Starting a Sandwich Generation Caregiving ERG: Implementation Guide

This comprehensive guide provides a practical roadmap for launching a "**Parents Parenting Parents**" **Employee Resource Group (ERG)** at your company. The document outlines a three-phase approach to establishing a supportive community for employees who are caregiving for elderly Loved Ones, complete with specific action steps, timelines, and strategies for long-term success.

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Phase 1: Foundation Building

Building a strong foundation is critical for your ERG's long-term success. This initial phase focuses on assembling the right team, securing support, and establishing your group's purpose.

1 Find Your Core Team

Begin by identifying 3-5 passionate colleagues who have personal experience with caregiving for elderly parents. Seek diversity across departments, roles, and caregiving situations to ensure broad representation. Schedule an initial brainstorming meeting where you can align on vision and goals for the ERG.

2 Secure Executive Sponsorship

Identify a senior leader who has a personal connection to caregiving issues. Prepare a concise pitch that highlights the business benefits of supporting caregivers, including reduced absenteeism, improved retention rates, and enhanced productivity. Request a brief meeting to present your vision and secure their advocacy for your initiative.

3 Develop a Mission Statement

Create a clear, compelling statement of 1-2 sentences that defines your ERG's purpose. Focus on both the support and educational aspects of your group. Ensure that your mission statement aligns with your company's values and culture to increase relevance and acceptance.

4 Check HR Requirements

Meet with your Human Resources department to understand company policies regarding ERGs. Inquire about available budget, meeting spaces, and communication channels you can utilize. Determine if there's a formal application or approval process that needs to be completed before launching.

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Phase 2: Launching Your ERG

Once you've established your foundation, it's time to launch your ERG with intention and structure. This phase focuses on organization, communication, and initial programming to ensure a successful start.

Create a Simple Structure

Establish core roles such as chair, communications lead, and event coordinator to distribute responsibilities. Set clear term limits, typically one year, to prevent burnout among leadership. Draft basic operating guidelines that outline meeting frequency and decision-making processes to ensure smooth operations.

Plan Your Kickoff Event

Schedule a lunch-and-learn introduction event that welcomes potential members. Invite an engaging speaker to present on a broadly relevant topic like "**What is Gerontology?**" to provide immediate value. Provide snacks and create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages networking and sharing among attendees.

Develop a Communication Strategy

Create a company intranet page or dedicated Teams/Slack channel for ongoing communication. Design a simple logo and consistent branding to establish recognition. Prepare an announcement email template for company-wide distribution to promote awareness. Consider maintaining a confidential membership list for those who prefer privacy around their caregiving responsibilities.

Build Initial Programming

Schedule the first three months of events and meetings in advance to maintain momentum. Mix informal support sessions with structured educational content to address various needs. Create a survey to gather member needs and interests to ensure your programming remains relevant and valuable. Remember, you're **Sandwich Generation Caregivers**, you're ALL going to be busy!

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Phase 3: Growth and Sustainability

Ensuring your ERG thrives beyond its initial launch requires intentional planning for growth and sustainability. This phase focuses on establishing regular programming, measuring success, building partnerships, and planning for leadership continuity.

Establish Regular Cadence

Create a predictable rhythm with monthly full group meetings that can be attended via a hybrid format. Encourage members to supplement these with on-going, informal coffee chats that provide ongoing support. Schedule quarterly educational workshops featuring external speakers to bring in fresh perspectives and expertise on caregiving topics.

Track Metrics for Success

Monitor member growth and engagement rates to understand your ERG's reach. Track attendance at events to identify which formats and topics resonate most. Conduct satisfaction surveys to gather feedback for continuous improvement. Collect impact stories that demonstrate how the ERG is making a difference in members' lives and work experiences.

Seek Integration Opportunities

Partner with other ERGs on intersectional topics that may affect caregivers from different backgrounds or circumstances. Collaborate with HR on policy recommendations that could better support caregiving employees. Connect with community organizations that specialize in elder care to access additional resources and expertise for your members.

Plan for Leadership Transition

Document processes and resources to preserve institutional knowledge. Mentor potential future leaders to build their skills and confidence. Create a leadership pipeline that ensures continuity when current leaders step down, preventing gaps in ERG operations and momentum.

By focusing on these 4 key areas, your ERG can move beyond the initial excitement of launch to become a sustainable, valuable resource for caregivers throughout your organization. Regular evaluation and adaptation based on member feedback will help ensure the group continues to meet evolving needs.

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Quick Start Timeline

This accelerated implementation schedule provides a framework for launching your ERG within a 12-week timeframe. Following this timeline will help maintain momentum while ensuring all critical foundation elements are in place.

1

Weeks 1-2

Assemble your core team of 3-5 passionate colleagues and research your company's existing ERG policies. Use this time to have preliminary conversations with potential members and gather insights about caregiving challenges within your organization.

2

Weeks 3-4

Secure an executive sponsor who can advocate for your ERG at leadership levels. Draft your mission statement that clearly articulates your purpose and aligns with company values. Begin outlining your basic operating structure and leadership roles.

3

Weeks 5-6

Plan your kickoff event, including securing a speaker, location, and refreshments. Create your communication materials and announcement strategy. Begin promoting the upcoming launch through appropriate company channels.

4

Week 8

Host your kickoff event, collecting contact information from attendees and feedback on their needs and interests. Use this opportunity to recruit additional volunteers for specific roles or initiatives within the ERG.

5

Weeks 9-12

Hold your first regular meetings, implementing the structure you've designed. Refine your approach based on initial feedback and participation levels. Begin planning for longer-term programming and initiatives.

This timeline provides a balance between thorough preparation and maintaining momentum. While the schedule is ambitious, establishing your ERG within this timeframe helps capitalize on initial enthusiasm while providing enough structure to ensure sustainability. Remember that flexibility is important—adjust the timeline as needed based on your company's specific circumstances and approval processes. Be sure to check out **our list of ERG speakers & suggested topics** on: **www.usepetunia.com/start-a-caregiving-erg**

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