**Summer Workshop - The State of DEI and the Value of ERGs**

0:00  
Right.

0:00  
So welcome everyone to our DEI and ERG workshop.

0:06  
Thank you for joining us today.

0:08  
We are thrilled to host a panel featuring some of State Charisma's committed DEI leaders, members of our DEI Council, and driving forces behind our employee resource groups, or Ergs.

0:20  
As interns entering a rapidly evolving workplace, you're stepping into a moment where equity, inclusion, and belonging are not just values, they're business imperatives.

0:29  
Today, you'll hear directly from those shaping stage, DEI strategy and culture, and learn how Ergs are building community, sparking innovation, and creating space for everyone to thrive.

0:40  
Whether you're just beginning your DEI journey or already deeply engaged, we hope this conversation challenges you to think critically about the kind of workplace you want to help build, and how inclusive cultures are a key to attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive world.

0:54  
So we're going to dive in with some introductions.

0:58  
And Ahmed, do you know what I realized?

0:59  
I've never I've never personally said your name out loud.

1:02  
I think it's Beigley.

1:04  
It's close enough.

1:04  
Beigley.

1:06  
OK, yeah, it's like AT in there, but it's it's all right.

1:11  
OK.

1:11  
It's not as easy as McNamara.

1:14  
Listen, Macamara is no treat either.

1:17  
I'll tell you well, thank you.

1:21  
You are a customer service leader with over a decade of experience in the insurance and non profit sectors.

1:26  
Achmed currently serves as Lead Customer Service supervisor at Stage Sure, where he mentors, associates and supports both internal and external stakeholders.

1:34  
And as Co chair of Stage Sure's Believe ERG.

1:36  
He champions diversity, equity and inclusion across the organization.

1:40  
He holds an MBA from Thomas Moore University and serves on its alumni board.

1:43  
A fun fact.

1:44  
He reads and speaks Dutch, which is something I did not know.

1:48  
That is fun.

1:49  
Where'd you find that information?

1:51  
I found it on the Internet.

1:52  
Oh, it's out there.

1:54  
Oh, boy, Is it true.

1:55  
We gotta go scrub the Internet.

1:57  
Yeah, it's true.

1:58  
Good luck.

1:59  
Good luck with that.

2:00  
Let us know how it goes.

2:03  
Kong, you are sorry, I'm just noticing some changes Kong to who is among us there in the small conference room in Connecticut.

2:11  
Hello, Vice president and product development research actuary at Stage Sure, where he overseas pricing for new product development, product management and data science for underwriting and actuarial functions.

2:21  
With 20 years of actuarial experience, Congren's deep expertise and probability data analytics and business strategy to this role to his role helping Dr.

2:29  
innovation and informed decision making across the organization.

2:33  
And I'm saying all these nice things.

2:34  
So it's, it's fine to say.

2:35  
Since joining Stage Sure in 2016, he has held several leadership roles and currently serves as sponsor of the Aspire Employee Resource Group, supporting professional development and inclusion initiatives.

2:46  
Kong holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Mathematics with a concentration in Actuarial science from the University of Connecticut and is a Fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society.

2:56  
Welcome, Khan John.

2:58  
With over 2 decades of experience in database architecture and engineering, John Sedaris is the Director of Dead Data Management at State.

3:05  
Sure, he leads with deep technical expertise across a wide range of platforms, including, I'm going to do my best here, Oracle, SQL Server, RDS, Dynamo DB, Aurora, Cassandra, my SQL, and Redshift.

3:20  
Did I get all that right?

3:22  
Excellent.

3:23  
Great.

3:24  
Since joining Stage Sure in 2019, he has played a pivotal role in scaling and optimizing the company's data infrastructure.

3:30  
A graduate of Southern Tech with a degree in computer Science, he is known not only for his technical mastery, but also for his collaborative spirit and sense of humor.

3:37  
He has served as the chair of the Empower ERG and as a fierce advocate for LGBTQIA plus rights in his private life.

3:48  
And last but certainly not least, Maria Scharf.

3:51  
She is a strategic operations and corporate development leader with over a decade of experience in the insurance and financial services industries.

3:58  
A senior director of investor strategy and operations at Stage Sure, she leads capital partner engagement, board strategy and transaction execution.

4:06  
A graduate of Rutgers Business Business School with the BS in Finance, she is also the founder and chair of Stage Sure's Women's Inclusion Network or WIN, our employee resource group, advancing equity and leadership across the organization.

4:17  
All four of these members are also members of our DEI Council, So in addition to serving on the ER GS, they are on the council.

4:27  
Welcome everybody.

4:28  
I'm so glad you're here.

4:29  
Thank you so much for being a part of this today.

4:31  
So as usual, we're going to ask some panel questions, everyone, but I am going to be keeping an eye on the chat to make sure if anyone has any questions and you can come off mute and ask questions to our esteemed panel members who are delightful, welcoming, warm people who are happy to hear your questions and spend some time with you today.

4:47  
So we'll get started.

4:50  
Great question.

4:51  
Is anyone at the large JC large W 'cause it's no video and it looks like it's like, no, I can, I can take them off.

5:01  
I need to officially remove them.

5:03  
I'll put them in the waiting room.

5:04  
How about that?

5:05  
OK, Also, Blake, you can do that for the Cincinnati one too, 'cause we're all working from home today.

5:10  
OK, I don't, I actually don't see it, but I will continue to work on that while we get started on our questions.

5:19  
And I'm going to start, John, with you.

5:22  
What are some common and we're going to use diversity, equity and inclusion.

5:25  
We're going to say the whole all the words because you know, obviously this has been in the news and there's there's some some confusion.

5:32  
So we're going to say all the words out loud.

5:33  
What are some common misconceptions about work and diversity, equity and inclusion?

5:38  
DEI work?

5:39  
Sure.

5:39  
And I will mention DEI on this aspect because we do hear a lot of the news like, oh, there's a problem with there.

5:46  
There's an issue because I have DEI hires and they're making quotas.

5:50  
The diversity equity inclusion is not about quotas or making sure that we have the, you know, right, number of different people from different backgrounds.

5:58  
It's about removing barriers.

6:00  
So we broaden our network for equally qualified people in those different areas that we would not normally consider.

6:06  
It's not about let's make sure we have someone that fits that role from a look perspective.

6:11  
It's the quality of what they can bring as well as their background.

6:16  
There another item that you hear a lot on DEI.

6:19  
It's like, well, I don't want to be forced to push into other beliefs.

6:23  
And that's not what the diversity, equity inclusion's about.

6:26  
It's about fostering conversations, understanding different backgrounds, just bringing more cohesion against different groups.

6:37  
It's not about separation or causing conflict there.

6:40  
And then the final one I'll close on.

6:42  
You hear a lot with companies where it seems to go, well, we're all friendly here.

6:45  
Why do we need diversity, equity, inclusion?

6:48  
Well, it comes under a phrase that you may have heard.

6:51  
It's called illusion of inclusion.

6:53  
You may look around and see people with different backgrounds, but are they able to speak?

6:57  
Are they able to give their opinions just because in the room doesn't mean that they have that opportunity.

7:02  
So what diversity equity inclusion does is make sure everyone has a voice and is included.

7:10  
Thank you so much.

7:11  
Those are great answers.

7:12  
And I haven't heard the illusion of inclusion.

7:13  
I like that a lot.

7:15  
So this is an interesting one if you look back to the start of your career.

7:20  
And I'll, I'll start with Kong on this one.

7:22  
If you don't mind.

7:23  
How was diversity, equity, inclusion understood or talked about, if at all, in your workplace?

7:32  
Yeah, so for me, when I, when I first started, it wasn't really talked about.

7:38  
I, I know that there were.

7:41  
So I worked at a few other companies before companies had ER, GS, but it wasn't well discussed, shared about.

7:53  
I wasn't really knowledgeable about it.

7:57  
I think the term DEI overall was just not something that was very much discussed.

8:04  
But I also think it depends on the location of where you live.

8:12  
Since I came, I worked at big cities, I worked at Philly and New York.

8:17  
So they tend to be more diverse compared to on city.

8:23  
And so I think that that plays a role at the workplace.

8:28  
I think people just have been generally shy to talk about it 'cause they're not sure what that may cost.

8:36  
And I think a lot of people, especially new people coming into the workforce, want to be able to focus on showcasing that they can do a good job at the company.

8:49  
So I, I think that that when I first started, I feel as though DI just wasn't something that I heard much of or there was much focus on.

8:59  
And this is dating myself like 20 years ago.

9:02  
So times have changed and have evolved since then.

9:07  
And I would say that as I join other companies and as the general environment has changed, that's created a need for companies to establish a voice and and ensure exactly what John shared in his first statement, the illusion of inclusion that it's not that you can't, you can't kind of hide behind just expecting that that's there.

9:37  
There needs to be something a little bit more behind.

9:38  
And I think that's where companies started to step up and either feed, but they had more clear and available to employees to, to partake in and to join.

9:51  
And you're hearing a lot more companies take a stance on on the fact that it does matter to to people that your voice matters and what you say and how things are said does impact you in certain ways.

10:08  
So I think that in my journey so far, DI has definitely evolved over time.

10:17  
That's great.

10:17  
It's so interesting because it is such a rapidly, the workplace is just so different.

10:23  
It's so different than it was 10 years ago or 20 years ago.

10:26  
And it's continuing to evolve, and it's kind of exciting to be a part of that work.

10:32  
John, can you answer the same question?

10:34  
I can read it again.

10:35  
And back to the start of your career, how was DEI understood or talked about, if at all, in your work?

10:39  
Sure, Yeah.

10:40  
Let's go way back into the 1990s.

10:41  
So way back when there was these conversations about gays in the military.

10:46  
Don't ask, Don't tell.

10:47  
That was big conversations in the workplace too.

10:50  
So back in my, I was working for this really great progressive at the time consulting company and we didn't have anything other than the standard EOE out there.

10:59  
So I wanted to move forward to get orientation added to the non discrimination policy.

11:06  
Thought it was a great idea.

11:07  
Everyone thought I was trying to like shut the company down.

11:09  
That was going to ruin the company.

11:11  
And it was internal.

11:12  
It wasn't for anything publicly.

11:13  
Then it took me, I did do it.

11:15  
It took about 12 months to do it.

11:17  
And I did have two really good sponsors in leadership who are straight that helped sponsor that.

11:24  
But the timing to do that and there was so much pushback in meetings to do that compared to today where that's just a standard today, right?

11:30  
But way back then, that was a huge ordeal to actually say that we had that after almost a year, a little over a year of fighting.

11:38  
Whereas today that's the standard.

11:40  
But just keeping that in mind as we, you know, see current events and things, it's not something we could just like relax on.

11:46  
We have to to keep working on it as well.

11:48  
But it's progressed so much now that we can actually have these conversations and not be concerned.

11:53  
Whereas before it was these side conversations you'd have outside of the workplace, but not really into it back then.

12:00  
So, yeah, thank you.

12:05  
And because it's become I think so so much more of a central business imperative.

12:13  
Let's talk a little bit about what role let's switch to kind of Ergs in particular, because it's interesting you say those side conversations.

12:19  
I actually heard someone saying once that the side conversations about the EI are what turned into the ERGSI actually heard someone refer to their first ERG was they got together with people who they felt a community with outside of work and where they would meet at someone's house once a week and talk about these subjects.

12:34  
So he considered that to be sort of early stage ER GS, which I thought was really, really kind of beautiful and interesting.

12:41  
What role do you think ER GS play in building connection across organizations?

12:48  
So I would like to direct this question first to Maria and then we'll go to Achmed.

12:52  
Sure.

12:53  
So I have been at Sager for a little over 10 years and was here when we founded and started our ERG.

13:01  
So I've personally been able to witness how our Ergs can help transform Sager.

13:07  
I think they're a critical piece to bring our DEI strategy to life by carving out space to have folks share experiences with each other.

13:19  
I've seen them provide professional development opportunities to do things like this, speak when people may not necessarily have the opportunity in their day-to-day job.

13:29  
I think they help provide education to allies depending on what Ergs you participate in, and I think overall help build stronger, smarter, more diverse teams that ultimately help the business.

13:47  
For me personally, it's allowed me to connect with so many amazing people across the company that in my day-to-day job I wouldn't necessarily be interacting with.

13:58  
Yeah, yeah.

13:59  
So I'll echo what Maria said.

14:02  
She I think copied all my answers as well.

14:06  
So I I I like her have been here since the starting of our DI council along with our ER G's that we've built believe being one of the first ones being built along with empower.

14:22  
So the biggest thing I have experienced for the past almost five years now is the learning that we get out of a lot of our ER GS things that you generally, I mean, unless you're personally a inquisitive and you just seek certain things outside of work, you're not going to get it.

14:44  
So our ergs allows allow us space to get that additional information and additional learning.

14:51  
I, I will share with you when my calendar wasn't as busy as it is not right now, I went to win and I learned some conversations there that I remember they brought in a basketball player, NBA player that shared her story and how, you know, growing up and working, playing in the league.

15:12  
I've attended empower meetings and learned about our, our colleagues in the LBGDQ plus and I community, right?

15:21  
So you learn things that you otherwise would not necessarily seek outside of work.

15:28  
And I think it allows you to, again, network, learn about your colleagues because believe it or not, I see some offices or some office people here.

15:38  
We're 1100 strong, but about what, 90% of us work remote.

15:42  
So it allows us to make this big place a smaller place where we can make sure that, you know, our colleagues are people and human.

15:50  
So yeah, I want to extend it to the other panelists if anyone also wants to answer that question, because you all have such a deep ERG experience.

16:01  
And the question was, what role do Ergs play in building connection across the organization?

16:06  
Just in case you'd like to answer.

16:08  
Yeah, I'd love to.

16:11  
So yeah, I, I, when we created Aspire, it was because coming out of COVID, anti aging heat was on the rise.

16:25  
And it was just a time when I felt like it was an opportunity to help share some of the perspectives of colleagues and their families or friends were were experiencing.

16:39  
So that that was kind of one of the impetuses.

16:43  
And the other is just my own personal passion of wanting to be able to to to, to share experiences with like minded or like experienced folks, as well as inviting allies who are interested in learning more about our our perspectives and impacts things that impact us that may not necessarily folks may be aware of.

17:04  
So I think your GS have definitely been a great way to be able to open that Channel for communication, have a forum for folks to feel a safe space to be able to have conversations, to learn from each other and ultimately bring humanity into the conversation.

17:27  
Because I think a lot of times, even at the start, if you saw the title of the discussion, you see DEI at times people just start to kind of tune out like it's not for me.

17:39  
I I already know what it's going to be about.

17:41  
And it's ERGS and DI is a lot more than that.

17:45  
It's when, when you get to have those conversations with people and understand what it does and how it impacts people and their families and friends, it, it brings the reality behind why there's a need for having ER G's and the discussions around DEI.

18:03  
So it's, it's the humanity behind it that I, I personally enjoy making others, helping others be aware and seeing that, you know, we could work in the same office, but we have maybe different experiences outside of work and, and being able to share that with other people.

18:24  
I have just one more item to add there.

18:26  
The other thing is it also removes that single spokesperson from each group as well.

18:32  
And an example of that is things may be going great for me.

18:35  
I don't feel discriminated against, but someone on another team or department that's LGBTQ may not be feeling the same or supported.

18:43  
So having these ER GS, you're able to voice that and get the support of the group.

18:46  
Just make sure that we can resolve that because just cause one person's fine doesn't mean everyone else is.

18:50  
So it's a good place to get feedback from across the company there.

18:55  
So yeah, that's a great point.

18:57  
And to Ackman's point, for many people, this is just a really wonderful way to just beat folks across the organization who they're not going to get to run into in the office because we're losing those run into in the office moments.

19:12  
We gain so much from this flexibility, but we do lose those moments.

19:16  
And especially if you are across an entire country, there's some companies across the entire world.

19:22  
It's just a great way to connect with new folks.

19:25  
Carl, coming back to you for one specifically about insurance, if you don't mind, have you seen a shift in how insurers think about the communities they serve, especially in terms of equitable access to coverage and risk assessment?

19:43  
I, I think what comes to mind when you ask that are commercials essentially.

19:50  
And now it's just ads in, in different social media.

19:54  
And I think that the way companies it's, it's the insurance.

20:00  
At the end of the day, it's commodity.

20:01  
It's, it's not really understood.

20:04  
People are like, I'm, I work in insurance and some people don't really even understand what it is, but they, they, they work in an insurance company.

20:11  
So I think that it, it has this because it's not a tangible thing.

20:18  
I think from a like ADI perspective, how do you kind of attach messages and things around that?

20:25  
And so ads or commercials are, are ways to be able to kind of put a voice behind behind it.

20:33  
And so not only insurance, but kind of in any type of industry, I think they're, they're using more faces, they're involving more people to try to represent the population.

20:52  
So I think that's, that's one aspect of how I feel like at least they're, they're showcasing representation, sometimes a little bit more extreme than what's actually the case, but they're they're trying to push that in terms of access to to insurance from a property and casualty perspective.

21:17  
One of the items that has been kind of around for a while.

21:20  
And as actuaries in the room here will will come to learn on some of the exams.

21:27  
Insurance score is one example.

21:29  
That's not exactly DIERG, but it, it has impacts to, to populations that have historically have potentially have had trouble with financial circumstances because of the way that our government and, and just the way that things have worked in society.

21:49  
And, and the advent of having that be actually such a impactful variable or consideration.

21:58  
And how insurance is, is afforded is something that has been part of our actuarial training discussion and and debates for for some time.

22:08  
In terms of risk management, because there are protected characteristics that we consider that are not allowed to be considered as part of how we consider risk or providing insurance to people, then certain aspects aren't taken into account.

22:29  
So we do look at certain proxies and maybe insurance court could be part of that.

22:33  
So I guess it's, it's a controversial topic, but it is something that we do view when we're looking at data very significant and helping to determine risk segmentation.

22:45  
So in terms of again, availability, it depends on I think different economic situations, but I think it does it, it's, it's been something that I think continues to be an area where there are advocates to try to figure out how do we make it more affordable to, to, to folks in in different areas, not necessarily driven by their ethnicity or their race, but also by socio economic situations.

23:19  
Not the best concise answer, but no, I'll add.

23:25  
Oh, I'm sorry, Maria, go ahead.

23:26  
No, go ahead.

23:27  
I was going to add 2, but yeah, no, just adding to just real, real life.

23:31  
That's happening, right?

23:33  
You guys have to understand insurance is a very old industry, financial industry.

23:39  
You guys are young.

23:41  
We are.

23:42  
Well, most of us are.

23:44  
I'm just looking at myself.

23:45  
I have Gray hair, but we're, we're young people and I just, I was in a, in a, an insurance conference a couple of weeks back and we learned that a lot of executives are retiring and it's like we're going to have a 400 to 500,000 gap employee gap in insurance coming up in about 10 years or something, something crazy.

24:15  
All right, so the change that DIERGS have done across the the board when you think about insurance is great, but it's very slow to actually hit the insurance industry itself.

24:31  
But to Kong's point, you know, when you think about a company like I lost train of thought on that company, they, they removed the insurance or the rating based on zip code for auto because believe it or not, your zip code determines your rate because of crime thefts.

24:58  
You think about it, right?

24:59  
So they removed something like that, as simple as that, along with insurance score as well.

25:06  
The other thing I, I want to add when they think, when organizations think about this is when it comes to claims, right?

25:14  
Being more present in the space rather than just paying out a claim and then be done with it.

25:21  
Being more pressing there in the communities that they serve.

25:24  
So great example.

25:26  
And I know Lisa is not here, but she likes to share this.

25:29  
She had an opportunity to visit one of the catastrophic areas with our chief claims officer.

25:34  
Lisa is our chief admin officer that leads our DEI council.

25:40  
And people were actually excited to see that Satyr was there in person and not just cutting a check for my home, but they actually saw that these people, like aren't just these people, but they are people that support us.

25:55  
So those are some things that actually companies are starting to do now a lot more you will see on TV often insurance companies actually being in locations that they may insure people if it's bring them water or bring them food or whatever.

26:12  
But they they they are becoming more intentional in being in those communities.

26:17  
Beyond addition.

26:19  
What Cong shared.

26:21  
So Maria, sorry.

26:23  
Yeah, well, set up.

26:24  
And I just would add a little bit to a shift right is that paying claims is super important.

26:30  
It's the reason people that have insurance, but a shift for insurance companies thinking more about preventative measures, right?

26:38  
How can insurance companies help you better protect your home to prevent a claim in the 1st place?

26:45  
And so being more proactive in the communities that we serve to help people prevent a loss if, if we can and never even have to have a claim, which has been, I think a positive shift.

26:58  
And I think makes insurance as a whole look better, as if we're not just seen as the people that you come to for money after you have a loss.

27:05  
If we can help you prevent a loss, I think we're providing even more value.

27:11  
Maria, could I ask a question about that Just to hear it more 'cause I, I have heard, I think it's our home services team.

27:17  
They will actually, they have sent teams to, to, to kind of flash repairs on roofs before storms come.

27:24  
I don't know if that's something they're planning on doing or that they're already doing.

27:28  
Yes, they're already doing.

27:29  
It's a shingle resealing program.

27:32  
I can try to find a picture of it, but they come out and help 4 to 5 roofs in certain locations and we have data we can actually see.

27:39  
Kong would probably know better than I do, but you can actually see a roof that has been had.

27:45  
Shingle resealing holds up way better when a large storm hits versus, you know, neighbors who don't have the same service.

27:53  
Another one, I don't know, Connie, if we still work with Leakbot or if we've moved on, but a little device that people put on their pipes that alert you to a small leak to help hopefully prevent significant water damage happening to your home.

28:09  
Things like that where we can be proactive in helping Ting.

28:14  
Ting is the new one.

28:15  
Thank you.

28:17  
Ting is for fire, fire fire prevention.

28:19  
So it's like a electrical device.

28:21  
It, it checks like the surge of your power and if it's kind of out of sorts, it kind of lets you know the homeowner know to to be aware, maybe turn the power off to potentially prevent fire from electrical situation.

28:36  
And I think the more things like that we can help implement and give credit and make home homeowners insurance more affordable for people, it hopefully will help even out some of the kind of inequities that Achmed was talking about, about zip code and things like that.

28:56  
It's not all awash, but I think we can do our part to make it a little bit better for people.

29:02  
And for those of you keeping track at home, that's one of the that's one of the rare times when a company's imperative, but it's good for the good for the customer and good for the company, right?

29:14  
I feel like that's something that's so unique about our industry is that partnership.

29:18  
And I did look up the stat Achmed because I used to have the stat at the top of my head, but it's half of the insurance industry.

29:24  
It's going to retire by 20-30.

29:26  
I think that's actually true for most industries because of boomers overall, but that doesn't change the fact that there is going to be a real a real need for more people to be coming into the industry and for the industry to change and grow.

29:44  
Any other comments on that last question?

29:46  
Great conversation.

29:51  
All right.

29:51  
Thank you, Pamela so much.

29:53  
OK.

29:53  
We're going to move to the next one.

29:57  
Small conference room.

29:58  
There it is.

29:59  
Have there been instances in the past where the panel really felt the weight of DEI not being properly included, supported in the insurance industry?

30:09  
I'll say not just insurance industry, right?

30:12  
We got hit with 2025 and we all of a sudden saw Target removing their Dai initiative, Microsoft doing some things.

30:21  
Everybody was doing this stuff right.

30:23  
So we just want to make sure that and this is just forsake sure.

30:30  
And I very much applaud our DI council and our leadership.

30:35  
We had a, we had Lisa and Lisa send the communication, but the DI council all pitched in and we made a strong statement that DI is not a check box.

30:47  
It's actual work that we're doing.

30:51  
Some of us may not be or could not be in this in certain spaces if we did not get the opportunity to apply or to be considered because of whatever reason kind of thing.

31:04  
And you guys are all here because you are learning the industry, learning about the industry, doing the stuff in college you need to and you are going to add the value needed to make the industry stronger by like right now and or later, right?

31:22  
So it's not a checkbox at all.

31:25  
I don't, I don't feel it is that way.

31:28  
Say it sure doesn't feel it's that way.

31:30  
So while it's heavy work and others may be taken and taken aback by it or we're we're doing what we need to to make sure that everybody on this call and that it's not on this call feels like they belong.

31:48  
Anyone else want to tackle that question?

31:51  
Yeah, I think even just piggybacking what Akman said about leading into 2025, there were big companies that got rid of their DEI officers, right.

32:03  
So that kind of was happening 2023-2024.

32:05  
So it was, it was we could see that the precipice to turn into 2025 and kind of these acclamations of of not for from our leadership in government to companies saying that they, they shouldn't be incorporating DEI into the workforce or into their practices because it's unfair and to what not.

32:29  
Ackman should just want to also give props to Blight 'cause she she's the one who helped to craft that message and she shared that to the DEI council.

32:38  
We didn't really freak it at all.

32:41  
So it was, it was, it was an awesome message and coming new and coming with some fresh perspective as well.

32:46  
That was pretty, pretty awesome to have and for her to be able to kind of sum up what we felt as an organization and how we wanted to and using her words double down on our beliefs on the the importance of, of having ADI council and ER GS and safe space for folks was, I guess a testament to our leadership, RMC and our executive leadership and, and what they're looking to invest in our people knowing that this, this matters and we're, you know, government, whatever they can say what they want to say.

33:23  
But at the end of the day, it's, it's a whole of people and we're real.

33:26  
We're here to work as, as, as an organization to, to better, you know, to, to achieve or be hag.

33:35  
And a big part of that is being admired and being admired not just externally, but being mired internally because if you're admired by your employees, that that helps to multiply.

33:45  
That's going to shine and help external parties to feel that way about our decisions as well.

33:50  
So, yeah.

33:53  
So I just wanted to make sure to share that.

33:57  
Thank you, Kong, and thanks for your kind words.

34:00  
And I think that for me joining what I did, I joined in December, everyone.

34:04  
I don't think I've shared that necessarily with all the interns, but I joined in December and at that time there was a real movement across different companies asking themselves what are we going to do about the executive orders and how are we going to respond.

34:19  
And I was so proud to join a company that was so clear on what they wanted to do.

34:27  
They were so clear.

34:28  
Everyone was so clear about this is not something we're going to slow down.

34:34  
This is something that's really important.

34:36  
This is important for us to achieve our B hag.

34:38  
It's important for our our business and we want you to think about how we can keep on putting a lot of pressure on all of us to support this work.

34:51  
That was so refreshing and so amazing.

34:53  
I was so grateful.

34:56  
Does anyone else want to speak to that before we move?

34:58  
There's another question in the chat I can move to and we have more questions in our in our prepared remarks.

35:07  
So Chanel asked a question in the chat, how does state term measure progress in its DEI initiatives?

35:12  
That is a wonderful question, Chanel.

35:13  
So we meet monthly as ADEI Council, the DEI Council has identified 4 pillars and in those four pillars, goals for the year and certain OK Rs that we want to achieve throughout the year.

35:28  
And so the way we're measuring our success this year is have we achieved our OK Rs?

35:32  
Some of those OK Rs are looking at our compliance trainings to make sure that they are inclusive.

35:40  
Looking at our the trainings, we're offering trainings this summer on distributed workforce and on teaching managers how to remote, how to remote manage and to do it really, really well.

35:52  
We are getting DEI Council partnership on those trainings to ensure again that they have the kind of the DEI Council partnership and that viewpoint in perspective.

36:01  
We're also looking at just the numbers, Chanel, and I know you love numbers.

36:05  
We're up 29% in our ERG membership since January because we are making real effort in our new hire orientations for two reasons.

36:15  
I think we're making a real effort in new hire orientations to really put the ER DS in front of people exactly because of the reason that Ackman said that it is.

36:24  
It is one of the most powerful ways that we can connect people in a hybrid remote environment, right?

36:31  
To get people into each other's space who aren't necessarily on each other's teams and to build connection and build relationships.

36:37  
We're in this company together and if we have stronger relationships, we're better at our jobs.

36:42  
And we're also, I think the ER GS have done such an incredible job with their events this year that every single time we have an event, we're seeing membership go up.

36:52  
And not only just in the ERG that had the event, Aspire can have an event.

36:57  
And after the Aspire event, membership across the ER GS goes up.

37:02  
So people experience the event and they want more of it and they want to be more connected.

37:07  
So those are some of the ways that we're measuring our success.

37:11  
I see.

37:12  
Another question in the chat, do does Sage share actively host in person DEI events to get the community together?

37:18  
If so, what type you to take that one?

37:22  
Yeah, sure.

37:23  
Yes, absolutely.

37:24  
Thank you Genesis for asking that question.

37:27  
So we do.

37:28  
All Ergs have, for the most part, monthly meetings that you can join.

37:35  
Either speaker events or book clubs or articles or you name it.

37:42  
More more recently, I can speak on behalf of belief.

37:45  
We did some games around Juneteenth to learn more about Juneteenth.

37:51  
What's coming up this time around in July, It's a panel around storytelling.

37:57  
So with the premise of immigration right.

38:01  
So we we we just want to make sure that we provide a space where our colleagues that are not necessarily born in the United States of America that make sage sure awesome get to tell their story.

38:18  
And because I'll tell you you, you may not have heard the mispronouncing pronunciation of pronouncing, but I wasn't born here, right.

38:30  
So I have a story from far, far away and I think everybody has one regardless again, if you're born here or not.

38:39  
So yes, we have a fence that are erg driven and then we have a fence that ergs cross collaborate and then we bring it to the large population of state.

38:50  
Sure.

38:51  
So whichever you're interested in, just ping one of us and we can we can help you get used to rated.

38:59  
I'm sorry, I'm just going to add, yeah, like the question also, I think the thing that I was trying to think about was that in person and because of such a hybrid and remote workforce, it's, it's difficult to, but it's been difficult to figure out ways to to, to have in person events that are as inclusive as possible.

39:21  
But the idea isn't necessarily to always have to figure out a way to make it the most inclusive across all of our office just because we're so spread out.

39:29  
So there are events, there have been events that have been localized like in, in Cheshire, we had past couple years, we've had just lunches.

39:39  
So one, one month Aspire will sponsor lunch and bring in food from some local restaurants from different different Asian restaurants.

39:47  
So the folks have a chance to try different foods and we've done games as occupied share with with what the Leafs done and we've done games.

39:56  
We've played mahjong.

39:58  
We've got I, I didn't know how to play before, but I, I kind of know how to play now.

40:04  
So we're trying to do some fun things as well as some educational things.

40:08  
A lot of the events that we do have tend to be over Zoom in order to help have more folks attend that aren't necessary in the same location.

40:21  
Like the art of looking where we actually did join in person with a small group in Jersey City.

40:26  
But then we dialed into the event and that was it was really fun to join it in person and virtually.

40:31  
And then, Ahmed, do you want to share about Doctor Dina?

40:35  
Yeah, Yeah.

40:37  
So I believe in May, we brought in Doctor Dana specifically.

40:41  
She's a local professor at University of Cincinnati and we actually brought her into Cincinnati, our office and we had had our first hybrid event as ADI council and believe so, which was very impactful.

41:01  
We had a lot of engagement within the office and remote.

41:06  
I think.

41:08  
I don't like to brag, but numbers matter.

41:11  
Sometimes I forget what it was like 122 colleagues showed up to just learn and hear Doctor Dana speak about her topic when it comes to mental health.

41:24  
So yeah, it was it was a great event.

41:27  
And I think, Raphael, if I.

41:29  
Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

41:31  
Yeah.

41:32  
Yeah.

41:32  
Raphael.

41:33  
Raphael.

41:33  
OK.

41:34  
Thank you.

41:34  
Yeah.

41:34  
So again, we do that quite often where we get together with each other and say, hey, can we collaborate and do an event together.

41:46  
So yeah, that's good.

41:48  
And Rafael Genesis, I hope that answered your question and thank you, Ahmed and Kong.

41:52  
Maria maybe talking about a little bit because I feel like when has done has maybe more than one joint event.

42:02  
Sure.

42:03  
Most recently in June and I think we recorded it so people can go and watch if they want to find it.

42:09  
And Aspire Co hosted a speaker event with a amazing woman named Jessica who is a trailblazer in the actuarial world and actually is the CEO of Octagram Analytics, which I believe she has built from the ground up.

42:28  
And it was an awesome opportunity to collaborate with another erg, work together to put on this event.

42:36  
And Kong, I don't know if you disagree, but I think it was a great showcase of both of the teams working really well together.

42:45  
And I think was a good opportunity to, like Bly said, encourage membership to some of the different ergs and people participate in today.

42:56  
I, I think we, when we had that, there may have been some folks on the call that were that participated.

43:02  
So, yeah, I, I really enjoyed her perspective and hopefully I think it was recorded and can be shared so folks can watch, especially folks in this room might be interesting because there was some, some discussion on the actual profession and her journey there.

43:19  
So, so I'll make sure we're actually going to be adding it to the win page later today in our ERG meeting where we're learning how to use our new tool.

43:27  
And so after that's done, folks, I will circulate that so you can see it 'cause it is.

43:32  
It was an amazing conversation.

43:36  
We have more questions in the chat.

43:38  
I love this one, so thank you for asking.

43:42  
Is there a value or practice that is strongly upheld within your ERG that you believe would be impactful if Stage 2 adopted it and scaled across other teams?

43:51  
Great question.

43:52  
It's for anyone on the panel.

43:57  
So in sorry, no, I just spoke.

43:59  
But for win this year, we did kind of win buddies where we paired up with somebody who works on a different team that we haven't met before, don't work closely with and I think has been hugely valuable in learning about other areas of the company, building connection.

44:16  
And I personally would love to see something like that implemented throughout the entire company for people who want to participate.

44:23  
Let's do it.

44:24  
I think that's great.

44:25  
I love that it's been so valuable, like wild success more than I than we even thought when we set it up.

44:37  
I, I feel like so maybe blindly even shared this during all your orientations.

44:44  
We run, we are fountains.

44:46  
We run down the hall and we don't try our seizures.

44:49  
Seizures 3 main values and I and I try to think about it for Aspire.

44:58  
I I think the the one that maybe just personally has I've always connected with this.

45:02  
We don't, we don't try.

45:04  
And it's something that I, I feel like I, I hope is, is kind of translating a little bit into inspire as well as that in, in, in the fact of we're, we're here to share who we are and whether or not there is some executive order to say what they want to say.

45:25  
That shouldn't stop us from being able to still have those conversations with, with our employees and our friends and our colleagues.

45:33  
And so I feel like with inspire our one of my goals for the group has always been to be vulnerable and and be a voice to help folks just hear someone who maybe have experienced something that might have been similar to.

45:50  
Then allow those conversations to be had and have people also join in those conversations to feel heard and and feel supported when when they they go through something that others may other may not have experience, but others within the ERG may have experience and can relate to.

46:10  
And just that in itself feel like helps to build a bond.

46:14  
And so that value for seeds sure to me is something that we we, I feel like we practice within Aspire as well.

46:26  
Yeah.

46:31  
John Achmed No, I couldn't necessarily think of anything different from what Maria and Kaya shared.

46:40  
Thank you.

46:41  
Same on my side, fortunately.

46:43  
So I have one that I would like to add.

46:45  
I think, and this was this came from events across the ergs this year.

46:51  
But I think we learn.

46:52  
We learn in a very powerful way when we hear stories.

46:56  
We just learn in a very powerful way.

46:58  
And one of the items that the DEI Council and I've been talking about, we're talking about the ER GS, is a concept from the 90s.

47:06  
It was actually for libraries.

47:08  
And I think libraries are amazing places for so many reasons, but the concept is windows and mirrors.

47:14  
And the idea being that in our work, we try to provide windows into the authentic experiences of others and mirrors so people can see themselves reflected.

47:22  
And if you can do those things, you're going to build powerful connections.

47:26  
And I think that I have already heard stories in each of the Ergs from employees that have reordered my brain chemistry around how I think.

47:35  
And once you have your mind opened, it's kind of hard to close it.

47:40  
Certain concepts are just not, you can't lose them again.

47:43  
And I find the opportunity to learn that way from my colleagues makes me feel just incredibly satisfied with this work and my work at the company, but also just so much closer to the people who I work with and understanding of who they are.

47:58  
And really grateful to have my own experience improved and to understand the world a little better than I did the day before.

48:06  
That kind of learning changes who we are profoundly.

48:12  
And I think providing those opportunities is a real privilege.

48:16  
Being a part of those opportunities is a real privilege and that to me is something that I wish that we had as we move ahead, more and more folks joining our ERG events and having that experience, that's a company.

48:36  
Thanks for these amazing questions, everybody.

48:38  
We have.

48:41  
We have one more that I think we'll do.

48:44  
What is the most powerful ERG moment for you this year?

48:49  
If you could each pick one that will resonate with you and just to be fair, you can choose one from your own and one from someone else's if you want.

48:59  
For me, last week we had a return speaker that Empower has brought in.

49:05  
I think this was her third year, John, coming to speak CAB.

49:11  
In the session she talked about inclusion.

49:14  
We talked a lot about microaggressions and she is such an engaging speaker and talks about topics that can be difficult for people to listen to in such a digestible way and it was awesome to see it.

49:29  
A bunch of people that are in ER GS, but also folks in the company who haven't participated to date join and learn about these really important topics and how to ultimately walk away.

49:39  
I think being a better human and it's always really powerful and impactful to hear her speak and and educate the broader company.

49:52  
That's mine.

49:55  
And Dolla, I'll follow up on that.

49:57  
Thanks.

49:57  
Speaker She she's been amazing.

50:00  
The first time we brought her up, she did gender identity, which is very provocative subject.

50:05  
She handled that really well.

50:06  
It's just not from what I get from it, but we get a lot of people.

50:09  
I get a lot of feedback from people that attend, those that are very excited to be represented, basically that they don't feel they have a voice.

50:17  
Some of these topics can be pretty hard to discuss, but the fact that we're actually brave enough to bring them up is how someone put it to me makes them appreciate and feel more trusting to the company.

50:29  
So we're not just here today, but we're going to like drop it when it becomes difficult to whatever.

50:34  
So for me, it was when I joined a care ERG event and care is the OR group that it's a, it's a group of employees that spends the time talking about learning about taking care of either dependent parents and, or children that depend upon the parents in there.

51:07  
And it was just a powerful, it's time that I spent to see that there's so many of our colleagues that actually do this and bless their heart with the actual work they are doing outside of work and taking care of their elderly parents and or their children that depend upon them.

51:29  
And I would, it was, it was powerful for me just to to learn and see, I don't, I have children, but I don't have parents that or children that fully depend to me, depend on me like that.

51:40  
And it was just strong to see that we have colleagues that like go through this and still have the bandwidth of being great colleagues, etcetera, right.

51:51  
So that, that was just an awesome experience for my, for myself.

51:58  
Yeah, I, I personally, and because one of the events that I, I host, but I, I personally love the art of looking.

52:06  
I, I, we've done it three years in a row.

52:09  
I love art and I feel like it's such a unique medium to be able to express your the the artist's perspective.

52:19  
But then it's that much more interesting to kind of understand, to hear other people's perspective of that artwork and why I think that it's completely different angle than maybe what having like a really tough conversation about some certain event right now would have.

52:40  
But it, it helps to I, I find it helps to be able to hear how varying people's perspectives are on the same image or same artwork that folks are, are looking at where they're coming from, their context of what they bring to the conversation.

53:01  
And my, my hope with that was, has, has been and continues to be to open up people's minds more regarding how we bring ourselves to our, to conversations in everyday life.

53:17  
Everyone's coming from their own perspective, looking at the same thing.

53:22  
Two people can view it completely differently.

53:26  
And you, you come into a meeting, you come to a conversation with your friend or whatever, and the same thing happens all the time.

53:32  
And what do, what do you do about it?

53:35  
And in those, in those discussions, we have someone who's helping to moderate and then they share what the artist did and gives a little bit more context behind it so that you kind of get a little bit more.

53:45  
And that's a convergence, but understanding of what it is.

53:49  
But I feel like it, it's something to take back in real life where in conversations and and what not, you're trying to get to some sort of common commonality or some common ground at the end.

54:00  
And I I'm hoping that it it gives a practice for folks to be able to to view that, see it they kind of come to action and see about how see how they could potentially bring that back to their just daily lives and their interactions with family, friends and colleagues.

54:18  
It was a great event.

54:21  
You're doing incredible work, all four of you.

54:23  
Thank you so much.

54:24  
I'm so grateful for these are also, by the way, everyone should know, incredibly valuable team members.

54:31  
These are people who are killing it at Sage.

54:33  
Sure.

54:33  
And killing it in the ER GS.

54:35  
So I just want to say thank you to them for also offering, raising their hand once again to offer their time, energy, talent to us today to spend some time talking to all of you about this incredibly important subject.

54:50  
So thank you so, so much and thank you everyone for your attention and time.

54:58  
Hey, my, my pleasure.

54:59  
In the words of Chick-fil-A.

55:00  
I don't like Chick-fil-A.

55:03  
In the words of Chick-fil-A, my pleasure.

55:05  
All right, everyone, have a lovely one.

55:07  
Thank you.

55:08  
Thank you, thank you.

55:09  
Thank you.

55:09  
Thank you.

55:11  
Thank you.

55:13  
Thank you.