



THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY

BT Employee Networks

BT's employee networks are established groups of employees who come together to represent the views and issues of a particular group. Our networks are focused either on defined characteristics, (e.g. gender) or "interest-based" groups gathered around particular activities (e.g. carers). BT has seven employee networks - Women, Ethnic Minorities, Disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), Christian, Muslim and Carers.

BT believes a high performing employee network connects individuals with others who share similar experiences, interests and challenges. Networks create a communication channel between members and the business; create developmental opportunities for members; enhance the corporate brand and work with our Inclusion team to plan and implement our diversity and inclusion strategy.

BT is very proud of its well established and diverse networks for employees and as such our networks are deemed by external organisations as leading edge. We are committed to continually supporting our networks and to find new ways to work with them to achieve excellence in diversity and inclusion.

Aims and Objectives of a Network

Each network creates its own specific aims and objectives in line with helping BT to deliver its inclusion strategy. In conjunction with this, individual objectives are also set for the networks by their members. This means BT can meet the needs of its people and its customers more closely. Each network is set up and run voluntarily by employees - 6,000 of our people participate in these networks.

Collaboration between Networks

Our employee networks collaborate to raise greater awareness of the services they offer, with the aim of supporting more BT people. In February 2014, we held an online event called the "Big Conversation". Having a face to face conversation wasn't going to be possible with more than 6,000 members based around the globe, so we decided to use digital technology to enable as many people as possible to join in. This was the first time we have held an online event of this kind with the networks. Each of our seven networks provided content for discussion and, together with the Inclusion team, created an online, interactive event. The event encouraged more people to participate in our networks, share ideas and celebrate their achievements. More than 600 people got involved over the two days, 564 comments were posted and more than 14,000 pages were viewed. As a result, we have now recruited approximately 1,000 new network members. The Big Conversation enabled the networks to share learning across various groups.

Ethnic Minority Network (EMN)

Another example of the benefits of an employee network is demonstrated by our Ethnic Minority Network (EMN) which actively supports members' personal development. This benefits not just the individual but the business too. One of the major activities within the EMN has been the continuation of the mentoring scheme which was set up by the EMN in October 2010. At the time over 88 per cent of the network's members requested the scheme be set up.

The scheme is sponsored by Tony Chanmugan, BT's finance director and Race Sponsor for BT. In his role, Tony is able to influence and encourage directors (including HR, Finance and Sales) from across the business to act as mentors for members of the network (25 senior managers in total from across the business). This has contributed to the high visibility of the scheme across the business.

At present, there are 270 members in the mentoring scheme, which is growing year on year. The success of the scheme has seen EMN members achieve promotion and/or develop skills which enables them to take on additional responsibilities. The feedback from the members has been very positive and continues to be effective.

In 2012, the EMN decided to extend the successful mentoring scheme to schools to enable members to "give something back to society" and develop skills and experience further which would help them in their careers. The programme now covers five schools in London with a total of 52 students and 26 mentors taking part.

We are currently on the shortlist for this year's "Race for Opportunity Awards 2014" for the work the EMN is doing with schools on mentoring and equipping students with skills to support them when transitioning from school and education into the world of work. Examples of this programme have featured in the local newspapers and the links are provided below:

[BT to mentor pupils at Northumberland Park Community School in Tottenham](#)

[Tottenham school to become trail-blazer in mentoring scheme](#)

The EMN also gives members (and non-members) access to senior managers through its "Meet a Senior Manager" sessions. The senior managers have led discussions about their careers and given suggestions about how members could develop their own careers. The senior managers involved are all directors from different parts of the business and Tony Chanmugam kicked off the first session and talked about his own experiences.

Future

At BT we are very proud of our employee networks and the work they and their members do to support our inclusion strategy: -but as always, there is more to do. By making greater use of the technology we have available, we aim to make it easier for a greater number of our people around the world to participate in network activities. We want each of our networks to learn from one another and develop inclusive activities that allow everyone the opportunity to learn and grow. Such collaboration among the networks will encourage behaviours and ways of working that keeps BT people talking and interacting. This helps the business to move the dial on delivering the inclusion strategy which benefits both the business and the employee.