



Benevity Labs Special Report: **COVID-19 Relief**

Leading with *Purpose* in Extraordinary Times

How companies are activating their people and communities during a global crisis



Together, we're making progress on "flattening the curve" of COVID-19, thanks to a global movement that has been fueled by collective thinking, and perhaps more importantly, collective action. However, it's also manifesting a whole new set of economic and social crises — from unemployment and food insecurity to employee engagement and productivity to mental health and wellbeing. And nonprofits responding to these crises are faced with the question of survivability, with 50% of them operating on less than one month of financial reserves, according to a report from Guidestar.¹

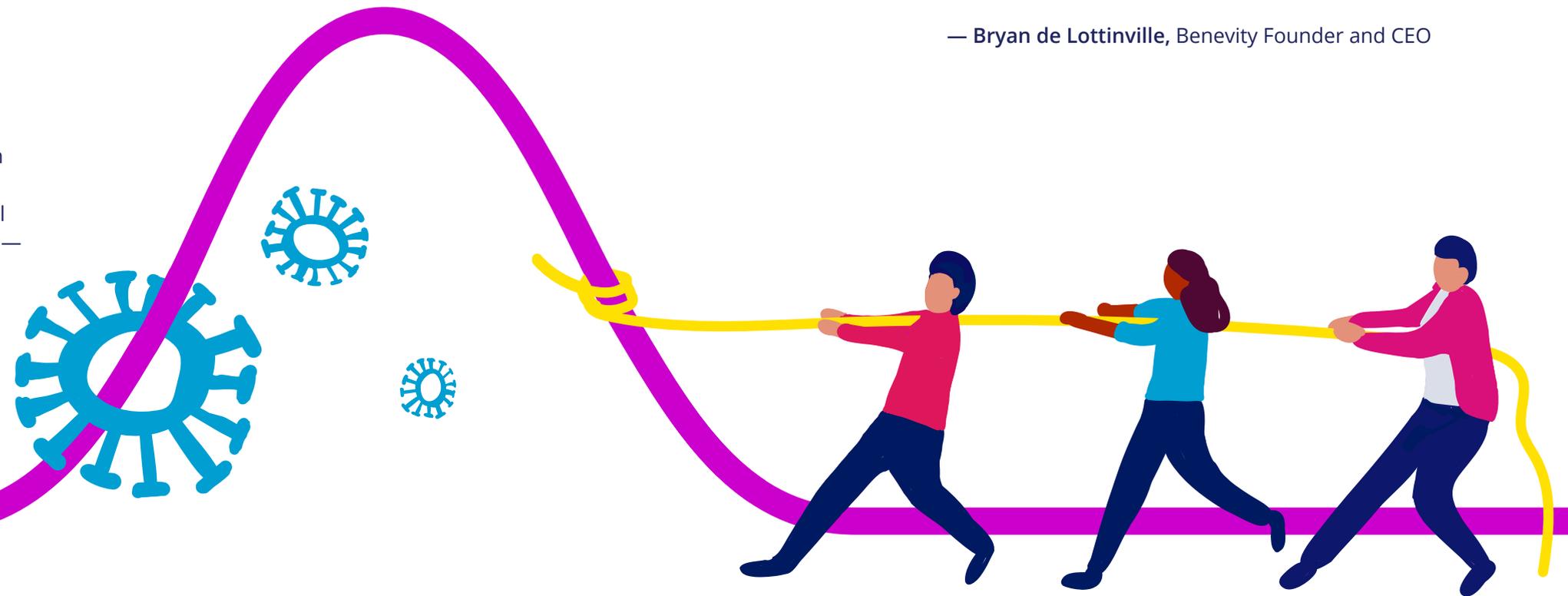
Given the current state of low trust in governments and the media, business continues to be seen as the most trusted institution to respond effectively, after health authorities.² It's becoming clear that the effects of the crisis are at least two-fold: First, there are "direct impacts" from this global event that are resulting in new challenges, like social isolation and physical distancing. Second, there is an "amplification effect" on existing social issues that are exacerbated or highlighted by the crisis, like equity, unemployment, mental health and more. While it may be too early to understand the full scope of the effects, and what recovery will look like, one thing is certain: it will require all of us — individuals, business, government and nonprofits — using our unique strengths and networks to solve the issues flowing from this global crisis.

With many of the world's most iconic brands relying on Benevity to power their corporate purpose, we're uniquely positioned to see what some of the most responsive companies are doing. For this report, we examined our platform data between March 1, 2020, just before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and April 30, 2020, to identify the number of companies and individuals taking action, the ways in which they are acting and the related trends that are emerging. In addition, we pulled together specific examples of how companies are responding, as of April. Within this report are some of the early trends this data has surfaced.

"How we respond to this crisis — as companies and as people — may be more significant than anything we have ever done in our lifetime."

“ ”

— Bryan de Lottinville, Benevity Founder and CEO



Our data shows that corporate purpose programs are rapidly adapting and expanding, companies are seeing increased engagement and impact as a result. Some of the adaptations we're seeing are removing restrictions on grants, launching education and awareness programs, promoting and rewarding small, positive actions (like helping the elderly), implementing or expanding employee relief funds and partnering with other corporations and nonprofits for collective impact. Companies engaging their people in a larger sense of purpose also seems to be reducing the sense of isolation and increasing connectedness in a remote workplace context. A deeper dive into this data has surfaced the following five trends.

1 Business has been quick to respond, despite economic uncertainty and a looming recession. More than 500 companies and 450,000 of their people drove \$640 million in donations, 786,000 volunteer hours, 53,000 small acts of Goodness and 8,648 corporate grants to support 79,000 global causes in just eight weeks. And more companies are activating support initiatives every day.

2 Community investment budgets are being sustained or boosted. Of the largest 175 companies, 83% indicated no changes to their CSR program budgets and 63% reported the desire to run social impact initiatives or campaigns (or are already running them). Further, many companies are drawing on additional crisis or relief budgets to protect annual budgets, which are dedicated to ongoing employee engagement, community investment and customer marketing programs.

3 Matching donations is the most common response. Our data shows that 63% of companies engaged their employees, customers and/or the public by matching donations in ratios of up to \$5 for every \$1 donated, driving greater engagement and participation. Overall donation volume per day was up 36% in March and 134% in April, with an average of \$8.1 million being donated through the Benevity platform every day.

4 Volunteering has declined, but virtual volunteering is on the rise. Volunteer hours being logged through Benevity dropped by 12% in March and 20% in April. This highlights the impact of physical distancing on giving time and talent in traditional ways, and the lag from nonprofits and companies adapting their programs to find more innovative ways for people to volunteer. However, the number of open spots for virtual volunteers has climbed steadily, with 44,000 available opportunities as of March 26. We expect volunteering to rebound as this trend continues.

5 The types of causes people and companies are choosing to support has shifted. Significant increases in the share of total donation volume are most notable in the categories of human services (+24%), food security (+268%), public safety and disaster preparedness/relief (+57%), community improvement (+57%) and employment (+141%).

Health and safety remain the immediate priorities, but in the coming months we expect to see a groundswell of support for longer term health, social and economic issues, and continued impacts on how we **engage in civic and political society**, especially around the U.S. presidential election. A multi-phased and multi-pronged approach that encompasses immediate response, mid-term relief and long-term recovery will guide companies' efforts and investments over the coming months, and likely into 2021, as new program budgets and strategies roll over with the calendar year.

Whether companies respond will be less important to maintaining public trust than how they respond and activate around purpose. As businesses recognize the necessity of their role in providing people with a sense of purpose, meaning and impact, they are not only shaping their relationships with their stakeholders, but are also fostering collective mindsets, behaviors and beliefs that will hopefully become habit forming and part of a "new normal."

Taking a long view of the outcomes they seek to achieve will help companies make more informed decisions about how to engage their communities in ways that build resilience, continuity and sustainability in the face of a growing number of global crises. Ultimately, the companies that lead with authenticity and a broad notion of purpose will earn the trust of their employees, customers and communities, while building the blueprint for how we tackle large social issues through collective action for years and decades to come.

Introduction

Over the past couple of months, we've seen an unprecedented global health crisis unfold into a global economic and social crisis. Oil has hit an all-time low, small business owners fear they won't reopen and millions of people are filing for unemployment. For those privileged to be working from home, the need to physically distance has led to a work-life collision that's affecting employee engagement and productivity, and society withdrawing into enforced isolation is affecting a sense of connectedness and belonging that people are hardwired to seek. All of this is leading to a growing number of people experiencing mental health challenges. And while no one has been spared the risks of COVID-19 and its related effects, everyone is being impacted differently, exposing the diversity, equity, health and systemic gaps that are deeply ingrained in society. Recovery will bring still different stressors to bear.

Given the already low state of trust in governments and the media prior to this crisis, we've seen heightened expectations on business to take action on these multiple crises. The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer revealed in January that 69% of people didn't have confidence in their current societal leaders to address their country's challenges. NGOs were seen as the most ethical institution to improve society, while business was seen as the most competent. Now, four months later, nonprofits are having to cancel events and are struggling for funding, with more than 50% of them operating on less than one month of financial reserves. At the same time, the COVID crisis has made the need to address many of these social issues more acute.

So, the world is increasingly turning to companies as the holders of hope. Data shows that 78% of people expect business to protect their employees and local communities,³ and 81% of consumers say brand trust is a deal breaker or deciding factor in their buying decisions, depending upon its absence or presence.⁴

Purpose has already been a topic of much discussion in boardrooms, with the importance of ESG (Environmental Social and Governance) themes becoming an increasingly relevant component of investor due diligence. Now, as businesses are forced to reimagine the ways they work and do business, the demand on corporate leaders to define their company's purpose and activate it for real-world impact is even more urgent. Purpose is now fundamental to business strategy and continuity planning as employees, customers and communities want to see proof that companies are genuinely committed to improving the world while they grow their business.

In this report, we examine the trends in what purpose-driven companies are doing to provide relief and recovery, while connecting their people around a personal sense of purpose, meaning and efficacy, and the impact they're seeing as a result. All data and examples represent action taken within the timeframe of March 1 to April 30, 2020.

*“Companies will define what they do
in the crucible of COVID-19 response
— or be defined by it.”*

“”

– Bill Schaninger, Bruce Simpson, Han Zhang, and Chris Zhu;
authors of McKinsey article Demonstrating corporate purpose
in the time of coronavirus

537
companies

450,000
people

\$640
million in donations & grants

786,000
volunteer hours

53,000
small acts of Goodness

8,648
grants issued

79,565
causes supported

Where People Are Giving

The types of causes people and companies are choosing to support has shifted as an average share of donations in March and April 2020, compared to January and February 2020. Significant increases in share of donation volume are most notable in the categories of human services (+24%), food security (+268%), public safety and disaster preparedness and relief (+57%), community improvement (+57%) and employment (+141%).

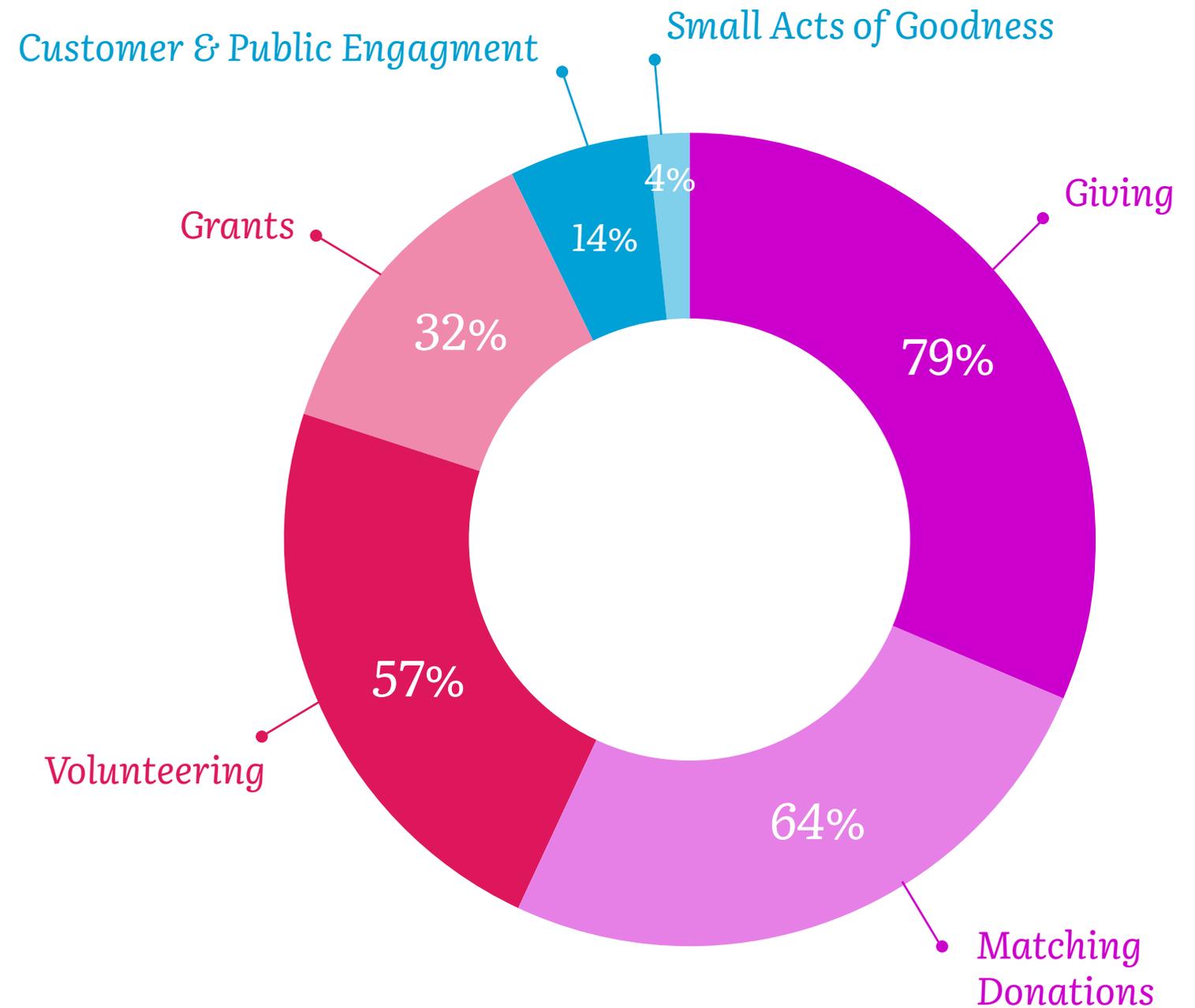
We also drilled deeper into the categories with significant increases to compare donation share over the same time period last year. None had a notable share increase in 2019, indicating that this shift is responsive in nature, not seasonal.

CAUSE CATEGORY	RANK PRE-COVID*	RANK POST COVID**	RANK SHIFT	
Human Services	2	1	1	↑
Education	1	2	1	↓
Food Security	10	3	7	↑
Foundations	3	4	1	↓
International, Foreign Affairs & National Security	4	5	1	↓
Religious	5	6	1	↓
Health	6	7	1	↓
Arts, Culture & Humanities	7	8	1	↓
Public Safety, Disaster Preparedness and Relief	13	9	4	↑
Youth Development	12	10	2	↑
Animal	8	11	3	↓
Voluntary Health & Medical Disciplines	9	12	3	↓
Community Improvement	17	13	4	↑
Recreation & Sports	14	14	-	
Environment	11	15	4	↓
Housing & Shelter	16	16	-	
Civil Rights, Social Action & Advocacy	15	17	2	↓
Mental Health & Crisis Intervention	20	18	2	↑
Employment	23	19	4	↑
Crime & Legal	22	20	2	↑

Types of *Action* Companies are Taking

Employee giving represents the largest response from companies, but many companies are adapting their programs to include things like public giving, positive actions and virtual volunteer opportunities to engage their networks in multiple (and meaningful) ways.

The percentages identified in this image represent the number of companies taking each type of action, out of a total of 537 companies, during the period of the study. Many are taking a holistic approach and responding with multiple actions.





Action by the numbers

The health and safety of employees remains a top concern for companies. Among Benevity's largest 175 client companies, 87% indicate shifting to remote work was one of the first lines of defense, but health and safety comprises far more than physical wellness. With 63% of people seeking daily updates from their employers, there's now a growing appetite for businesses to provide communication and connection — to the company, to each other and to the communities and causes that matter to them.

One way we're seeing companies deliver trusted health information is through increased learning and awareness content that helps people stay informed and take small actions that develop positive behaviors, protecting them and their communities. This content encourages educational actions like reading business continuity updates and employee benefits changes, alongside more physical actions like sanitizing your home, creating thank you cards for frontline workers and dropping off food for an elderly neighbor. Benevity saw individuals track 53,000 small acts of "Goodness" in our system in March and April, 2020 — an increase that is six times higher than the previous two months — and with more interest in mental health activities, we expect this trend to continue to grow.

We are also seeing a growing interest in employee relief funds, which make it easy for employees to donate to a fund to assist their

coworkers who are impacted by the crisis. And more companies are taking advantage of their employees as "on-the-ground" ambassadors, letting them engage their teammates in activities, giving and volunteering opportunities. By allowing their people to take the lead, companies leverage the scale and relevance in content creation that is otherwise difficult to achieve for under-resourced teams.

Takeaways

As we reimagine the ways we work and live, business is playing an increasing role in helping to keep people healthy, engaged and connected. Providing regular updates and being a source for trusted information is one way to support people through this uncertain time. Another way is to get creative and adjust and expand corporate purpose programs to include things like positive actions that are easy to do, may require very little time or money and create meaningful impact — and a sense of personal efficacy — for people and their communities.

Companies responding

CVS Health

The CVS Health Foundation is matching up to \$1 million in employee contributions to the CVS Health Employee Relief Fund, a public charity

supporting colleagues during unanticipated and unavoidable financial hardships and emergencies. The fund will make \$1,000 grants available to employees to address qualifying emergency needs related to the pandemic.

Twitter

Twitter was among the first companies to publicly act on the need to physically isolate, announcing the move to mandatory work from home for all global employees on March 1. They're also providing resource guides to help their employees navigate remote working, with additional resources to support parents, and they're reimbursing home office set-up expenses.

SAP

SAP is providing employees with learning and awareness content, and encouraging small acts of Goodness, through their corporate purpose program. The content includes resources for understanding COVID-19, providing tools to help have COVID-19 discussions with kids and actions to help maintain employee health and wellbeing and spread positivity. Some SAP employees are hosting activities for co-workers' children to help relieve parents — things like guitar lessons, pen-and-paper game sessions and crafts.

Workday

Workday announced several employee relief initiatives and benefits, including a one-time payment (equivalent to two-weeks pay) to help accommodate unforeseen costs, setting up a relief fund to help employees who may need additional support, arranging one-year access to a research-backed app that offers meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to focus and sleep and expanding their paid sick leave policy for any employee who becomes infected with COVID-19.

87% indicate shifting to remote work

63% of people are seeking daily updates from their employers



Action by the numbers

Since the pandemic became widespread in early March, 64% of companies taking action have offered donation matching to employees. These initiatives have raised \$448 million for 79,000 causes, 38% of which came from individual donors and the other 62% from company donations, matching dollars and rewards. Unsurprisingly, the increase in corporate matching incentives is driving a significant month-over-month increase in average donation amounts, with a 104% increase in April at \$286 per donation, compared to February at \$122 per donation, including the corporate match. Additionally, matching appears to be driving an increased sense of efficacy, resulting in larger individual donations. We saw a 40% increase in the amount individuals are contributing in March and April, compared to February.

When we analyze the top causes people and companies are supporting, it's not unexpected to see a steep climb in the overall share of donations to causes in the categories of human services (+24%), food security (+268%), public safety and disaster preparedness

and relief (+57%), community improvement (+57%) and employment (+141%). A deeper dive into the specific nonprofits shows support for both local and international organizations, from community food banks and Rotary clubs to Doctors Without Borders and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy.

Takeaways

Giving initiatives provide people with a sense of contribution and efficacy, and a connection to a larger sense of purpose, that can help to improve mental health. As we're ordered to physically distance to prevent being part of the problem, giving in whatever fashion a person is able is an opportunity to be part of a solution. When featuring specific nonprofits, considering organizations at the national and international level, as well as the local level, ensures communities get the support they need to recover. Further, offering broad choice in where people can direct their donations, in addition to featuring specific nonprofits, makes people feel supported and valued and bonds them with a brand or employer in a more personal way that goes beyond the transactional nature of business. Another way we're

seeing Benevity clients enabling open-choice giving is by depositing donation currency into their employees' "giving accounts." People can then direct these community investment funds — with or without their own contribution — to causes that they choose. Choice also ensures that the nonprofits (large and small) who need funding are more likely to get it, especially at a time when they may be facing uncertainty and issues of survivability.

Companies responding

Apple

Apple's donations to the global COVID-19 response — both to help treat those who are sick and to help lessen the economic and community impacts of the pandemic — have reached \$15 million worldwide so far. Included in this is a 2-to-1 employee matching initiative to support response efforts locally, nationally and internationally.

Google

Google increased their employee donation match cap from \$7,500 to \$10,000 annually and committed \$50 million for global COVID-19 response. This includes providing \$6.5 million in funding to fact-checkers and nonprofits fighting misinformation around the world, with an immediate focus on coronavirus, \$5 million in matching funds for the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and \$25 million in ad credits to WHO and government agencies through its Google Ad Grants crisis relief program.

Micron Technology

Micron committed \$35 million to COVID-19 relief, and part of that includes a 2-to-1 company match to double the impact of employee donations to causes addressing both immediate and future community needs, from food banks and school meal programs to health facilities and online learning resources for students.





Action by the numbers

Companies responded quickly and emphatically when COVID-19 was first classified as a global pandemic, issuing \$246 million in grants between March 1 to April 30, 2020. The amount was granted by 172 unique companies issuing 8,648 specific grants. Some companies are also deploying grants funds as matching budget for employee or public giving campaigns, leveraging the funds for maximum engagement and impact. One of the most noteworthy trends emerging is companies removing restrictions on their grants funding. This allows nonprofits to use this funding to cover general operating costs instead of being designated for specific projects, long a challenge in conventional grantmaking. The result is more nonprofits being able to use that money to respond more effectively and ensure they make it through the economic crisis. Many companies are also loosening the reporting requirements, putting more trust in nonprofits at a time when they need to be hyper-focused on sustaining their operations.

Takeaways

Many companies are allocating additional granting budget, recognizing the scale of recovery efforts that will be needed as time goes on. Once companies have their granting budgets set, considering which nonprofits to support with an eye on both mid-term relief and long-term recovery is key. While we don't yet know what recovery will look like or what exactly it will require of us, we expect several themes to emerge, including mental health, education, domestic violence, racial and gender inequity, financial wellness, employment and much more. Taking an investor mindset, removing restrictions and deploying budgets in ways that engage others in the effort will increase impact. It empowers nonprofits to spend the funds the way they see fit to accelerate the speed at which they can help their communities recover.

Companies responding

BlackRock

BlackRock committed \$50 million in longer-term relief and recovery efforts to help address the financial hardship and social isolation fallout of COVID-19 as families grapple with job disruptions, school closures and unexpected parental, childcare and medical costs.

David & Lucile Packard Foundation

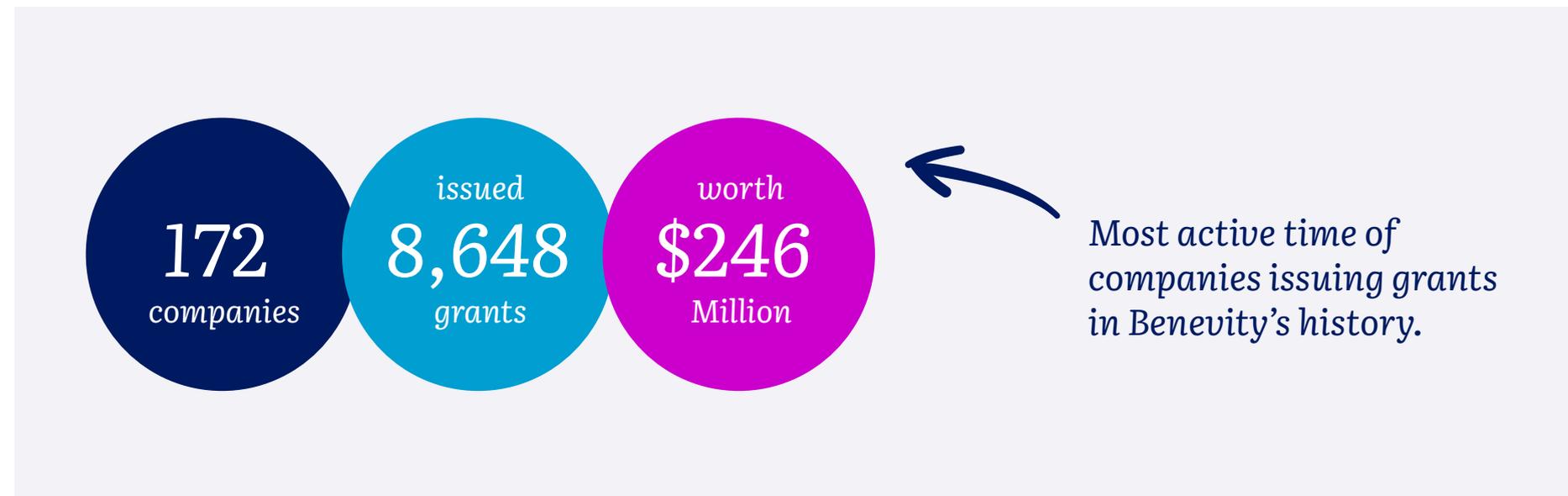
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation is adjusting their grantmaking process to be as flexible as possible for their nonprofit partners who need to be able to work with agility and speed. To do this, they are converting project grants to general operating support, expediting payments where needed and offering extensions for reports.

Microsoft

Microsoft is suspending grant outcome metrics through fiscal year 2020. With this change, the company's grantees have the flexibility to use the resources in a manner best suited for dealing with the crisis.

Silicon Valley Bank

Silicon Valley Bank has committed \$5.5 million to COVID-19 relief across the nine countries and 15 states where the company has offices. As part of this commitment, \$1 million will go to a public response fund that invites clients, partners and the public to contribute to community relief efforts.





Action by the numbers

As we began a global shift to remote working and physical distancing, 64% of Benevity clients who responded to a recent survey around volunteering said they had to cancel planned events. The number of volunteer hours logged immediately dropped by 12% in March and was down 20% in April, compared to February. With many companies beginning to pivot their volunteering strategies to promote virtual and remote opportunities, we expect volunteer hours to rise. The number of COVID-specific virtual opportunities available is rapidly increasing, with 44,000 open spots for virtual volunteers as of March 26 through a VolunteerMatch integration in the Benevity platform. We are also seeing peer support emerging as a way of giving time to those we know, and becoming a norm for people who may not have engaged in traditional volunteering. More companies are now expanding their volunteering programs beyond charitable organizations to include small actions like checking in on an elderly neighbor or doing online story time with a co-worker's child so they can focus on work or take a

break. And many are also offering rewards, whereby volunteers who give their time receive donation currency that allows them to amplify their impact by going on to donate as well.

Takeaways

In the best of times, volunteering is the most popular way companies engage their people in purpose. It provides a sense of personal and social impact, but more than that, it provides connection and a way to build cultural cohesion and unity. From a business perspective, volunteering helps develop skills around leadership, team work, developing cross-functional talents that may not be part of a person's everyday role, increased empathy and belonging, and many other impacts. During a time of physical isolation where many of the conventional volunteering events are constrained, virtual volunteering and non-traditional volunteer opportunities can create a purpose-driven culture where people feel connected to each other, their employer and their communities. Skills-based volunteering is another way to provide valuable support to nonprofits who have had to cut

staff, and micro and kid-friendly volunteer opportunities can make it easier for those who are juggling work, parenting and teaching to participate with their families.

Companies responding

Adobe

Adobe created a virtual volunteering directory, and their employees logged 2,000 more volunteer hours this March than they did in March 2019. They also created a virtual team building event where they used one of their own products, Adobe Spark, to build get well cards for people who were suffering from COVID-19.

Dolby

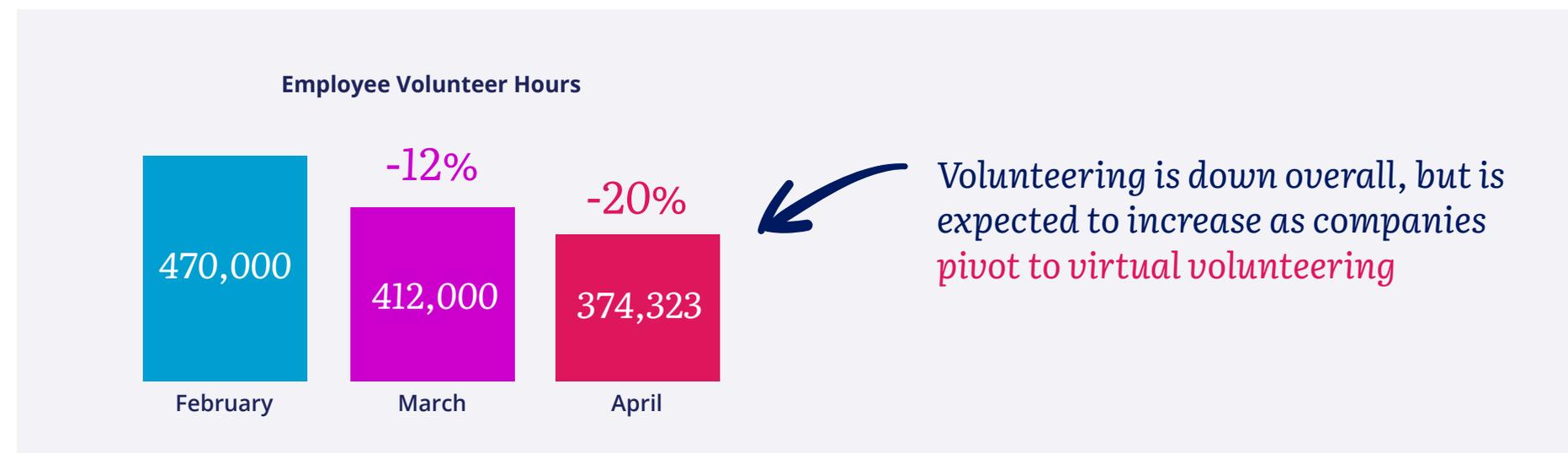
Dolby activated their network of 30 ambassadors across their global offices to understand the status of COVID-19 in each region, how it's impacting local employees and which local organizations could be promoted from their headquarters, along with other large relief organizations.

HPE

HPE launched a registry of volunteer network engineers ready to assist in the build out of network infrastructures for medical facilities on the front lines of dealing with this pandemic. Almost 200 engineers spanning more than 20 countries signed up in the first 48 hours after the initiative launched.

Liberty Mutual

Liberty Mutual announced Liberty Torchbearers Calling, encouraging employees to take time out of their workday to call loved ones in isolation (friends, family, the elderly) to let them know they care.





Action by the numbers

Companies are creating movements by activating their broader networks in their response efforts, through public relief initiatives and donation integrations into their customer experiences. These types of initiatives invite customers, community members, and friends and family to join in supporting a featured cause or a cause of their own choosing, with or without a corporate match. These public opportunities are enabling progressive, purpose-led companies to engage more people in a meaningful way and build long-term trust and brand loyalty. With 76 companies in Benevity's community running public initiatives that generated \$7.5 million in donations in eight weeks, there's an opportunity for more to differentiate their brands and drive greater social impact, especially given that consumers say brand trust is a deal breaker or deciding factor in their brand buying decisions.⁶ This area shows the largest increase in individual giving because fewer companies had previously leveraged customer and public engagement in their programs. Corporate matching helped encourage customers and the public to give 180% more in March and April compared to the previous two months.

Takeaways

Even prior to COVID-19, people were choosing to align themselves with purpose-driven brands. So this crisis is a call to all companies, as people watch to see how they respond. Public giving initiatives are a way to meaningfully engage customers and communities, and connect people to what matters to them, in much the same compelling value proposition that drives employee engagement. While it's important for companies to lead with purpose, we must remember that purpose is also personal. In addition to select causes, companies have an opportunity to drive social change by empowering and amplifying people's personal passions around what's happening in their own families and communities. A promotion plan that is focused on how people can come together to make a difference, versus promoting the brand, will lend the initiative more authenticity, leading to better results.

Companies responding

ATB

ATB has a year-round public giving site that offers a 15% match on donations to Alberta nonprofits. In April, they bumped that up to 50% in response to COVID-19 to ensure local nonprofits continue to receive the support they need. Thanks to the generosity of the public and additional funds committed from ATB, they raised \$300,000 in just five days. And they also cover credit card fees on all customer donations, so that entire amount made it to nonprofits.

Benevity

Benevity launched a public "We Are We" campaign that has raised nearly \$2.4 million through 3,286 individual donations to 830 causes in just one month. Over \$600,000 of that was donated in the first 3.5 hours alone, indicating a huge appetite for people to give back in a time of need. Benevity's campaign had an outstanding 8.4% conversion rate versus the average 1.2% because of the ability for donors to choose the cause they wished to support and have matching funds applied. Although the match is no longer available, people continue to visit the site daily to donate.

TC Energy

TC Energy's mantra is "better together," so they launched their Community Impact Portal with 100% matching on all public donations up to \$500,000 to their featured causes responding to COVID-19 in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

QVC

Qurate Retail Group, the parent company of QVC, launched a public campaign in support of Meals on Wheels America and No Kid Hungry, with a \$1 million match on customer and employee donations. Due to overwhelming response, they've increased the match to \$2 million.



in Benevity's community are running public initiatives that generated nearly



Conclusion

Companies are in the throes of redefining a lot of what they thought they knew, as they navigate changes in the way they work and in the way they lead. It may appear on the surface counterintuitive in an economic crisis to invest in purpose, but in the midst of global uncertainty and government distrust, there's a stark spotlight on companies as the holders of hope, connection and efficacy. People want to be part of the solution, and they want business to help them do it.

How they do it will be more important than doing it at all. Those who have a clear company purpose, and have programs that allow them to activate it, are well prepared to take decisive action. For others, this moment represents an opportunity to define their purpose and demonstrate to their people that they value more than the bottomline.

The companies highlighted in this report are just a few of the many who are leading with purpose and adapting and expanding their programs in an authentic way, including pivoting to virtual volunteering, enabling open-choice giving, providing opportunities for awareness and education, removing restrictions on grants, and deploying community investments in ways that engage others at a grassroots level. Their unique efforts offer both inspiration on what's needed and tactical roadmaps on what's possible.

The COVID crisis has shown us in living, acute colour what can happen when we are not ready to address imminent existential threats. The impact of our collective action in response to this pandemic has been both heartening and perhaps a presage of things to come as we seek to address future threats.

A purpose-driven corporate mindset, with leadership that makes decisions with both head and heart, is changing the way companies engage their employees and communities and transforming the meaning of corporate culture and the nature of business. All while inspiring a movement, with millions of people solving this global crisis together.

So, while being tasked with leading in hard times is a tremendous responsibility, it's an even bigger opportunity. There's no greater test on a company than how it treats its people and communities in times of crisis. And the corporate leaders who answer that call will be the ones to make an indelible mark on society and their company's identity.



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 17 languages, to an employee base of 12 million users around the world, Benevity has processed almost 4 billion dollars in donations and 23 million hours of volunteering time this year to over 230,000 charities worldwide.

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