



THE DECISION *catalyst*

A practical guide for ERG
leaders who want their
members to be considered
when opportunities
are assigned



Send your questions to pro@fortefoundation.org

Organizations often think opportunities follow performance reviews or positive reputation. In reality, many opportunities are assigned in allocation discussions: a team must choose one person to trust with something that matters.

In those moments, leaders are not only asking who is talented. They are asking whether they can predict how someone will operate in a new situation.

People rarely choose the person they know the least about.

ERG activity can influence this — not by recommending members, but by creating situations where leaders can observe members working, leading, and solving problems before a decision is required.

When decision-makers already understand how someone works, the future feels less uncertain. That is when opportunities start to move.

The Framing Insight

People are chosen for opportunities when leaders can picture how they will operate in the role.

HOW TO ACTIVATE THIS ROLE

ERG Program Ideas

01. **Run a cross-functional project**
Have a department bring a real business challenge. ERG members lead the solution and present recommendations.
02. **Host a working session, not a speaker session**
Replace a panel with a live problem-solving discussion. Leaders see members think in real time.
03. **Partner with recruiting**
Involve ERG members in candidate experience and interview events. Leaders observe planning and follow-through.
04. **Facilitate structured discussions**
Lead discussions that involve disagreement and tradeoffs. Leaders see how participants handle ambiguity.
05. **Assign initiative ownership**
Give members responsibility for a real initiative with defined constraints. Visibility comes from execution, not presentation.

HR Partnership Opportunities



Invite leaders to observe, not just attend

Have senior leaders join working sessions so they see members operate, not just present.



Recognize ERG leadership as leadership experience

Include initiative ownership, stakeholder management, and influence without authority in performance reviews.



Use ERGs as pilot environments

Test new programs (mentoring, onboarding, communications) through ERGs and let members lead implementation.



Share observations with talent development teams

Help HR understand the leadership behaviors members demonstrate before formal review cycles.

Metrics That Matter

Category	Measure	Why It Matters
Opportunity Access	% of ERG leaders assigned stretch projects	Indicates decision trust
Talent Pipeline	ERG members considered for key initiatives	Shows inclusion in allocation conversations
Leadership Exposure	Leaders participating in ERG working sessions	Creates observational familiarity
Internal Mobility	Role changes or project assignments	Tracks movement, not just engagement
Manager Feedback	"I understand how this employee works"	Signals interpretability

Quick-Start Checklist

Action	Owner	Status
Identify one real business problem the ERG can help solve this quarter	ERG Leadership Team	
Invite at least one senior leader to observe the working process	ERG Chair + Executive Sponsor	
Assign clear ownership roles to members	ERG Officers	
Document decisions and outcomes, not just attendance	Project Lead	
Share results with HR or talent leadership	ERG Chair + HR Partner	

Reflection Prompts

Which ERG activities demonstrate judgment, not just enthusiasm?



Where could our ERG create a low-risk leadership opportunity?

Who has potential that leaders have not yet observed in action?

