

E-BOOK

7 Tips to Help You Design Successful International Programs

A Guide to Global (and Local) Impact

Big world Big opportunities

It's a big world out there. Full of big opportunities for companies that want to enhance how they engage with their employees, customers and communities. And, along the way, create a shared sense of purpose that unites everyone who connects with their brand – no matter where they are located. A global corporate purpose program could be just the ticket to building an inclusive culture across your offices that will help your people around the world feel more connected to the company, their colleagues and their local community. At the same time, your program can build deeper links with the customers and communities you work with globally to create the social and business impacts you're looking for. It's no wonder that more and more Fortune 1000, FTSE4Good and DJSI leading companies are multiplying the power and reach of their CSR strategies by taking – and combining – their employee engagement, community investment and customer engagement programs to go global. Here are some reasons why they're doing it:

Borderless purpose means boundless engagement

A recent [Benevity Engagement Study](#) shows that a well-designed corporate purpose program can lead to better business outcomes in just about every way. Especially when you can bring together employee engagement, community investment and customer engagement for maximum impact. Employees are five times more likely to engage with a cause when they have options that align with their passions, and customers are 88% more likely to purchase products from companies perceived to be doing good¹.

And in today's globally aware world, that means extending purpose programs to support causes not just in people's home countries, but also around the world. This is especially true at a time when international disasters and ongoing human crises are pervasive global events. Everyone, everywhere wants to engage directly with the causes they care about, no matter how far or how near they are. Offering your people a way to do it is a powerful loyalty builder and can create an inclusive experience for everyone involved.

 **Did you know?**

83%

of millennials say they are actively engaged when they believe their organization fosters an inclusive culture.

Source: Deloitte, *The Radical Transformation of Diversity & Inclusion: Millennial Influence*.

Global Goodness could be the brand and talent magnet you're looking for

Socially conscious 21st century employees and customers want their job or purchasing decisions to provide them with a sense of pride and purpose. In fact, 80% of people expect companies to solve society's problems and 70% say they'd want to work for that company.² A purpose program with international reach can be a compelling tool to engage people in ways that matter to them. Along the way, you'll create a sense of belonging and connection within your organization, uniting your people regardless of location. There are very few levers available to companies to positively influence culture on a global scale, and social purpose has been proven as a strong enabler and unifier of culture across borders.

Consumers are

4-6x

more likely to buy from, trust, champion and defend companies with a strong purpose.

Source: [Zeno "Strength of Purpose", 2020](#)

Global Goodness supports diversity, equity and inclusion

The most forward-thinking companies recognize purpose as the way to tackle unifying global issues while embracing and celebrating the diversity of their people. The need for both has never been higher. Building a culture of belonging within and beyond company walls through a shared value of doing good, while offering people localized and personalized opportunities to support the nonprofits they care about most, is critical. And, doing it by providing an equitable experience for your people – whether they are in Boston, Berlin or Bangkok – shows your commitment to an inclusive workplace. Does it work?

Going global is good for the bottom line

It's simple (and proven). Investing in purpose drives gains in all aspects of your business in every place you operate – from corporate reputation to culture building to attracting top talent and building a strong ESG profile. Employee and consumer loyalties flow from an authentic commitment to making a positive impact in the world. Companies who invest in social purpose and harness its power to tackle global issues see a 6% higher market value and generate 20% more revenue, significantly outperforming companies that don't.

20%

Companies who invest in social purpose and harness its power to tackle global issues generate 20% more revenue

Source: Project ROI, 2015



Tip 1

Meaningful (and Personal) Choice

Choice – providing everyone the ability to pick from the broadest range of nonprofits to support – is one of the big benefits of a global program. Empowering employees to engage with the causes that fuel their passions – whether across the street or across the world – is the new standard. In an era when even our smartphones are personalized, people increasingly demand this same level of customization in their giving choices. When you open up giving, volunteering and granting to nonprofits across borders, you’ll have the best chance of everyone gaining a personal sense of purpose – no matter where they are located or what demographic groups they belong to. And showing that you support people’s passions in ways that matter to them is a powerful engagement driver!



I’m originally from South Africa, I live in Canada now. I still donate back to a rhino sanctuary close to where I grew up in South Africa, because that’s something that matters to me personally. My employer matches those donations, and that makes me feel more connected to the organization. I still support the company initiatives of my Canada-based employer, but I like the additional flexibility to give back to a cause that has had a personal impact on me.

– Spark User

It’s important to note that when it comes to global programs there are two ways to think about choice:



Giving, volunteering and granting across borders

This could include, most critically, employees or customers across the globe wanting to support international disaster relief to help where it is needed most, most urgently. Or an expat wanting to give to, or volunteer remotely with, a favorite nonprofit back home.

This requires advanced capabilities when it comes to vetting nonprofits **[TIP 2]** and ensuring that all funds disbursed meet local regulatory standards **[TIP 3]**. It’s nearly impossible to do so successfully if you are not using software to manage your programs. And even if you are using software, it must be a truly robust and scalable technology platform **[TIP 7]**. The complicated work and processes related to vetting should be invisible to your people. Supporting flood relief halfway around the world needs to be as easy as supporting the arts center around the corner.



Providing localized opportunities everywhere you operate

This covers, for example, enabling someone in Bangalore to access local Indian nonprofits that may be more relevant to them, or enabling volunteering or positive actions not just at company headquarters, but around the world.

Adding enough local organizations to make it engaging for people in other countries requires a high level of expertise as well as diverse and adaptable systems that adhere to local cultures and regulations **[TIP 3]**.

Recruiting local and executive champions who will help lead, communicate and execute your program with local know-how will also be critical to your success **[TIP 5 and TIP 6]**.

Maximum Choice

With almost 2 million vetted nonprofits in our global database, Benevity offers greater choice than any other corporate purpose provider.

Any volunteers?

Calling all volunteers! It's all about enabling cross-border volunteering, whether that's in person, virtually, or a hybrid of the two. Doing that takes a broad database of nonprofits to create opportunities from and the ability for your people to suggest organizations for volunteering (or giving) to be included in your program. This also applies to enabling opportunities for your people in international locations who want to volunteer in their home country."

Take a holistic approach

When it comes to employee, community and customer engagement in locations outside of your headquarters, it's important to remember that not all countries and cultures give back in the same ways. In some countries, volunteering is the preferred way to support nonprofits and, in others, giving is predominant. Companies who take a holistic approach to their CSR or corporate purpose programs, and offer options for both giving and volunteering, see up to 50% higher participation rates. Again, it's all about enabling and celebrating choice.



"All our employees across our 80 locations in 38 countries receive the same program benefits and opportunities to do good – including the same volunteer time off and rewards and donation matching at the same dollar amount, regardless of location or currency. And we share their stories of giving and volunteering globally so that others can contribute if they feel inspired to do so. In the first 8 weeks of partnering with Benevity, we saw close to US\$500,000 in donations going to 481 nonprofits around the world. **Our partnership also led to a 4% increase in our internal 'sense of belonging' score.**"



Carina Weyer

Global Good Manager, F5 Networks

Tip ②

Understand that Vetting Is Vital

Is the community food bank in Botswana that one of your team members wants to give to a legitimate nonprofit? You'll need the right tools and systems to be sure. And these tools must be scalable enough to provide the wide range of choices that encourage engagement. What's at stake? A lot: giving to an organization that is not what it seems could mean misdirected dollars and a reputational risk to your company. Removing the risk by validating the global nonprofits your people want to support is vital.

But how do you do it? Vetting organizations on your own, especially in distant locations, can be complicated, cumbersome and expensive. Very expensive. Costs can be as high as hundreds or even thousands of dollars per nonprofit. Another option is to work through third-party organizations that conduct manual vetting duties, but this can also be very costly. And neither process may get to the heart of the matter: ensuring nonprofits are, in fact, valid organizations. Manual vetting by multiple donors also creates strain on recipient nonprofits, reducing the impact of the funds flowing to them to do good on the ground.

techsoup

Getting vetting right

Through the Benevity Global Network, including our exclusive partnership with TechSoup, we have on-the-ground partners and capabilities that can investigate whether a given nonprofit is valid under its own local laws. Once we've determined that the organization meets local regulations, it is then scanned against recognized global watchlists that will flag connections with improper or illegal activities. Ideally this process is performed when a nonprofit is onboarded to your program and again before each payment disbursement, as it is at Benevity. A step that provides additional peace of mind is to put in place a process whereby organizations will self-certify that they meet criteria that align with your corporate values.

Understanding equivalency determinations

An equivalency determination is the legal process of evaluating whether a foreign nonprofit is deemed equivalent to a U.S. public nonprofit. While for some companies it is the preferred standard, it may not be the most efficient or effective way of vetting a nonprofit. Vendors with local expertise may provide a more accurate picture. And the equivalency determination process can be onerous on recipient nonprofits (with many legal and administrative requirements to fulfill for each potential donor). It also entails greater costs, which means fewer dollars to organizations and fewer choices of causes to give to. And high vetting costs make micro donations (which are vital to many nonprofits) impractical.

Global nonprofit vetting

With best-in-class vetting, Benevity is the only provider who ensures organizations on our platform are vetted according to local regulations as well as global standards. That means you can be confident you're supporting legitimate organizations and you gain peace of mind knowing your brand reputation is protected. Through Benevity, your company can access the largest database of validated nonprofits around the world – at no additional cost. A testament to Benevity's vetting procedures is that we were selected by Apple to support their nonprofit vetting and eligibility for Apple Pay.

Don't risk your reputation

68%

of the book value of S&P 500 companies is now represented by intangible assets, up from

35%

20 years ago

Source: 2019 BofA Merrill Lynch Global Research Report

Tip ③

Think Globally. Act, Speak and Engage Locally.

We've adapted the well-known phrase, "Think globally, act locally" to stress the importance of making an impact wherever you do business, while still providing inclusive, localized and personalized experiences that engage your people, customers and communities in ways that matter to them.

Successful global programs are inclusive and scalable, allowing you to offer a local experience within a unifying framework. People like to feel connected globally, but also with the freedom to participate in ways that make sense to their local culture and in ways that matter to them personally. In some regions, fundraising is very popular; in others, volunteering rises to the top; while elsewhere, small acts of goodness are considered the greatest contribution. People give back in different ways around the world, and a program with flexibility, and not a top-down approach, will be more successful.

Act

Engagement across all your international locations means localized giving and volunteering opportunities your people can act on. Local content is king!

Speak

Providing a platform with a wide range of language options is table stakes in an international program. Comprendre? Capiche? Sicher! Spark, our employee engagement solution, is available in 22 languages. Benevity Grants is available in four languages.

Engage

One of the most vital aspects of a seamless, localized global program is the ability to meet people on their level, and that includes giving in local currencies. Our technology enables payroll giving in 13 currencies. Other payment methods available include credit card, PayPal and Apple Pay depending on the currency. And your system must adhere to local regulations for taxation. Tax receipts (in some jurisdictions) and gift acknowledgments (in others) that can be built into your system's process and be immediately available to donors are must-haves. Our solution offers tax-effective giving in multiple countries across four continents. These countries include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A global program that's also a local one

If engagement and impact are your goals, providing an experience that accounts for diverse cultures and needs is critical. Imagine an employee's response if they worked in an international office and their company only allowed giving, volunteering and grants for nonprofits in the head office country? That sends the wrong message about how inclusive your company is and could be a real disengagement driver.

While a global program can unify your community across borders, so conversely can local campaigns. Campaigns create opportunities to rally the entire company around local events. They can focus on events of unifying global impact – like natural disasters and crises – as well as more local or regional events like Martin Luther King Jr. Day or the national volunteering week in a specific country.



Disaster crisis relief

When a disaster strikes in an area where you have employees, customers or partners, you can engage everyone in supporting those people and communities when they need it most. This can be through an employee giving and matching campaign, volunteering, public response appeals and corporate grants. The most important thing is to act fast and mobilize people to take action. Benevity publishes ready-to-go content, including hand-picked lists of vetted nonprofits working on the ground, so you can respond to pressing issues quickly.

Tip 4

Follow the Money (Very Closely)

Disbursement of donations to nonprofits

Getting donations to their intended nonprofits is a highly complex process, even when disbursing to domestic organizations. When it comes to distributing funds in far-flung locations, the complications and administrative procedures multiply. Companies considering global programs will want to make sure they know the answers to these questions:

Do you intend to handle the disbursement of funds yourself?

If so, do you have the in-house capabilities? Is your internal solution scalable as donation volumes and your reach expand to include small nonprofits in other countries where English is not the first language?

If you are partnering with a third-party provider, do you understand that some vendors use other third-party agencies to disburse funds? In almost all cases this will mean additional fees to the ones quoted to you – from 2% to as much as 25%. This burden of extra cost is often passed on to nonprofits, while more care and control is lost each time money is handed off. And that could jeopardize the security of your funds. Other vendors drastically limit fees by keeping disbursement “in house.” Be sure to compare apples to apples when considering vendors to help you with international funds disbursement.

Global leadership

Benevity disburses

100%

of funds outside of North America electronically (and 90% of funds in North America).

Do you know that EFT (electronic funds transfer) is mandatory in many jurisdictions?

Checks just don't cut it anymore. Their cost of use, susceptibility to loss and the extra costs they entail (they are 10X more expensive to send and 5X more expensive to receive than e-payments) make them a liability.

Benevity is the only supplier to employ a proprietary global disbursement process. Our centralized, automated process provides the most efficient and effective way to disburse funds to nonprofits, both in North America and abroad

The ability of the Benevity platform to ensure that donations go to their intended recipient organization in a timely, accurate and reportable fashion is unmatched and has set a new bar for the industry.

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Because nonprofits matter

Benevity connects your company, people and customers with nearly 2 million nonprofits around the world. And we help those organizations get closer to realizing their social missions with unparalleled access to technology and resources.

Our ecosystem view of the CSR landscape means that, along with supporting companies, we also support the nonprofits that are so important to them, their employees and their customers. We do it by improving systems, implementing best practices and automating, automating, automating so that changing the world is a little easier for them.

The Benevity Causes Portal is an online global portal for nonprofits to register, set up profiles, share giving and volunteering opportunities, access monthly reports and access donor information, if it's provided. It is available in 12 languages and with dedicated assistance from Benevity's Cause Support team.

Location: Worldwide ▾

Find causes anywhere in the world Search

POPULAR CAUSES

- Protect all animals**
Give >
- Help youth succeed**
Give >
- End cancer**
Give >
- Save the planet**
Give >
- Solve world hunger**
Give >
- Care for sick kids**
Give >

Nearly
2.1 million
nonprofits around the world

Benevity disburses 90% of domestic funds and 100% of international funds through electronic funds transfer/ automated clearing house (EFT/ACH). Thanks to the unparalleled accuracy, reliability and speed of electronic payments, we have the highest rate of funds delivered. Last year alone, we eliminated an estimated 450,000 checks. That's important because, statistically, 4% of checks get lost. That works out to \$64 million in donations that would never have made it to causes last year if we had sent checks.

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Tip 5

Empower Local Champions to Drive Global Success

Some companies call them ambassadors. Some call them local champions. We know them to be mountain movers. They're people in your international offices who, through local know-how, cultural connections and a passion for doing good in the community, can act as local leaders in driving a successful global program. No matter what you call them, they are the linchpins of some of the world's most successful global corporate purpose programs.

Here are some tips from Benevity clients on how to inspire and enable local champions:

- ✔ Recruit local champions – it might be easier than you think. Just ask! Leveraging existing ERGs (employee resource groups) is a good place to start, too. You're sure to find people who are passionate about making a difference in their communities.
- ✔ Make champion roles as exclusive and attractive as possible, and create a network of champions that are connected across businesses. Let them know it's a great way to grow their career with you.
- ✔ Use your local champions to help you get to know the local giving and volunteering cultures in your international locations, and empower them to take your global program and make it local. They'll know their local team better than anyone else, and can choose what and how to communicate with colleagues in their offices most effectively. Local good news travels faster and has more impact than any global corporate email ever will!
- ✔ Use their insights to design your program to meet localized needs – not the other way around.
- ✔ Let your local champions drive the content of your program. They'll have the best chance at helping to discover the giving and volunteering opportunities that will engage your people.
- ✔ Give them the resources, training and support they need.
- ✔ Provide a budget, marketing and communications materials, and training to help them in their roles (handbooks, role expectations, and opportunities to connect with others and share insights and news). Be sure to endorse their decisions along the way. They'll need to feel supported in every aspect.
- ✔ Enable them with permissions in your program software that will allow them to post new opportunities and target the people and organizations in their areas.
- ✔ Encourage and enable peer-to-peer communications – and even matching. A peer inviting another peer in the same location to participate can be more effective than top-down directives.
- ✔ Local champions could be your future leaders. Let them know their efforts are recognized, valued and a great way to develop soft skills like collaboration, leadership and communication.

Local champions can help you do more with less budget

Utilizing local champions, Equinix, a global data center company, runs an international giving and volunteering program in 26 countries with a single administrator! In her words, "global success can mean empowering your local champions and getting out of their way. Nobody knows their communities better than they do." The results? Harnessing Benevity's corporate purpose software, Equinix drove exceptional results after they began utilizing local champions: participation grew by 62% YOY, donations increased by 50%, while volunteer hours jumped by 72%!

Participation grew by

↑ 62%

Donations increased by

↑ 50%

Volunteer hours jumped by

↑ 72%



Tip 6

Executive Sponsorship and Communication

A respected and authentic executive sponsor – someone who doesn't just give a rubber stamp to your program or program expansion, but believes in what it means for the company's culture – can help navigate a lot of the challenges and hurdles you may face along the way.

Strong executive sponsorship also inspires engagement and participation, communicating to your people that your program is a priority for the business and empowering them to participate in the ways that matter to them. This endorsement is key. In some cultures, for instance, taking time off from work to volunteer is something that people are not comfortable with. Executive sponsorship, at a global and a regional level, reassures your community that their participation is approved and encouraged.

As you prepare to roll out or expand your program, recruit as many executive sponsors as possible by tying back the benefits of a purpose-led giving program to employee engagement and retention, customer (and talent) acquisition, and community impact. Use them to assist with launch communications, both at a global and local level. It's crucial that employees hear about your culture of purpose directly from leadership as well as their peers. The more advocates, the better!

An overarching communication strategy that lays out an integrated plan across channels for pre-launch, launch and post-launch, and that integrates executive sponsorship and is supported by global and regional communications teams, is critical. Use email, webinars, lunch-and-learn seminars, new hire orientations and messaging platforms (e.g., Slack, digital screens, collateral, speaking slots during company town halls) to rally the troops, provide direction and impart the program values you are supporting.

And don't stop communicating after launch! Share success stories from different regions at regular intervals.



Tip 7

Check the tech

An international corporate purpose solution requires robust yet easy-to-use technology. Integrating country-specific workflows, providing for a variety of languages, allowing for donations in multiple currencies, and adhering to the security and compliance demands of global organizations requires a serious commitment on the part of your supplier.

The platform you choose should be:

Integrated

Having international giving, volunteering, positive actions and grantmaking in a single platform creates a purpose “ecosystem” where each part of your program leverages and enhances the others to drive more engagement and awareness of your company’s commitment to its causes.

Scalable

Does your provider have the bandwidth to grow with you as you add new users, new locations and new features? Easily enabling new localized experiences in the form of language, currency, nonprofits and tax-effectiveness is also a must-have.

Configurable

Program administrators need to be able to easily adjust the functionality of your system to suit local needs. And a system that’s globally optimized while providing users the ability to generate locally relevant content is also key.

Secure

For global companies with employees around the world, security and data privacy are among the most crucial considerations when launching software. Benevity’s security practices have been audited and approved by the world’s largest and most advanced technology and financial services companies, which is a testament to the investments we continue to make in this area.

Technology trusted by brands that know tech best

Benevity is proud to work with over 600 of the world’s most iconic brands to help them elevate their purpose to tackle global issues and engage their people, customers and communities to unleash a world of good. We take it as the strongest possible vote of confidence that our industry-leading approach to compliance and controls meets the standards of the world’s leading banks and financial services companies.

Growing global programs

This webinar shows how purpose-driven companies have used technology to connect their people and build a unified culture across geographies. Learn strategies to scale your giving and grantmaking program globally, and more.

10 capabilities your international employee engagement solution needs

[Check out this quick guide to find 10 capabilities your provider needs to deliver on for a successful global employee engagement program.](#)

How Benevity Can Help

Talk to us about how we can help you go global with your corporate purpose program.

ABOUT BENEVITY

Benevity is the global social impact software with an all-in-one platform for corporate grantmaking, volunteering, giving, micro-actions and employee resource groups. A certified B Corporation and recognized in Fortune's Impact 20, we empower iconic brands to attract, retain, and engage diverse workforces, embed social action in customer experiences, support communities and understand their impact in the world. Since our inception, Benevity has helped businesses around the world donate over \$14 billion, track 72 million volunteer hours and support communities with over \$19 billion in grants.

