



Benevity Labs Report

Of the People, by the People, *for the People*

What politically charged giving trends
mean for companies in 2020



Executive Summary

On an annual basis (and sometimes in the interim, when a notable shift occurs), we analyze giving data from Benevity's 600 client companies and their network of more than 12 million people. This study examined monthly transactional data from 350 of those companies and donations from over 1 million global active users between Jan. 1, 2016 and Sept. 15, 2019, to uncover trends in the social impact landscape.

A macro view of the data isn't surprising or shocking, with the top 10 causes supported by companies and their people remaining largely unchanged over the last year. However, we know from past data that there is a trend brewing beneath the surface that is likely to bubble up in the coming weeks and months — reactionary giving on the social issues likely to dominate the 2020 U.S. presidential election debates.

Income inequality, immigration, women's rights, climate change and gun safety all appeared as key themes in the top 10 biggest news stories of 2018, according to Google Trends, but surprisingly make up less than 10% of action, measured by donation volume to related causes. These cause categories are significant nonetheless, accounting for \$332 million in donations to 7,774 recipient causes from 238,262 donors.

Notably, these five cause categories also represent the largest spikes in giving in response to real-world events, a trend that first surfaced in 2016. Donations in 2019 to these categories have surpassed 2016 numbers — and nearly doubled since 2015 — despite the spikes not being sustained over the long term relative to the absolute dollar volume being donated through the Benevity platform.

With growing tension and government distrust, we believe that's about to change, and people will be looking to business to lead the way. So, what do these politically charged giving trends mean for companies in 2020?

1 People want to take action, but they need more ways to get involved.

Society is expanding its definition of charitable behavior, combining traditional approaches to giving, volunteering and grantmaking with more action-oriented, everyday behaviors like purchasing from purpose-driven brands and making lifestyle changes. Having a holistic approach to corporate purpose programs that include components around education, advocacy and meaningful actions will engage more people and ultimately lead to greater awareness and impact.

2 Many companies are at least partially set up for success.

Already, 95% of companies using Benevity's employee engagement solution are directing funds to causes that fall into at least one of the five categories. They and their people are well equipped to take action, through giving and volunteering, when they feel the government is not.

3 There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

To help companies understand their options and execute authentically, we provide examples in this report of what others are currently doing to support their people in these focus areas, based on three levels of engagement — **Bold Brands, Active Promoters and Passive Supporters**.

Companies play an increasingly important role in civic engagement, beyond allowing their people time off to vote. By harnessing the passions and power of their people, and choosing to amplify them, companies can create major social impact and win the support and loyalty of employees, customers and communities. All by becoming authentically purpose-driven businesses that are of the people, by the people and for the people.

The trust people are placing with their employers is both an opportunity and an expectation. The companies that get it right — in that they have an authentic program that is inclusive and a culture that is compelling to the diverse demographics in the workforce — will win. They will win the talent war. They will win the brand war, both with employees and consumers. They will even attract more institutional investors. And our data is proving that out.



Bryan de Lottinville
Founder and CEO, Benevity

Top 10 Causes Supported by Companies and Their People

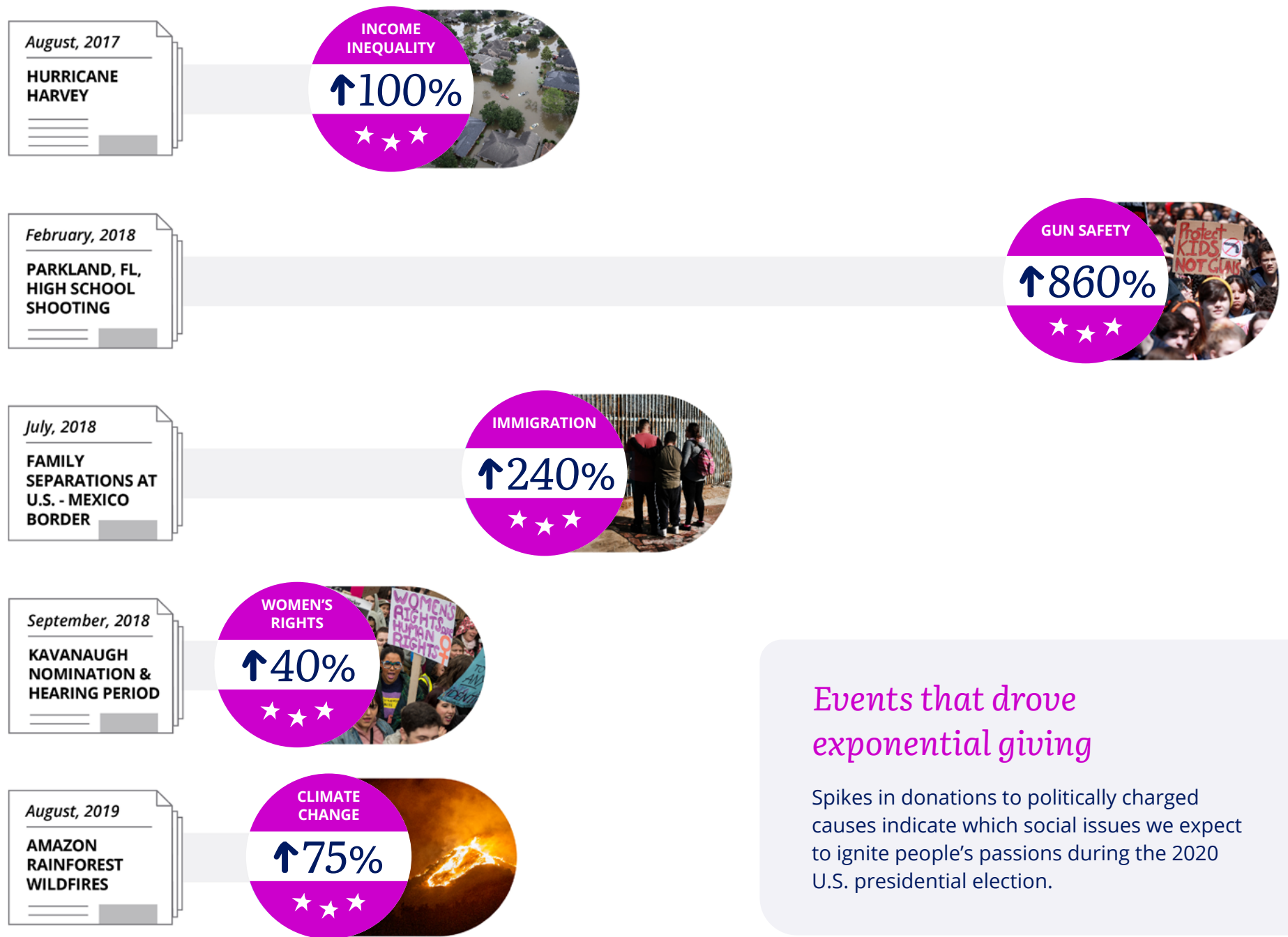
	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital	5	1	↑ 4
Planned Parenthood Federation of America	3	2	↑ 1
National/State Cancer Societies	6	3	↑ 3
International Federation of Red Cross	1	4	↓ 3
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society	8	5	↑ 3
Doctors Without Borders	2	6	↓ 4
American Civil Liberties Union	4	7	↓ 3
National/State Heart and Stroke Foundations	10	8	↑ 2
PTA California Congress of Parents Teachers & Students	7	9	↓ 2
Boys & Girls Clubs	11	10	↑ 1

All local chapters of national organizations (e.g. Red Cross, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, etc.) have been consolidated for ranking purposes. Charity aggregators that distribute funds to multiple organizations, as well as private foundations for specific companies, have been excluded. The 2019 trending rank includes donations made from Jan. 1 to Sept. 15, 2019. The final 2019 rank may differ once additional donations made from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31, 2019 are included.

Introduction

If you want to know what today's employees and customers truly value, look at where (and when) they give. A deeper look at the causes people choose to passionately support amidst mass public distrust and social upheaval, environmental crises and political uncertainty, provides a unique view into the hearts and minds of those who are counting on business to use its reach and resources to be a force for positive change that people are craving. With 75% of people saying they trust "my employer" over any other institution to create social change¹, 86% of consumers saying they would purchase products and services from a company that is purpose-driven² and CEOs from 181 of the world's largest companies declaring that the purpose of a corporation is not just to serve shareholders but "to create value for all our stakeholders," purpose has become a business imperative.

What's a company to do with all that? This data provides a good start, with a glimpse into the cause trends Benevity expects to gain traction in the coming year (and likely beyond), presenting companies with a unique opportunity to inform their social impact and corporate purpose strategies, so they can create more compelling initiatives to engage their stakeholders. In the era of purpose-driven business, the companies who leverage the trust invested in them to create social change will be the benefactors of high-value relationships with their communities, employees, customers, nonprofit partners, suppliers, shareholders and the public at large.



Events that drove exponential giving

Spikes in donations to politically charged causes indicate which social issues we expect to ignite people's passions during the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Methodology

Each year, we analyze data from the Benevity client community, comprised of more than 600 companies (with a network of 12 million people) who use Benevity's technology to power their corporate purpose initiatives. This year, we dug deeper into the data on five cause categories currently dominating media and public discourse to identify shifts and trends in giving, in relation to relevant triggering phenomena, that we expect to become key themes among donors in 2020.

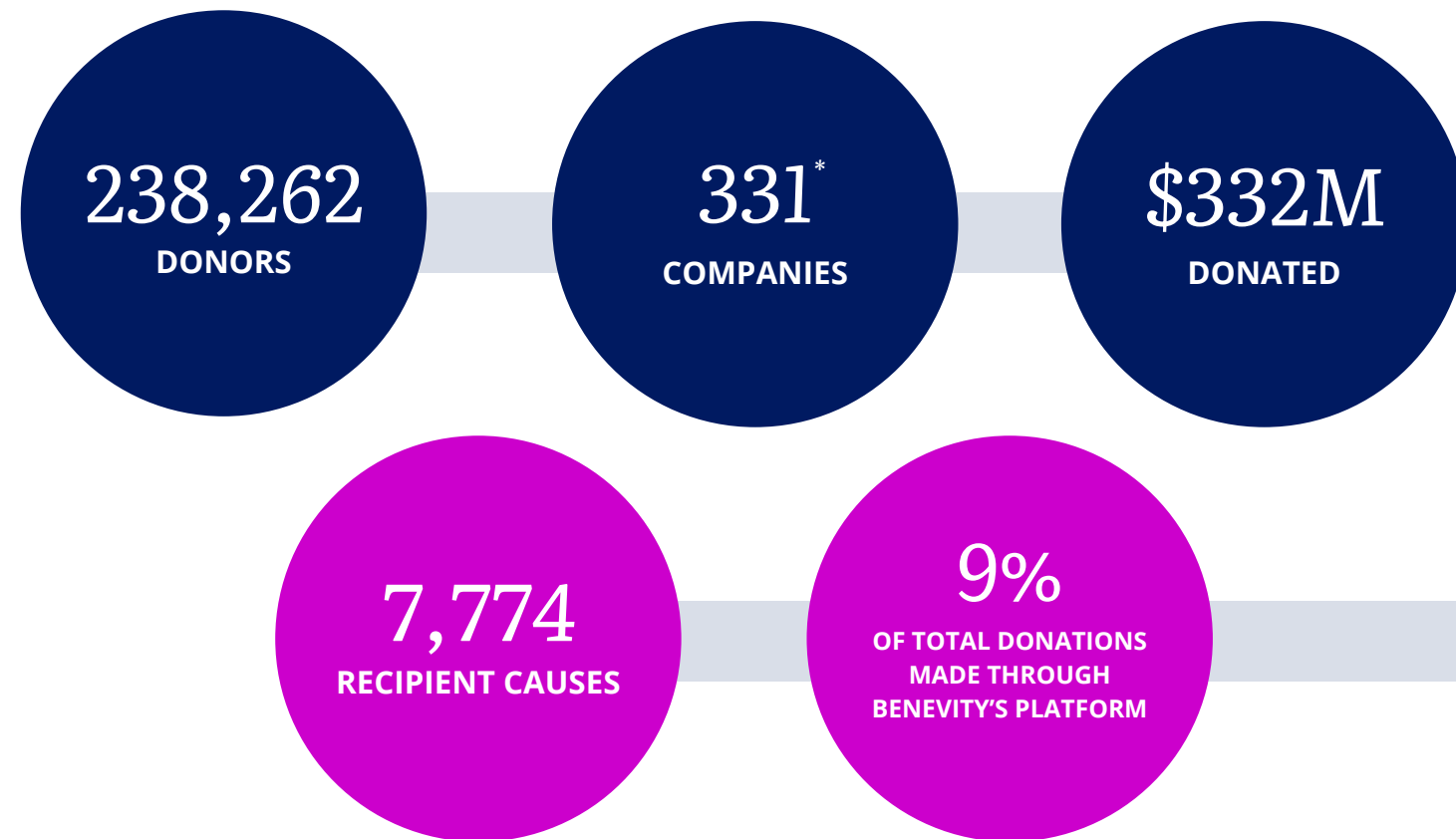
For this study, we analyzed monthly transactional data from 350 companies and donations from over 1 million global active users on the Benevity platform between Jan. 1, 2016 and Sept. 15, 2019, directed to any cause based in the United States that fell into one of the five cause categories — income inequality, immigration, women's rights, climate change and gun safety.

The categories and subcategories mentioned in this study are based on National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes provided by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data feed and contain charitable organizations within the Benevity Causes Portal based on cause name, category and subcategory to create groupings. We then compared this data to Benevity's overall donation patterns, and controlled for the rapid growth trajectory of Benevity overall, to arrive at a view of monthly donation growth year over year and highlight if and where a specific cause category was outpacing the overall trends at a particular point in time.

Benevity recognizes that many national and international organizations have broad mandates and can be actively engaged in more than one category. To avoid duplication, each organization could only be attributed to one cause category — this was determined based on the events that coincided with the biggest spikes in giving to that cause through the Benevity platform.

This data includes individual donations, corporate matches, companies providing direct donations and individuals redeeming charitable reward dollars through Benevity's employee engagement platform. The cause categories are presented in order of the total share of donations they received, from largest to smallest.

Political giving in numbers



A Shift in Power

In the context of overall giving, the five cause categories studied for this report represent less than 10% of total donation volume, despite the high level of discourse around these topics. On the surface, there appears to be a large discrepancy between talk and action, with the the top 10 ranked causes in 2019 remaining relatively unchanged from 2018. But further analysis reveals an interesting trend in when people give that first surfaced with the last U.S. presidential election, resulting in seismic shifts in the causes people chose to support.

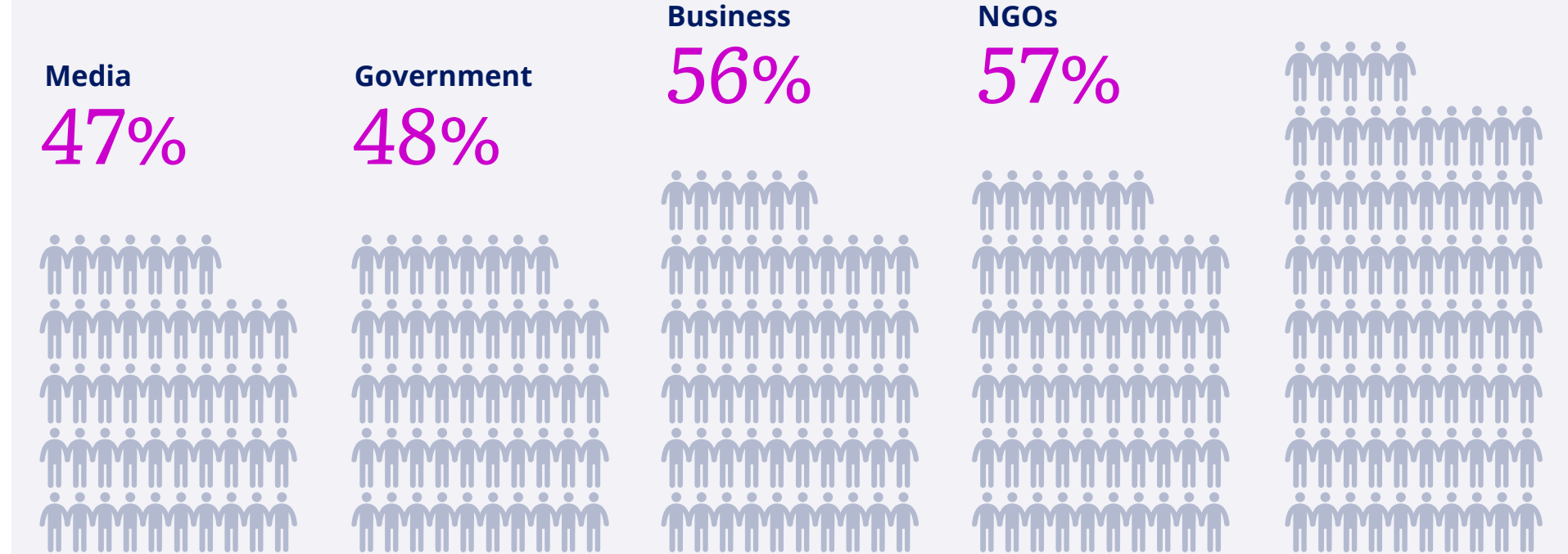
For the first time, nonprofit organizations related to human rights and crisis relief such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Islamic Relief Worldwide, that had never appeared in our top 10 causes lists previously, suddenly overtook long-standing stalwart causes. At the time, it appeared to be a bubble that would eventually burst, but today we're seeing spikes in reactionary giving continue, with people donating in the moment following politically charged events. Not only that, people now expect the companies they work for and buy from to do the same. According to the 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer, the public has put significantly more trust in their own employers (75%) — almost 20 points more — than in NGOs (57%), business (56%), government (48%) and media (47%), and companies that are answering that public cry and taking action are seeing business and social returns because of it.

In the last two years, it's become clear that profit is directly tied to purpose with more studies (and business leaders) than ever before calling on businesses to pursue hybrid goals in the interests of their communities, constituents and long-term viability. But for purpose to work, it has to be authentic. Companies are tackling this in a number of ways, but the predominant trend in this area is not only allowing — but

empowering — their employees, customers and communities to take the lead on social impact initiatives and support the causes that matter to them personally through their interactions with the brand. The case studies in this report show how purpose-driven companies like Accenture, Apple, BlackRock, Levi's, Lush and PayPal are doing well by doing good — not just by backing a cause but by backing their people and their passions.

2019 Edelman Trust Barometer

75% of people trust "My Employer" over any other institution to create social change.



2020 Outlook

People Voting with Their Donation Dollars

Benevity data is forecasting that five major social issues — **income inequality, immigration, women’s rights, climate change and gun safety** — will lead to more public pressure than ever on companies to take action. We expect people to do more than go to the polls; we’ll see them vote with their donation dollars, and we may even see lesser-known nonprofit organizations gain significant public visibility, like the ACLU did in recent years. This may put more pressure on companies to engage in a more public, democratized way on a specific cause

or issue, whether it’s as a passive supporter enabling people to donate or volunteer with causes of their choosing, an active promoter providing awareness and learning opportunities and encouraging people to take positive actions, or a bold changemaker taking a vocal stand on an issue.

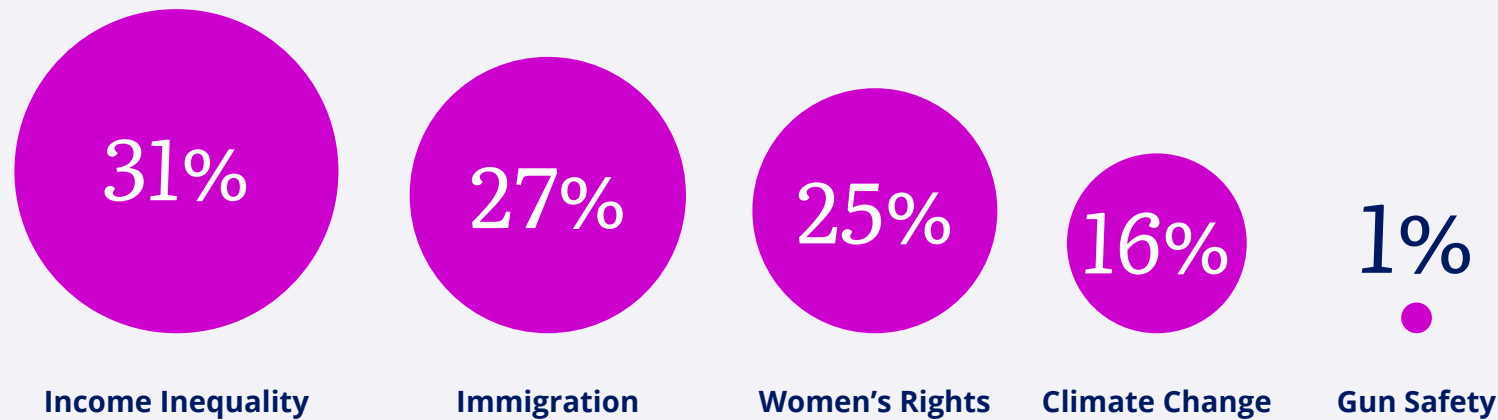
Not all companies are prepared or even want to engage in politically charged issues; however, it is likely that they will be called upon in the near future by their customers, their employees or even the public, so having a strategy and a data-driven orientation will equip program owners, corporate social responsibility leaders and human resources teams for the times ahead. From what we’ve seen in the past few years, the companies that leverage the trust people have invested in them to create social change will win the hearts (and wallets) of customers, employees and communities.

The following 10 pages of this report take a deeper look into each of these five cause categories.



Fair share

Income inequality sees the largest share of donations among the five cause categories analyzed through Benevity’s corporate giving data.



Income Inequality

-  **1,264** causes supported
-  **\$102** million donated
-  **125,526** donors
-  **320** corporate programs
-  **130** companies providing direct donations

What's going on?

Of the five cause categories, income inequality receives the highest donation amounts and the largest number of direct donations from both individuals and companies, but that still only accounts for 37% of companies studied. This category includes a multitude of organizations that all exist to provide for people's basic needs, such as food and shelter. While income inequality is an issue people support throughout the year, with nonprofits such as Second Harvest Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity sitting at #21 and #22 respectively in Benevity's overall cause rankings, data also reveals that when unexpected events like natural disasters occur, there's a correlative uptick in support for organizations like local food banks and emergency shelters. This was evidenced in the days and weeks following Hurricane Harvey in 2017 and again recently with the 2019 California wildfires and Hurricane Dorian.

Top 10 Income Inequality Causes

	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties	1	1	-
Habitat for Humanity International	2	2	-
Feeding America	5	3	↑ 2
Feed My Starving Children	4	4	-
Catholic Relief Services	3	5	↓ 2
Samaritan's Purse	6	6	-
Food For The Poor NC	9	7	↑ 2
San Francisco Food Bank	7	8	↓ 1
San Antonio Food Bank	12	9	↑ 3
The Alameda County Community Food Bank	8	10	↓ 2

The numbers in this chart represent the relative rank of individual causes within the category shown, based on dollars donated through the Benevity platform from year to year. The 2019 trending rank includes donations made from Jan. 1 to Sept. 15, 2019. The final 2019 rank may differ once additional donations made from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31, 2019 are included.



Hope Town, Bahamas, September 8

Takeaway

When disasters occur, people feel compelled to act immediately, and many people rely on that rapid support. While disasters don't discriminate between rich and poor, recovery can often take longer for vulnerable populations for whom public resources are unavailable or scarce. Nonprofit organizations like the Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP), who appeal for funds following disaster events, say it's important to also consider long-term needs, as it can take months or years for individuals and communities to recover, long after the emergency relief has departed. CDP works on extended support by assessing needs to determine where donation dollars can be directed most effectively (such as mental health services and affordable housing) and then giving locally, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable populations. Regine A. Webster, Vice President of CDP, says there's an opportunity for companies to create more awareness and education around long-term needs in the wake of disaster events, in addition to creating urgent giving opportunities. Furthermore, when we look at income inequality beyond disaster scenarios, that long-term vision is equally important. Short-term financial assistance, while necessary,

will not ultimately shrink the income inequality gap. Some companies are thinking bigger and utilizing their people's unique skills to provide job training, and others, like BlackRock, are working to help low-income people secure better financial futures and creating long-term systemic change that has the power to move the needle on income inequality.

In good company

BlackRock  *Active Promoter*

BlackRock is one of the world's largest investment firms, and they have a strong corporate purpose that goes beyond the bottom line. BlackRock's purpose is "to help more and more people experience financial well-being," so, in February, they announced a new initiative to increase access to tools that will help low-income people achieve financial security and opportunity. And their purpose is embedded across their business, with their clients, shareholders, communities and employees. One of the many ways they engage their employees in their corporate purpose efforts is through their talents, skills and passions. Their people are encouraged to discover and support causes they're passionate about, and can receive a company match on their donations. And they can create their own volunteering events or participate in company-sponsored events aimed at closing the income inequality gap, from mentoring underserved youth to packing meals at local food pantries to crowd-mapping to aid emergency response workers in remote areas. BlackRock also has 23 employee-led giving committees around the globe that award local nonprofits, nominated by their colleagues, with funding twice a year.

When disasters strike, the immediate reaction is to respond quickly, however, it is important to note that immediate relief is only one part of the story — how individuals and communities will recover should also be part of donors' consideration.



Regine A. Webster

Vice President of the Center for Disaster Philanthropy



Immigration

-  **611** causes supported
-  **\$90.8** million donated
-  **70,468** donors
-  **296** corporate programs
-  **76** companies providing direct donations

What's going on?

When President Trump enacted a Muslim travel ban in January 2017, donors responded quickly and emphatically, resulting in a 5,055% year-over-year increase in monthly donations supporting immigration causes. That activity remained strong throughout 2017, with another bump in June 2018 as the family separation crisis grabbed headlines and emotions. Over the last three years, The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) has leapt from #117 to #2 in this cause category, and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) rose to #8. The largest share of donations in this category went to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) by a considerable margin (31%), and it remains one of the top 10 causes in Benevity's overall rankings, currently sitting at #7.

Top 10 Immigration Causes

	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation	1	1	-
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services	5	2	↑ 3
United States Fund for UNICEF	3	3	-
International Rescue Committee	2	4	↓ 2
Southern Poverty Law Center	4	5	↓ 1
United States Association for UNHCR	7	6	↑ 1
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project	8	7	↑ 1
KIND	6	8	↓ 2
National Immigration Law Center	13	9	↑ 4
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	11	10	↑ 1

The numbers in this chart represent the relative rank of individual causes within the category shown, based on dollars donated through the Benevity platform from year to year. The 2019 trending rank includes donations made from Jan. 1 to Sept. 15, 2019. The final 2019 rank may differ once additional donations made from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31, 2019 are included.



Tijuana, Mexico, November 22

Takeaway

Immigration causes received the second-highest donation amounts of the five cause categories, yet it represented the largest discrepancy in support, with more than 70,000 individual donors and just 76 companies providing direct donations through the platform. When children are involved, as with the family separation crisis, urgency to act increases exponentially. With immigration policies already surfacing as a contentious political topic in the 2020 election debates, all companies, but particularly those with diverse employee bases that may be directly affected by immigration policies, have an opportunity show support for — and through — their people and weave a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging into their cultures. This could be through donation opportunities or special company matching to organizations like the ACLU and RAICES, providing learning opportunities and access to information on where candidates stand on the issue in the lead-up to the election, or taking a broader companywide stance, as already demonstrated by companies like Apple and Lyft.

In good company

Lyft Bold Changemaker

Lyft’s CEO, Logan Green, responded quickly to the Muslim travel ban, saying “Lyft has worked hard to create an inclusive, diverse and conscientious community where all our drivers and passengers feel welcome.” To show support and engage the Lyft community, the company introduced a Round Up & Donate program to allow users of the ride-hailing app to round up their fare to support a cause of their choice. The initiative raised \$2 million for the ACLU’s civil rights work including immigrants’ and voting rights. On top of that, Lyft pledged a \$1 million corporate donation over four years to the ACLU. And in the week of Jan. 30, following the ban, Lyft’s market share rose approximately 5%.

Apple Bold Changemaker

Apple employs 443 Dreamers, so when Trump moved to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Apple and its CEO, Tim Cook, co-signed a letter with more than 100 companies calling on Congress to save the program. Apple doubled down in 2019 with a filing to the U.S. Supreme Court in support of its employees, saying they hired them “because Dreamers embody Apple’s innovation strategy. They come from diverse backgrounds and display a wide range of skills and experiences that equip them to tackle problems from different perspectives.”

Apple wouldn’t exist without immigration.



Tim Cook
CEO, Apple

While the ACLU has fought for immigrants’ rights since its inception 99 years ago, this administration’s policies from the Muslim ban to separating families, to banning asylum, to terminating the DACA program for Dreamers and more, are galvanizing employees, businesses and their customers across industries to rise up alongside us. In addition to financial support, we are seeing an uptick in corporate advocacy for immigrants’ rights — from signing onto business amicus briefs, to sharing calls to action, to distributing critical “know your rights” materials to their audiences.



Danielle Silber
Director of Strategic Partnerships,
American Civil Liberties Union



Women's Rights

- ✓ **3,341** causes supported
- \$ **\$83.6** million donated
- 👤 **64,870** donors
- 🏢 **311** corporate programs
- 💰 **124** companies providing direct donations

What's going on?

When an executive order to defund Planned Parenthood occurred in early 2017, donations to Planned Parenthood and other women's rights organizations spiked. Then, in fall 2018, another uptick in donations was seen as the Brett Kavanaugh hearings were underway and several states were enacting abortion restrictions. Planned Parenthood consistently holds steady in the top five ranked causes overall and currently sits at #2. In this category, we're also seeing organizations focused on career and life management (CALM), which offer educational and financial support to women, and Girls Who Code and Black Girls Code all rise in the ranks, doubling their share of donations from 2017 to 2019.

Top 10 Women's Rights Causes

	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
Planned Parenthood Federation of America	1	1	-
Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and the Hawaiian Islands	2	2	-
Operation Underground Railroad	8	3	↑ 5
Girls Who Code	7	4	↑ 3
The Center for Violence-Free Relationships	19	5	↑ 14
Planned Parenthood Shasta-Diablo	4	6	↓ 2
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte	10	7	↑ 3
Young Women's Christian Association of Seattle-King Snohomish	11	8	↑ 3
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network	5	9	↓ 4
Girl Scouts of Western Washington	16	10	↑ 6

The numbers in this chart represent the relative rank of individual causes within the category shown, based on dollars donated through the Benevity platform from year to year. The 2019 trending rank includes donations made from Jan. 1 to Sept. 15, 2019. The final 2019 rank may differ once additional donations made from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31, 2019 are included.



London, England, January 21

Takeaway

This category comprises the largest number of causes amongst the five categories we analyzed, with 3,341 receiving funds through Benevity. The issues are wide-ranging and include lack of technical education, support services for victims of violence, sexual education and pregnancy support. While broad gender equality causes are well represented, the majority of support is going to organizations with more tactical missions that address short-term needs, rather than long-term, systemic issues. Companies taking an integrated approach that addresses both urgent needs and underlying structural barriers to equality, such as health services, legal rights, educational opportunities and women’s leadership are creating long-term change. And they’re doing it by empowering women to act as agents of change rather than as just recipients of support. Our data shows that politicizing women’s rights sparks action, so there’s further opportunity for companies to partner with nonprofits that are breaking taboo and driving change in areas that were once considered private matters, including violence against women and sexual and reproductive health, that their people are making their business.

In good company

Accenture *Bold Changemaker*

Gender equality is an important topic for any company that cares about diversity, inclusion and belonging, and Accenture is taking a lead on the issue, acting as a bold changemaker, active promoter and passive supporter all at once. In 2018, they set a bold goal to achieve a gender-balanced workforce by 2025, and they’re well on their way, with women representing 44% of their workforce currently. As an employer, they promote important women’s issues through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in every one of their offices that are empowered to drive community initiatives that support local women’s causes. Accenture has implemented all-gender washrooms and an extended healthcare plan that covers certain costs associated with gender reassignment surgery. And, finally, an open-choice giving and volunteering program means all of Accenture’s people can support any cause they care about, including those dedicated to the empowerment and advancement of women. Together, these initiatives foster an inclusive culture both inside the company and out in the communities they serve, making it clear that for Accenture, gender equality is about more than checking a box; it’s a business imperative that they believe is essential to innovation.

At Accenture, we believe that diversity is a source of competitive advantage.



Brittany Humphry

Business Strategy Senior Manager & Canadian Women’s Group Co-Lead, Accenture

For the more than 13 million Planned Parenthood supporters, our mission represents what they already believe themselves: all people — regardless of who they are, where they live, or how much money they make — deserve the right to make decisions about their health, their bodies, and their futures.

We are endlessly grateful for their generosity, time, and support, and for standing with patients everywhere.





Jethro Miller

Chief Development Officer,
Planned Parenthood Federation of America



Climate Change

-  **2,516** causes supported
-  **\$53.7** million donated
-  **41,413** donors
-  **302** corporate programs
-  **110** companies providing direct donations

What's going on?

The U.S. government's rollback of environmental regulations and announcement that the U.S. would exit the Paris Agreement saw an immediate increase in donations to environmental causes. Another notable increase in giving occurred as the Amazon rainforest fires hit news headlines in 2019, signaling a commitment from individuals to take action when they feel government will not. Among the five cause categories, climate change has the second-lowest share of total donation dollars (16%) and of individual donors (17%), indicating that people may be supporting climate-change issues through other behaviors, like purchasing sustainable products and making eco-friendly lifestyle changes. Data shows 50% of donations going to the top-10 ranked causes in this category, all with strong brand recognition and a vocal presence lending them broad relevance, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and The Nature Conservancy.

Top 10 Climate Change Causes

	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
Natural Resources Defense Council	1	1	-
World Wildlife Fund	2	2	-
The Nature Conservancy	3	3	-
Sierra Club Foundation	4	4	-
Earthjustice	5	5	-
Amazon Watch	213	6	↑ 207
Rainforest Action Network	38	7	↑ 31
EarthShare	7	8	↓ 1
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	8	9	↓ 1
Conservation International Foundation	12	10	↑ 2

The numbers in this chart represent the relative rank of individual causes within the category shown, based on dollars donated through the Benevity platform from year to year. The 2019 trending rank includes donations made from Jan. 1 to Sept. 15, 2019. The final 2019 rank may differ once additional donations made from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31, 2019 are included.



Ze Doça, Brazil, November 22

Takeaway

For many companies, the goal is no longer just to offset the environmental cost of doing business, so as to not leave the world worse than they found it, but to leave the world better than they found it. As the U.S. federal government does less to combat climate change, the employees, customers and communities who interact with those companies are feeling a heightened sense of urgency to do more. More than 2,000 companies, along with local governments, have made a joint commitment to the Paris Agreement through the We Are Still In movement and, with global climate strikes happening in every major city, many companies are giving their people paid time off to participate, while others are providing major grants to climate-change causes. And some companies are rolling out programs that educate employees on small and large sustainable changes they can make, and then track and reward their behaviors. By promoting behavioral change at a grassroots level and combining it with sustainable business practices, companies and their people can create meaningful, lasting impact.

In good company

Lush Bold Changemaker

Social activism is in Lush’s DNA, and their ethical campaigns are as coveted by consumers as the cosmetics they produce. They choose their campaigns based on input from their employees across the globe and continually give their people a sense of personal purpose by empowering them to take action on the issues that matter to them. So, when the global climate strikes began, they didn’t just allow their employees to participate, they encouraged them to do so because they felt the sense of urgency from people, particularly young people, demanded equally urgent support.

PayPal Active Promoter

Through an employee survey, PayPal found that a majority of their people across the company’s worldwide locations share a passion for sustainability. So, they embarked on a three-month mission to educate and engage as many employees as possible in taking positive actions in their daily lives to reduce waste and carbon emissions, and conserve water and energy. Employees could track and see the impact they were creating through their daily actions and, in just three weeks, their actions collectively saved 29,503 kilowatt-hours of energy, 22,205 pounds of carbon, 998 pounds of waste and 10,683 gallons of water.

I think people often have a hard time understanding how their daily actions actually do make an impact on the environment, and this provided a new way for us to demonstrate that to our team.



Julie Vennewitz-Pierce
Director of Global Employee Engagement & Philanthropy, PayPal

The climate crisis is the defining environmental issue of our time — the most recent IPCC report found that the climate-induced sea-level rise alone threatens to impact 1 billion people by 2050. Now more than ever, it’s incumbent upon companies to take on the mantle of climate leadership, both by reducing emissions across their operations and supply chain and by mobilizing employees to become conservation champions. We invite you to join WWF in creating a future where people and nature thrive.



Cheron Carlson
Private Sector Engagement Manager, World Wildlife Fund



Gun Safety

- ✓ 42 causes supported
- \$ 2.8 million donated
- 👤 3,561 donors
- 🏢 195 corporate programs
- 💰 16 companies providing direct donations

What's going on?

This is one of the most polarizing issues today. In fact, the top 10 causes in this category are split equally down the middle. Five represent nonprofits whose missions are focused on gun control, with Everytown for Gun Safety at #1, followed by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence and Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. The other five represent nonprofits focused on the protection of gun rights, with The NRA Foundation and the NRA Civil Rights Defense Fund leading that side. But when we analyze the dollar amounts donated, far more support is going to gun control causes. While just a few years ago for every \$2 going to organizations advocating for gun-control, \$1 was going to pro-gun organizations, that gap is now widening. In October 2017, following a shooting at a Las Vegas outdoor music festival, that ratio jumped to 4:1, with intense spikes of up to 24:1 following other mass shootings in the United States. The Parkland school shooting yielded the strongest reaction, leading to an 821% increase in donations to gun-control related causes, highlighting an urgent desire to protect children in local communities.

Top 10 Gun Control Causes

	2018 RANK	2019 TRENDING	YOY RANK SHIFT
Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund	1	1	-
Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence	2	2	-
Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence	4	3	↑ 1
Violence Policy Center	6	4	↑ 2
The NRA Foundation	3	5	↓ 2
NRA Civil Rights Defense Fund	5	6	↓ 1
Alliance for Gun Responsibility Foundation	7	7	-
Gun Owners Foundation	11	8	↑ 3
NRA Freedom Action Foundation	17	9	↑ 8
Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence	8	10	↓ 2

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Chicago, IL, April 20

Takeaway

Of the five cause categories, this one saw the largest spikes in donations in response to tragic events, compared to the baseline, with 85% more support going to gun-control causes over gun-rights causes. This shows an urgent desire for change, yet this category also has the smallest number of both individual and corporate donors, perhaps because it is such a polarizing issue. Several companies have taken a stand on what is possibly America's most controversial social concern, including DICK'S Sporting Goods, which destroyed \$5 million worth of its own gun stock. Levi Strauss has also been vocal about this issue, going a step further to engage their people, some of whom were personally affected by gun violence. The company both incentivized and empowered people to get involved with corporate matching on their donations and a new approach to volunteer activism.

In good company

Levi Strauss & Co.  *Bold Changeloger*

In 2018, following an incident where a customer accidentally shot and injured himself while trying on a pair of jeans in a retail outlet, Levi's responded by directing more than \$1 million in grants to nonprofits and youth activists working to end gun violence. They also doubled their usual employee donation match to organizations aligned with gun control and encouraged their employees to use their five hours of paid volunteer time each month to get politically active.

In October, they took it a step further to engage their customers using Benevity's API to round up e-commerce purchases on their site. Levi's did all of this not because it was a corporate pillar of theirs (until recently), but because some of their employees were personally affected by gun violence. It was only after deep consultation with their people, through town hall discussions, trying to understand how they felt about the issue in an authentic way that they took action, including empowering each individual in their company to make social change. In that same year, Levi's saw 14% year-over-year growth, generating \$56 billion in revenues.

*As president and CEO
of a values-driven company ...
I take the responsibility
of speaking up on the important
issues of our day very seriously ...
doing nothing is no longer
an option.*



Chip Bergh

President and CEO, Levi Strauss & Co.



A Global Trend?

The data analyzed for this report focuses on donations to causes based in the U.S.; however, we also examined year-over-year donation growth to causes outside of the U.S. to understand if reactionary giving is a global trend. A series of notable spikes occurred in the third quarter of 2017, with donations to the British Red Cross following the Grenfell Tower fire in London, where 72 people were killed and 70 were injured. The majority of victims were new immigrants to the U.K., and residents had expressed concern to the government about the building's fire safety for years. This event came to symbolize inequality in one of London's wealthiest areas. Two other notable surges occurred in the days and weeks following the outbreak of the wildfires in the Amazon and British Columbia in Canada, in 2019 and 2017 respectively.

Support in other cause categories, such as climate change, women's rights and gun safety, did not see similar international growth compared to U.S. data. Why? These categories are widely regarded as uniquely American issues, with the U.S. being the only country to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, highly politicize sexual and reproductive health, experience more mass shootings than in any other country in the world and vocalize strong beliefs around the purely American construct known as the Second Amendment. Still, responsive giving as a whole is not uniquely American. We see many European examples of support for immigration-related causes and efforts to forge a safe path for people in war-torn regions seeking refuge in or through the EU. This presents an opportunity for companies with global operations to support their people locally and globally, and create social impact while uniting their people around the world.



Conclusion

Giving when events happen is more than an emotional knee-jerk reaction; it represents a major power shift, with people acting on an urgent need to create change during times of tension and government distrust. Benevity recognizes that donation data is just one indicator of the action people can and are taking, and creating broad social impact will require more than a charitable transaction. It will require a holistic view that encompasses everything from awareness and education initiatives to open-choice giving and volunteering programs. And it will be executed best by brands who have a plan for how to address these social issues — whether they choose to passively enable people to support in their own way, actively promote and encourage them to take positive actions, or boldly take a firm stand.

Hundreds of companies in Benevity's client community already include organizations in these five cause categories within their giving and volunteering programs, so they're set up to take action and empower their people to do the same. For companies who have earned the public trust that government has lost, being a bystander is no longer an option. They've been entrusted by the people who work for and buy from them to create social change, and a company's corporate purpose may have the power to define how well their business performs over the long term. It's a big responsibility, and an even bigger opportunity, that will require a shift in mindset from one of for-profit to one of for-purpose (and profit).

In a values-driven world, it may not be surprising that standing up for what people believe in will yield bottom-line benefits and intangible value through greater brand affinity. By harnessing the passions and power of their people, and choosing to amplify them, companies can create major social impact and win the hearts of employees, customers and communities. All by becoming authentically purpose-driven businesses that are of the people, by the people and for the people.



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 a client community of 18 million people around the world, Benevity has processed more than \$5 billion in donations and 32 million hours of volunteering time and awarded over one million grants to 251,000 nonprofits worldwide.

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