

ISA Innovation Impact Award: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Culture with ERGs



Why Invest in ERGs?

In today's competitive market for top talent, companies must offer employees more than a good paycheck and benefits. Workplace culture is often more important than compensation for attracting and retaining employees. People want to feel connected and cared for by their employers. Shared values, strong relationships, and opportunities to develop professionally and personally rank high among the factors that influence individuals to work for a company and remain engaged and productive.

Vallen has made a commitment to developing a pipeline for talent—in particular, for women and minorities who are under-represented in the distribution industry. The creation of internal Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) has helped Vallen shape its culture into one that is more inclusive and welcoming of associates from all walks of life.

VICKIE is Vallen's employee resource group focused on developing women within the organization. Members include women and their allies throughout all roles and levels of responsibility. VICKIE stands for Voices Inspiring Change, Knowledge, Innovation and Empowerment. Members are active in supporting the pillars of the group—Learn, Nourish, Care, Celebrate, Innovate, and Give Back—to create value for Vallen and build a supportive environment to retain and promote women, attract diverse talent and build tomorrow's leaders.

It's been shown that [innovation flourishes](#) in organizations that value diversity and where employees feel they are in a safe and trusted space, with benefits including enhanced problem-solving and creativity.

BERG is Vallen's Black Employee Resource Group, which supports and encourages Black employees in their career development in order to bring greater success for Vallen. The group's name and logo of an iceberg represent the untapped potential of diverse associates and their contributions to the greater organization. Membership in BERG is open to all Vallen associates, with the goal of building relationships that enhance understanding, equity, and allyship.

Vallen's leadership recognizes that in order to be successful in the coming years, businesses must reflect the diversity found in their customers and communities. As ISA and its members continue to lead the channel forward, this is foundational: diversity and inclusion must become ingrained in the day-to-day operations and values of successful organizations.

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MEET VICKIE! [VICKIE](#) was officially launched in early 2020 with a [live webcast](#) for all Vallen associates that included a panel discussion with Vallen President Chuck Delph and three founding members to introduce the ERG and emphasize the importance of developing women leaders in the industry. Membership has grown to more than 100 and is inclusive of male allies as well as women at all levels throughout the company. The VICKIE Board is currently selecting its third slate of leaders, which is an opportunity for emerging and high potential women to take leadership roles and benefit through mentorship and coaching from more seasoned associates.

MISSION: Vallen's VICKIE is an employee resource group whose ultimate goal is to increase the number of professional women employed by and contributing to the long-term success of Vallen, while also supporting and encouraging current Vallen women associates to reach higher levels in the organization.



BERG IS JUST THE TIP...



There's a saying we've all heard about the tip of the iceberg: There is much more under the surface. So when a small group came together in mid-2021 to create Vallen's Black Employee Resource Group, the name [BERG](#) fit. Already the group numbers nearly 50 associates and there have been virtual events to launch the group and share personal stories. Members of BERG include many allies as well as Black associates, and programs will focus on why diversity matters to Vallen.

Making a difference

New hires at Vallen have shared that finding information about VICKIE and BERG on our [company website](#) has influenced their decision to join Vallen. "For me this has always been about creating the right culture for all of our team, not just some of our team," said Chuck Delph. "With the continued challenges in the labor market and Vallen being a people-centered value proposition, we must create a community and company that all team members see as a place to thrive, prosper, and feel their contributions matter."

MISSION: Vallen's BERG (Black Employee Resource Group) promotes diversity and multiculturalism through engagement, education, allyship, and community involvement. We are committed to impacting Vallen's success through networking, professional development, mentoring, and leadership opportunities while enhancing customer, supplier, and community relationships.

VICKIE programs and virtual events have included:

- ▶ [International Women's Day](#)
- ▶ [Breast Cancer Awareness](#)
- ▶ [Black History Month](#)
- ▶ [Steps Challenge](#)
- ▶ [Virtual Book Club](#)
- ▶ ["Love Your Body" Series](#)
- ▶ [Virtual Coffee Break](#)
- ▶ [Innovation discussion with Chuck Delph](#)
- ▶ [Virtual Motivational Speaker, Megs Gelfgot](#)
- ▶ [Career Workshop with Joyce Lansdale](#)
- ▶ [The Gratitude Project](#)

BERG programs and virtual events have included:



[BERG Virtual Launch Event](#)



[Finding Your Voice: A Panel Discussion](#)

and more to come!