



e-book

# 3 Trends Shaping Today's Top CSR Programs

How to Lead the Charge in Doing Good



# A Modern Approach to Corporate Purpose

Today's companies are thinking differently about how they approach their corporate giving programs, and it's shaking things up when it comes to employee engagement and social impact!

The traditional giving model where employees have been "voluntold" to give to a single charity, or where a company chooses the beneficiary cause for people's time and money, is now a thing of the past. Today, we have a very different social, technological and political landscape than we did just

a few years ago, let alone 10 or even 50 years ago, when these approaches first took hold, and the mindset around corporate giving is radically shifting.

Purpose is now a leading topic of conversation in boardrooms everywhere, as evidence of the connection between purpose and profit mounts. As Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) fast becomes the lens through which investors, consumers, employees and other stakeholders view companies today, many executives see an opportunity for their CSR programs to be a key tool for leading with purpose, alongside other strategic initiatives.

This is rapidly transforming how corporations engage employees in giving back, and we're seeing three trends in how companies are fostering compelling, purpose-driven workplace cultures, all while maximizing their social impact.



# The 3 Social Impact Trends

Among the hundreds of enterprise companies who are a part of Benevity's client community, we've seen countless examples of innovative strategies that really raise the bar when it comes to doing good. And what's especially interesting is that they're all incorporating at least one of three key social impact trends that are shaping how companies engage more people, maximize their impact and drive more purpose in the workplace.

So, if you're wondering how to magnify your program's impact — and see some powerful transformations in your workplace culture along the way — start by exploring these three powerful social impact trends.

## Trend #1

### Corporate purpose programs are **RESPONSIVE**

Data from the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer shows that people believe businesses are the most competent institution to make a positive difference in the world, and they're looking to companies to provide relief and support when disasters or social crises strike. This trend is all about being ready to act on the issues that matter to your people when it's needed most, and more and more companies are embracing a responsive approach.

From responding to natural disasters to providing relief during a global pandemic to taking action on social crises like racial injustice and inequity, companies are empowering their people to support the causes that matter to them in a timely way.



## Plan your response strategy

A key part of being responsive means knowing what you're going to do when your communities need support. Are there specific areas where you want to focus your efforts, like the cities where you operate or where your employees, customers or suppliers are located. What is your communications plan, do you have budget for matching, and who are your nonprofit partners?

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, 537 Benevity clients responded immediately, raising \$465 million for 70,500 in the first seven weeks. That's a lot of dollars for relief in a short amount of time, made possible by having resources, technology and a plan in place.

When it comes to being responsive, our client Visa is a shining example. They openly share their guidelines around disaster relief on their website and within their giving and volunteering program.

So, when Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017, Visa and their employees knew exactly how they were going to respond and were prepared to act when time was of the essence. Their campaign brought in significant support for communities in the affected areas of Texas, and in record time. Plus, a number of Visa's employees got involved in their program for the very first time, with an increase of almost 5% in first-time users.

*Prudential people pride themselves on working for a principled company with a purpose. Through our program, Prudential CARES, the company provides a platform and encourages participation, but it's the people who show up in their own way to give and make a difference, how they choose and when they choose. We are incredibly proud of the generosity that our team demonstrates all year round.*

**Amy Sulzman,**

Program Manager, Corporate & Community Engagement, Prudential Financial, Inc.

### **Encourage employees to co-create content**

A whopping 67% more companies are empowering their people to create and publish giving and volunteering opportunities for the causes that matter most to them. This is the biggest shift we've seen in recent years, and the one that's likely to bring the most transformation to the CSR space by getting more of your people engaged in doing good. Why? Because 45% of first-time donors get involved through a specific giving opportunity or campaign, helping them make the leap from ambition to action. Plus, by letting your people co-create content for your program, they can start rallying their coworkers before you're even out of a meeting!

Workday is one of the leading software providers for human resource capital and financial management. As part of their program, they allow employees to create content and campaigns, which has proven a resonant way to engage more of their people in Goodness.

When Hurricane Harvey made landfall, one Workday employee was directly affected, and wanted to help her community right away. So, she set up a giving campaign for the hurricane and set a \$10,000 goal.

As Workday experienced, empowering your employees to co-create content has the potential for huge impact. Consider how you can use your program to help your people support the nonprofits that they want, in the way that they want, to make the greatest impact possible.



*Did You Know?*

Within just

**10 minutes**

of the Workday employee creating a giving campaign in response to Hurricane Harvey, donations started pouring in. In just a few days it climbed all the way up to

**\$115,000**

That's the power of a democratized program paired with the right technology partner.



## Did You Know?

If you don't have a plan for your response strategy yet or want to enhance your existing one, consider questions like:

- Where are your employees located?
- What about their families?
- Where are your customers located?
- Will you match? And if so, what's your budget?
- Do you have charity partners who you can support all year round to be ready?

### Amplify Purpose with matching

Many companies offer matching on their employees' donations to nonprofits that are responding to disasters and crises, making this type of response a core part of their programs. We're seeing companies matching employee donations 100%, 200% and even 300% within hours of these events happening because they're ready to publish appeals and use their unique resources to rally support on a moment's notice.

Qurate Retail Group (comprised of eight leading retail brands — QVC, HSN, zulily, Ballard Designs, Frontgate, Garnet Hill, Grandin Road, and Improvements), made both their Hurricane Harvey and COVID-19 giving campaigns public so that customers could take advantage of the company's match. The match cap of \$150,000 they set on the Hurricane Harvey campaign was

reached it just 48 hours! So when COVID-19 hit, they set a \$1 million match cap and again saw so much response that they doubled it to \$2 million.

### Empower your employees to take a stand

Being responsive goes well beyond specific crisis events, and in many cases those events highlight underlying systemic problems, like mental health and racial inequity, that require longer-term action to solve. So, companies can also be responsive by providing their people with the ability to support any cause of their choosing in the face of societal issues and humanitarian crises. This is particularly powerful when these pressing issues personally impact your employees, their loved ones and their communities. When you empower employees to take stands on issues that matter to them, it communicates that the company cares about its people and the issues that affect their lives.

For instance, in response to a national crisis following the death of George Floyd (in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic), Apple stepped up its support for a number of anti-racism groups, including the Equal Justice Initiative, and Tim Cook encouraged his employees to donate too, with a 2-to-1 match incentive for the month of June.

By developing a program that's more responsive, you'll be able to keep your people engaged in doing good in the face of unexpected events, disasters and crises that arise throughout the year.

*Around the world, QVC prides itself on giving back to the communities where we do business, to the neighborhoods where we live and to those most in need. Our people, our vendors and our customers have responded generously in times of devastation, time and time again. And by providing them with a platform to take immediate action, they've shown up as a force for good.*



**Suzanne Quigley,**

Director of Global Corporate Responsibility  
at Qurate Retail Group

## Trend #2

### Corporate purpose programs are DEMOCRATIZED

Companies at the forefront of purpose are allowing employees to choose which nonprofits to support (versus only the ones that the company sponsors or supports), as well as when and how they support them. And the data shows that they're onto something: people are five times more likely to give their time, money and talents when they can choose the cause to support!

Prudential CARES, Prudential Financial's workplace giving and volunteering program for their more than 42,500 employees and retirees in the U.S., has dramatically shifted over the past few years from an annual day of service to a year-round approach to doing good. The key to making this shift has been giving employees more choice. In fact, Prudential's people can choose from hundreds of thousands of vetted and eligible nonprofits in the Benevity's Causes Portal to support at any time. And if a cause they care about isn't already listed, an individual can nominate that organization for inclusion. This really puts the power in the hands of their people.

### Go grassroots to engage more people in doing good

The reality is that the workforce is changing more rapidly than ever before and it's operating in a totally new way. Decisions are made differently — we're no longer in an autocratic, top-down management model. Empowerment, collaboration and accountability are fast becoming the core tenets of work cultures today, so taking a more grassroots approach by providing the ability for your people to choose how they give, who they give to and when they give just makes sense.

Total Quality Logistics (TQL), a North American freight and logistics company, used to run an annual campaign that supported a single nonprofit partner. But they started hearing from their people that they wanted more choice in the nonprofits they could support. That's not surprising, because 90% of their workforce were socially-conscious millennials.

Realizing they needed technology to help them streamline their communications, report on their people's activity and use that data to create an engaging and relevant program, TQL launched a brand-new giving program that allowed their people to support the nonprofit of their choice (also known as an "open-choice" program) — with impressive results!



### Did You Know?

By empowering employees to choose the causes they wanted to support, TQL saw a record 75% participation in their program and a 33% increase in donation dollars!



## Trend #3

### Corporate purpose programs are INCLUSIVE

Diversity and inclusion are top of mind for most companies, and it applies to your corporate purpose program too. An inclusive program helps everyone become better social citizens by providing more ways for all of your people to take part, regardless of location, ability, finances or time constraints. And the great news is that we're seeing more and more companies authentically embrace this critical issue by removing the barriers to participation that may have once limited people's ability to take part.

Companies are supporting inclusion and belonging in their workplaces (while generating greater social impact) by introducing multiple ways for their people to do good. Offering the ability to make donations to and volunteer with the nonprofits of their choice will likely help you appeal to more people, demonstrate that the company values what they value, and help your team members feel supported and included.

#### Try an innovative approach to engage employees globally

Companies who want to see program participation increase are offering more ways for people to get involved. That's why, in addition to giving, matching and volunteering, some are taking their program to the next level by offering their employees fun new ways to get involved in doing good — and they're seeing big things happen!

For example, companies like PayPal are engaging up to 80% of their remote workers and international employees by offering them small, positive actions to take part in (what we call "Missions"). These activities include everything from riding their bike to work to helping out a neighbor to learning about racial inequity. With a platform that allows them to track and even gamify these activities, companies are seeing unprecedented employee participation in their programs. Plus, they're building purpose-driven cultures and reaping the benefits of a more engaged and impassioned workforce in the process.

Today's employees are looking for a sense of meaning, purpose and belonging in their workplace that goes beyond their day-to-day roles. So, empowering them to be their authentic selves by allowing them to support the causes they're passionate about — however they want — is key.

This new approach can help your non-headquartered or remote employees feel a deeper sense of purpose that builds a bond between them and your company, much like what your headquarters employees have, which creates an authentic feeling of inclusion.

With employees all over the world, TripAdvisor knows what it takes to engage people in ways that are locally relevant and include everyone, while making a big impact towards a cause. As part of the effort to address the global refugee crisis,

TripAdvisor made a \$5 million commitment from the TripAdvisor Charitable Foundation and has inspired their traveler community to take part by matching donations through Benevity's Community Impact Portal. They launched a campaign to offer free tours, activities and experiences to help recently resettled refugees feel more comfortable in their new communities. They also mobilized their global employees to welcome refugees by hosting dinners and events for individuals who had recently resettled, and during their global volunteer month, employees in more than 30 worldwide locations supported refugees through giving and skills-based volunteering.

*This is a protracted crisis that is not going away overnight. With the state of the issue, governments around the world need to do more to find and implement lasting solutions; however, it's incumbent upon the private sector to leverage our unique expertise, resources and capabilities in partnership with nonprofit organizations.*



**Steve Kaufer**  
CEO of TripAdvisor

## Empower Employee Resource Groups to educate & engage

Yet another way to make your program even more inclusive is by empowering Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) — grassroots groups who are focused on building inclusive workplace cultures. Whether it's women's networks, LGBTQ alliances, expat groups or more, ERGs are becoming a popular way to help employees inform their company's initiatives in their respective areas, and educate and engage the entire company. But often, these groups don't have a platform to promote, track or measure their progress. By providing them with the ability to contribute content for your program's campaigns or initiatives — whether they're raising funds for their cause, setting up volunteer events or encouraging people to learn about and take action on key issues — your company can leverage the unique insights of ERGs to educate and engage your people in important causes and expand their social impact. Plus, it's another great way to support your employees' passions and encourage Goodness all year long!

## Lead the Charge

As more people look to businesses to lead the way towards greater social impact, how will you make the most of your opportunity to help your company's corporate purpose program be even more effective, strategic and impactful? With a responsive, democratized and inclusive approach, you'll empower your people to do more good as part of a powerful, purpose-driven workplace culture that's poised to make a real difference.



## Did You Know?

In 2018 alone, we saw a 35% increase in the number of companies engaging their employees around the globe by including international causes in their programs

## Ready to embrace these trends?

**Having the right technology partner will help you get there. Learn how Benevity can help you drive more purpose and impact through your corporate purpose program.**



Benevity, Inc., a certified B Corporation, is the global leader in corporate social responsibility and employee engagement software, including online giving, matching, volunteering, community investment and purpose-driven actions. Many of the world's most iconic brands rely on Benevity's award-winning cloud solutions to power corporate "Goodness" programs that attract, retain and engage today's diverse workforce by connecting people to the causes that matter to them. With software that is available in 20 languages, to an employee base of 12 million users around the world, Benevity has processed more than \$4.6 billion in donations and 23 million hours of volunteering time and awarded 974,000 grants to 251,000 nonprofits worldwide.

[benevity.com](https://benevity.com)

[goodness@benevity.com](mailto:goodness@benevity.com)

1.855.237.7875