

OUT & EQUAL 2022 EXECUTIVE FORUM



BUDDY PROGRAM

The team at Out & Equal knows that interpersonal connection matters and that our community has had fewer opportunities to meet and engage with each other in truly meaningful ways over the last few years. For the 2020 Workplace Summit, we launched our “Buddy Program” —a resounding success that facilitated connections in trios for more than 1,000 people. We are thrilled to bring the Buddy Program back for the 2022 Executive Forum (ExFo). This program will connect you to a few new friends with whom you can share a bit about yourself, dream about the workplaces we want to create, and process your ExFo experience before, during, and after the event. We hope the 2022 ExFo Buddy Program helps create lasting friendships, stronger community, and a sense of belonging for all of us.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- ExFo registrants who signed up for the Buddy Program will be randomly grouped into trios and provided a guide (see below) on how to engage in meaningful discussions with your group, how to document your shared goals and experiences, and how to share your experience with us.
- Upon getting your group assignments via email, please connect with each other and agree to a communication platform for your trio (ex. Google Meet, Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, etc.). By leaving communications up to the individual groups, we aim to give you the flexibility to drive your own connection and experience!

MEETING RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend each group tries to meet 3 times to make the most of this experience and cement your connection with one another: at least once before, once during, and once after ExFo. Schedule your first meeting as soon as you can.



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- Participants should commit to showing up and thoughtfully connecting with one another.
- Not all groups may feel (at first or ever) like fast-friendships or likely professional connections and that's O.K. The guide questions are offered to allow you to share yourselves and your stories, and to hear others'—and that may in fact mean connecting with, and learning from, people in a wide variety of ways. Be open-minded to connection, and to the magic of what can happen when you stop to listen to someone who might have a much different experience or story than your own.
- By design, we are not matching participants in any specific ways. We believe that random assignment will allow for the focus to be on human connection rather than any one preconceived idea about who would make the “best connection.”
- Be brave: If it feels right to do so, consider sharing about yourself personally. This will give others permission and confidence to do the same.
- Keep all conversations confidential. What happens in your groups should stay in your groups—just like Vegas! Avoid video recordings or taking photos of your Zoom screens. Memorializing your group in a screenshot may be ok but get your colleagues' permission first! And please maintain confidence of anyone and anything that is shared. When in doubt, ask!
- Make time and space for all participants to speak, contribute, and collaborate. There will naturally be those who are more extroverted, introverted or who always seeks balance. Everyone's voice is important!
- If you have a less-than-ideal group experience, be patient and flexible. Especially in these times where you and your colleagues might be balancing work with an unusual set of responsibilities and stresses.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

To get things rolling, we are offering the following questions as a starting place for meaningful, connective, and fun conversations.

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MEETING #1: HOLD THIS CONVERSATION BEFORE EXFO IF POSSIBLE

Each member should introduce themselves and consider sharing in an “icebreaker” type of conversation. Have fun with these!

- Your LGBTQ “coming out” or “staying in” story, or a source of your connection to/passion for the LGBTQ community.
- Discuss the meaning of work and a job/career for you personally. What is your “work” story?
- What values around work were communicated to you growing up?
- What is one favorite proud career moment?
- Do you have an important piece of advice you received or gave someone else that made a difference?
- What do you love about the LGBTQ community and our unique “culture” (whatever that means for you)?
- Favorite LGBTQ hero: Who have you admired, looked up to, been influenced by, or want to learn more about?
- What are your expectations for ExFo? Have you attended ExFo in the past? What was that experience like?
- If you want to meet up during ExFo week, the first meeting is a great time to talk about that and potentially exchange contact information.

MEETING #2: HOLD THIS DURING EXFO

After being apart for the last 2 years, we encourage you to connect in-person if schedules permit. There will be multiple opportunities at ExFo for you to meet up—you can sit together at our general sessions, connect during some of the programming breaks, grab a drink at one of our cocktail receptions, or plan to sit and celebrate the Momentum Gala together! Go at your own pace and remember to consider each person’s level of comfortability with being in-person.

- What has your experience at ExFo been like thus far?

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- What about your ExFo Cohort has excited you the most?
- Of the breakout sessions you get to select, which one's will you be attending?
- What speaker are you looking forward to hearing from?
- How does it feel to be back at an Out & Equal in-person event?
- Any fun attire planned for the Vegas themed Momentum Gala?

MEETING #3: HOLD THIS CONVERSATION A FEW WEEKS AFTER EXFO

- How was the experience of ExFo? How have you been since ExFo? What's new?
- What were your main takeaways from your Cohort?
- What did you learn?
- What have you been left curious with that you'd like to follow up on and/or learn more about?
- What are new or exciting discussions around that have either validated or challenged your perspective?
- Was there anything you learned that you have already begun to implement or discuss?
- What are some strategies that you encountered this week that you think would be effective in bettering yourself and/or your workplace?
- After this last outlined meeting, groups can of course keep the conversations going and continue meeting!

EXECUTIVE FORUM SURVEY

Out & Equal will send a post-event survey, which will include some questions about the ExFo Buddy Program. We would greatly appreciate your feedback on your experience as your insights play an important part in our future Buddy Programs.

