

Headline:

The case for caucus groups

by [Celeste N. Simmons](#)

Since the formation of Xerox's first caucus group in 1974 during a time of racial and social unrest throughout America, we have been a champion of celebrating differences and leveraging diverse perspectives to drive bottom-line results in the marketplace.

Caucus groups are independent organizations formed by specific diverse employee populations to share experiences, encourage professional development and career advancement, and engage in community involvement. Each group is appointed a senior executive to serve as champion. Champions are charged with advancing diversity awareness and opportunities at the highest levels of the organization.

Thirty-five years after the establishment of the first group, five additional caucus groups have blossomed within the company. Our rich tradition of inclusiveness remains a part of our cultural fabric. And we've got the [accolades](#) to prove it.

"Xerox has done a great job over time of thinking about how we manage diversity," said John McDermott, chief information officer and corporate champion of HAPA (Hispanic Association for Professional Advancement). "Many companies pursue diversity because it's good social policy, but at Xerox, we see it as good business."

Sophie Vandebroek, chief technology officer and GALAXe champion, added, "Each of us has the responsibility to create an environment where everyone can be authentic, including our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender co-workers.

"It is important to learn about the humans behind the projects," she added. "Having an inclusive culture that encourages all of us to bring our full selves to work makes this possible and ensures that Xerox has highly loyal, productive and innovative employees."

While caucus groups have placed emphasis on serving the needs of their membership, they have been instrumental in assisting the employee population as a whole. For example, the caucus groups were the principal lobbyists who persuaded Xerox to implement a nationwide job posting system.

Over the years caucus groups have partnered with us to achieve a standard of excellence in all aspects of the business and to assure that management never lost sight of its commitment to offer equal opportunity to all employees.

Take a look at what our caucus groups are all about.

ACT (Asians Coming Together)

President: Yonn Rasmussen – Vice President, Xerographic Component Systems Group
Corporate Champion: Wim Appelo - President, Xerox Global Business and Services Group

Founded in 1999 by a small group of Asian employees in California, ACT now has a membership of over 1,500 employees within one national and four regional chapters.

Yonn has been leading the organization since January of this year and is focusing on providing, "activities that enhance professional networking opportunities for ACT members

and foster a sense of community for our members at Xerox.” She added, “We’d like to utilize the untapped talent of ACT members beyond their field of expertise to fully realize their potential.”

Among many activities, ACT holds monthly morning coffee networking sessions with special guests, holiday community projects, public speaking seminars, and plans to launch an ACT language translation and cultural / travel information service.

For more information on ACT, visit: www.asianscomingtogether.com/

BWLC (Black Women’s Leadership Council)

President: Tonya Love – Manager, Color Imaging & Control Systems Group Area & Xerox Innovation Group Green Program Manager

Corporate Champion: John Kelly - President, Xerox Global Services North America

Since its inception in 1989, BWLC has been committed to the professional and personal growth of black women within Xerox.

“Leadership is a core focus for us, even down to the community service projects we select,” Tonya noted.

The annual BWLC national summit fosters many of these leadership development opportunities. In addition, BWLC launched a pilot program in 2007-2008 as a development opportunity for high-potential black women. Participants were selected by their managers and linked with mentors, sponsors and an external career coach to examine career aspirations and develop a supporting Professional Development Plan. As a result, 10 women advanced their careers within Xerox.

BWLC also operates a non-profit foundation that provides scholarships to high school students.

For more information on BWLC, visit: www.bwlc.com/

GALAXe (Pride at Work)

Co Presidents: Susan Mayrand, Consultant, RFP Centre of Excellence and Scott Reiber, Enterprise Client Consultant

Champion: Sophie Vandebroek, Chief Technology Officer and President, Xerox Innovation Group

Founded in 1988, GALAXe empowers employees who are, or who support, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons. GALAXe is Xerox’s only caucus group that supports an invisible employee population, and is committed to providing an inclusive climate for LGBT employees.

“GALAXe plays a significant role in providing counsel to Xerox in maintaining their status as the best place to work for LGBT employees,” Susan noted.

According to Scott, “The LGBT marketplace is expected to reach a value of \$1 trillion by 2012. This represents a huge opportunity for Xerox to establish relationships within this market to gain future new business and continue to solidify our place as the vendor/partner of choice.”

A company-wide LGBT awareness session is planned for Nov. 5. Additionally, a voluntary self-identification program is in development that will enable us to create an inclusive environment and track the careers of LGBT employees.

For more information about GALAXe, visit: www.galaxe.org/joomla/

HAPA (Hispanic Association for Professional Advancement)

President: Jean Cadena, Global Account General Manager

Champion: John McDermott, Chief Information Officer

When HAPA was founded in 1977 by seven Hispanic employees in Los Angeles, it was meant to unify Hispanic representation throughout the company. Now, with one-fifth of America's population expected to be of Hispanic descent by 2020, the organization's mission to promote the intake, retention, professional development and career advancement of Hispanic employees is especially timely as Hispanic decision makers and buying power increase.

HAPA is working with DMO West management to develop a talent exchange program between Latin America and the U.S. that will foster globalization and leadership skills for managers in Latin America and the U.S.

"I'm proud to see how serious my people are about professional development," said Jean. "My vision is to see a Hispanic Xerox CEO in the next 20 years."

For more information about HAPA, visit: www.agentsitebuilder.com/sites/hapa/.

NBEA (National Black Employee Association)

President: Alex Burgess, Region Vice President Xerox Services, Southeast

Champion: Cam Hyde, Senior Vice President, Global Account Operations

Founded in 1974, NBEA is Xerox's first-established caucus group whose model paved the way for today's caucus groups. Originally formed by a small group of black employees in New York City, NBEA now has grown into 10 local chapters that comprise one national organization. The group is committed to removing all barriers to the intake, growth and professional development of black employees.

"The mentorship I've received within NBEA - both solicited and unsolicited - are key factors in my professional success," Alex said. "NBEA also has given me a very powerful vehicle to pay it forward."

Paying it forward is a principle the organization takes seriously. Through scholarship funds, mentoring, food drives and neighborhood beautification projects, NBEA is an organization with strong community ties.

For more information on NBEA, visit: www.nbea.net/

TWA (The Women's Alliance)

President: Gina Testa - Vice President, Graphic Communications

Champion: Doug Lord - President, North American Solutions Group

Since its founding in 1984, TWA has been an organization that empowers women and supports their professional growth. With over 1,000 members throughout the company, TWA focuses on three areas: career, work/life balance and community involvement.

Internally, TWA facilitates a popular online mentor program that pairs women with mentors across geographies, career levels and interests. TWA also hosts an annual conference that gathers women from around the company. “This year’s conference will focus on career development and feature a line-up of popular authors,” Gina mentioned.

In their communities, local TWA chapters have raised thousands of dollars for scholarships for women in technology, breast cancer awareness, Dress for Success and Habitat for Humanity.

For more information on TWA, visit:

www.thewomensalliance.net/AboutUs/tabid/76/Default.aspx.