups</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <i>PwC's Gender Balance Group and Virgin Media's 'Gender Agenda' for female progression</i></li> <li>★ <i>'Fusion' network for cultural awareness</i></li> <li>★ <i>Broad 'Inclusion' network with different strands to ensure appeal to a broader target audience</i></li> </ul>
<b>A passionate senior network chair who can act as a top advocate</b>	<p>A sponsor with the following characteristics can be a powerful asset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A personal or emotional attachment to the network</li> <li>✓ A compelling story to tell</li> <li>✓ Wants to be actively involved</li> </ul>

Do you have ...?	Examples
<p><b>A strong business case for needing the network to secure senior sponsorship</b></p>	<p>Business case data can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Number of women in senior positions</li> <li>✓ Employee diversity data / goals</li> <li>✓ What competitor organisations are doing with their networks</li> <li>✓ Suppliers &amp; partners asking about their diversity statistics &amp; initiatives</li> </ul> <p>Consider also the costs involved including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Financial / people resources required to support core network activities</li> <li>✓ Budget for events</li> </ul>
<p><b>A meaningful name and a strong brand and communications to drive visibility of the network</b></p>	<p><i>Some interesting examples of names include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>For inclusion:</b> 'Unity'</li> <li>★ <b>For LGBT:</b> 'GLEE' (Gay, Lesbian and Everything Else) at PwC; 'Rainbow'; Fujitsu's 'Shine' network</li> <li>★ <b>For women:</b> Lloyds Banking Group's 'Breakthrough' network;</li> <li>★ <b>For family:</b> 'Family Balance', 'Balance'; 'Family Matters'; 'i-Care',</li> <li>★ <b>For career entry / millennial employees:</b> 'Young Professionals' 'Aspire', 'Our future'; 'Step Up'; 'Next Gen'</li> <li>★ <b>For wellbeing:</b> 'Health &amp; Happiness', 'Living Well'</li> </ul>
<p><b>A genuine understanding of issues and barriers experienced by employees</b></p>	<p>Methods of doing this can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A survey of working arrangements</li> <li>✓ Informal focus groups to hear more about known issues and brainstorm solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>A simple and achievable action plan for the network</b>  <b>e.g. 3 key priorities for the year</b></p>	<p>Priorities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Proposing improvements to policies / handbooks / internal training</li> <li>✓ Reviewing certain recruitment / diversity practices e.g. 1-page reminders on unconscious bias before every interview; mixed gender / race interview panels;</li> <li>✓ Developing practical guidelines or checklists for managers and/or employees</li> <li>✓ Offering post-onboarding support for new joiners</li> <li>✓ Role model profiles published in newsletters, intranet, handouts</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ EDF Energy's 'unwritten rules' leaflet developed by employees for explaining the informal do's and don'ts in their organisation</li> <li>★ EY's 'selfie' initiative called 'Igniting Change' which encouraged employees globally, male &amp; female, to make pledges on how they would accelerate change towards gender parity</li> <li>★ Fujitsu's 'Inclusion Matters' newsletter about diversity and inclusion issues</li> </ul>

Do you have ...?	Examples
The right resources to deliver the network's activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review employee data to find the right mix from across the business and consider allies as well as core members</li> <li>✓ Create some kind of incentive e.g. internal awards, a meaningful thank you from the CEO, inclusion of network activities in performance goals</li> </ul>
A network structure that enables it to deliver its aims	<p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A broad cross-business steering group</li> <li>✓ Sub/working groups looking at specific issues / areas</li> </ul>
A range of exciting network events and communication channels	<p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Webinars</li> <li>✓ Big events to raise awareness</li> <li>✓ Confidential</li> <li>✓ Closed sessions</li> <li>✓ Recording events so latest joiners can still access these</li> <li>✓ A balance of internal and external speakers</li> </ul> <p>The Cityworks' Diversity Calendar includes awareness dates to build into your plan (<a href="https://www.cityworksforum.co.uk/resources/diversity-calendar.htm">https://www.cityworksforum.co.uk/resources/diversity-calendar.htm</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <i>Lloyds Banking Group hold 'Live Meet' events where colleagues can dial in and hear stories from inspirational colleagues and senior leaders</i></li> <li>★ <i>City law firm held an internal event for younger professionals &amp; prospective parents about balancing careers with parenthood featuring panellists from across the business, sharing their experiences and working arrangements</i></li> </ul>
Rewards to demonstrate your achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Applying for awards can bring credibility and boost exposure for the network.</li> </ul> <p>Some of the main diversity awards are listed on Cityworks' Diversity Calendar</p>
A strong presence on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Leveraging members who are active on social media who can act as ambassadors for the network and increase awareness</li> </ul>

#### Useful Resources:

- **Cityworks Library:** A range of articles, reports, rankings and case studies  
<https://www.cityworksforum.co.uk/about-the-library>
- **Cityworks In-House Presentation:** Managing Employee Networks  
<https://www.cityworksforum.co.uk/resources/presentations-and-talks.htm>
- **Women Ahead:** Networks That Work research  
<http://www.women-ahead.org/networks-research/>
- **[www.inclusivenetworks.co.uk](http://www.inclusivenetworks.co.uk)**

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