**Guidelines For Managers Of ERG Leads / H&S Ambassadors**

So you're the manager of an ERG Lead or Heart & Soul Ambassador... now what?

In brief:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **We encourage you to...** |  | **… and try to avoid** |
| * Demonstrate **genuine interest** in the community they're part of, their experiences and struggles; * **Proactively ask** how you can help them succeed in the work that they do; * Do **your homework** to unlearn your unconscious biases and self-educate about their community; * Offer managerial **guidance** when needed just as you do on your core role; * **Recognise** a job well done – also just as you do on their core role; * Help them manage their **workload** – both on the core job and the ERG/H&S dedication. * **Check-in often** and show up at key events. |  | * Placing their dedication to the ERG/H&S as work **out of scope for your attention** or recognition; * **Shying away from conversations** about their ERG/H&S role; * **Being authoritarian**with regards to their time and dedication to the ERG/H&S (open a dialogue instead); * Interfering with**personal opinions** on what the ERG/community should or shouldn’t do, unless solicited; * Being **silent** when key events – be them celebratory or traumatic – affect the ERG/community. |

Starting from the beginning: what are ERGs and Heart & Soul?

[Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)](https://confluence.spotify.net/display/DIV/Employee+Resource+Groups) and [Heart & Soul (H&S)](https://confluence.spotify.net/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=49972287) are initiatives managed by our Diversity & Belonging team which rely heavily on grassroots, volunteer, employee-led collectives that gather around a shared passion. At Spotify, they are key because they increase our sense of belonging by creating a safe environment where band members connect with each other – something that proves more challenging when you either come from a group that's under represented in our industry and/or face stigmas around mental health. ERG members and H&S support each other, share experiences, develop leadership, provide insight to the rest of Spotify, and connect with the communities around us.

The work of ERGs leads and H&S Ambassadors is:

* Integral to [Spotify's Diversity & Belonging Strategy](https://spotify.facebook.com/groups/1085334348239320/permalink/1414395508666534/);
* Voluntary (participation is never mandatory);
* Mostly employee driven and governed with oversight from the [D&B Team](https://confluence.spotify.net/display/DIV);
* Committing: should be able to invest 3-5% (usual) to 20% (seasonally) of their time;
* Open to all employees and interns from across Spotify – not specific to a department;
* More successful when their leads are supported by caring managers (like you!).

What changes in my role as the manager of an ERG Lead or H&S Ambassador?

We have good news for you: not much, actually! You remain co-responsible for their performance and development. That said, many managers still feel insecure around the fact that their report leads a group around a shared identity the manager doesn’t ascribe to (like being the male manager of a Spotifier leading Women@; or someone unfamiliar with mental health issues leading a H&S Ambassador). Here are some tips for dealing with that feeling

**1 - Talk to your report about it**

Understand how they see their role, ask about their motivations and set up shared expectations on time commitment (the average dedication is 3%-20%). Check in early and often, so either of you can course correct if the role is not living up to agreed expectations/needs. Allow space for peak dedication at key community milestones and events (like Hispanic Heritage Month, Ramadan, World Mental Health Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, etc.).

**2 - Get close to the community in question**

Do your best to understand the needs of the ERG/H&S and their community. Do a quick search to learn, and perhaps [watch this 20min video](https://youtu.be/sWWyT8iQU3M?t=357) on the importance of building proximity to help bridge gaps between demographic groups.

Be aware of your own biases (we all have them!) and do your best to unlearn them. [Here is a cheat sheet on that](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rakoW1nuDxHz8QKPlTMK8KM5OhpLlIAF3xhU30Rd-Y0/preview) and [video of a great example](https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4618001/caller-admits-racism-gently-advised).

Show up for key events for the ERG/H&S – and encourage your whole team to demonstrate their support as well. Both celebrations and triggering or traumatic events should be your focus; for the latter, [here are some tips on leading in trying times](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bg3pCKZ_K5wVnACSMOyHcJS0v0MwH6LxE-ZKrSq6iuU/edit?usp=sharing). If you're still insecure, feel free to [reach out to our team](mailto:teaminclusion@spotify.com). Also, try to attend our annual Inclusion Summit: it’s a great way of both learning and supporting. Or watch [the recordings from previous years](https://videos.spotify.net/search/perform?search=%22inclusion+summit%22).

**3 - Get comfortable with being uncomfortable**

Get used to making mistakes, learning from them, apologising and moving on (just like in your core managerial role!) and familiarise yourself with [Spotify's Essential Guide to Allyship](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ngzo3M4GICVg8pKP1tjuojnhQNLXO5PFOIS_X65kTkg/preview).

Discomfort may also arise if the Spotifier presents performance issues: if that's the case, don't shy away from being transparent about it, and discuss with them how to best reconcile their core role and their engagement with the ERG/H&S – which might then have to be reduced temporarily until things are back on track again. If further support is needed, make sure to connect with [your HRBP](javascript:void(0);).

Should I include ERG/H&S work in Development Talks?

The simple answer is: it depends. If you both agree that the ERG work contributes to the development of the Spotifier's [Mastery, Achievements and Behaviour](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uyfWkiHUWbaxmuUFvC7nnySDSinYF0Kk/view), then we see no reason that should not be part of the [Development Talks](https://confluence.spotify.net/handbook/for-everyone/personal-development-at-spotify/development-talks) you have with the Spotifier.

Often, ERG/H&S work allows the development of leadership skills, alongside building connections, making difficult decisions, solving complex problems, and navigating the organisation. All these can be helpful for fostering further leadership in one's own core role.

We encourage managers to reflect on, appreciate and leverage such learnings Spotifiers get from leading an ERG or being a H&S Ambassador: as their manager, help the Spotifier establish goals and parameters of development – just as you would do with their core role – and follow up as needed.