



GOOGLE: Stay & Thrive

One day, a fellow Googler reached out to Rachel Spivey, who was at the time a Community Advisor for the Black Googler Network and HOLA Employee Resource Groups, with a problem: they needed help navigating their relationship with their manager. The situation was so dire that the employee was getting ready to give notice. Recognizing this person's talent and not wanting to lose them to another company, Rachel reached out to the company's Chief Diversity Officer to see what she could do. One Googler turned into ten and a new retention strategy was underway.

Rachel is now the director of Google's [Stay & Thrive](#) initiative, a unique retention and progression program focused on advocating for underrepresented Googlers. The program launched in 2017 when Google saw disproportionate attrition among their Black, Latinx and Native American employees in the US. From 2020 to 2022, Rachel's team grew from 7 to 27 members with full support from Google CEO Sundar Pichai. More than 2,400 Googlers have been through the program to date, and among that group, 86% are still Googlers.

In the United States, Stay & Thrive is aiming to expand to additional underrepresented groups like people with disabilities and trans and nonbinary Googlers. In India, where data on race cannot be collected, Google's focus is on gender.

Stay & Thrive participants go through a series of one-to-one meetings with Rachel, or another member of her team, to discuss their concerns and examine possible solutions, with the goal of helping the Googler achieve their desired outcome. On average, this process takes 100 days. Stay & Thrive consultants partner closely with stakeholders and advocacy groups. Like an [ombuds](#), they advocate for the employee in conversations with decision makers who can influence the final outcome. Confidentiality is key to ensuring psychological safety, and it is a principal reason the program is thriving. Google recently shared a milestone in their [2022 Diversity Annual Report](#): Black women, who make up the largest proportion of the Stay & Thrive team's clientele, are staying at the highest rates the company has seen since it started collecting attrition data.

Because of demand for participation, in 2021 the program began offering group coaching around common themes, often in partnership with Google's ERGs. Perhaps one of the most impactful aspects of the Stay & Thrive team is how they regularly anonymize and aggregate observed trends from Googler conversations and exit interviews to lobby for systemic change at Google. For example, before Stay & Thrive's founding, Google's Employee Assistance Program allowed for ten counseling sessions per Googler per year. Google's Benefits team was able to leverage Stay & Thrive's learnings to expand this offering to 25 sessions per year.

Google wants employees to have a good experience at the company. That is why acknowledging and working through challenges is essential to Stay & Thrive's success. In the beginning, it was challenging to define roles and responsibilities as well as a timeline to demonstrate results. Stay & Thrive is still working through these challenges, but the popularity of the program alone shows that the initiative is working.