



Guide

# 2023 CSR Trends: The latest inspiration for building your company's CSR strategy

A guide for all businesses





## What is **CSR**?

In the business world, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an increasingly important business concept that enables companies to be socially responsible for employees, stakeholders, the environment and society at large.

By implementing a CSR strategy, companies assume responsibility for the impact they have on society through their economic, social and environmental influence.

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The *search for purpose* is changing the corporate world



# The *search for purpose* is changing the corporate world

The dramatic events of the past few years have changed us. Since our world was first turned upside down in 2020, we've seen a huge tilt towards corporations and their stakeholders taking action beyond their backyards, rallying around critical issues that matter for the global good.

In times of social injustice, international unrest and threats of climate change, many people are seeking out ways to stand up for our society and our environment – and not only in their free time.

Alongside the search for higher-quality jobs with more flexibility, autonomy and better pay, employees are also seeking purpose, meaning and impact in every part of their lives – including at work. This search can be answered through corporate social responsibility.

2023 will be the year in which this collective need for purpose and a sense of community will become an integral part of the corporate world. Your employees' desire to be socially engaged presents the perfect opportunity for your company to set the levers in motion and become part of this positive change.



# The importance of *corporate social responsibility*



## The importance of *corporate social responsibility*

More companies are responding to their employees' search for meaning by offering volunteering and giving programmes that enable teams to contribute to the causes they care about.

The State of Corporate Purpose 2022, a report by Benevity Impact Labs, delves into the importance of social responsibility in the business world with almost 8.9 million volunteering hours recorded by more than 460,000 volunteers in 2021, an increase of 28% over the previous year.

More than 850 companies around the world already rely on Benevity's platform to organise CSR activities, measure outcomes and reward employee volunteering.

850

purpose-driven companies

333,000

positive actions completed

8.9 M.

volunteering hours

\$2.3 B.

donations

108,500

grants worth \$2.95 billion

218,500

organisations supported globally

# The five most *influential* *CSR trends* of 2023

1

Stakeholder philanthropy

2

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB)

3

Employee resource groups (ERGs)

4

Virtual volunteering

5

Environmental, social and governance (ESG)

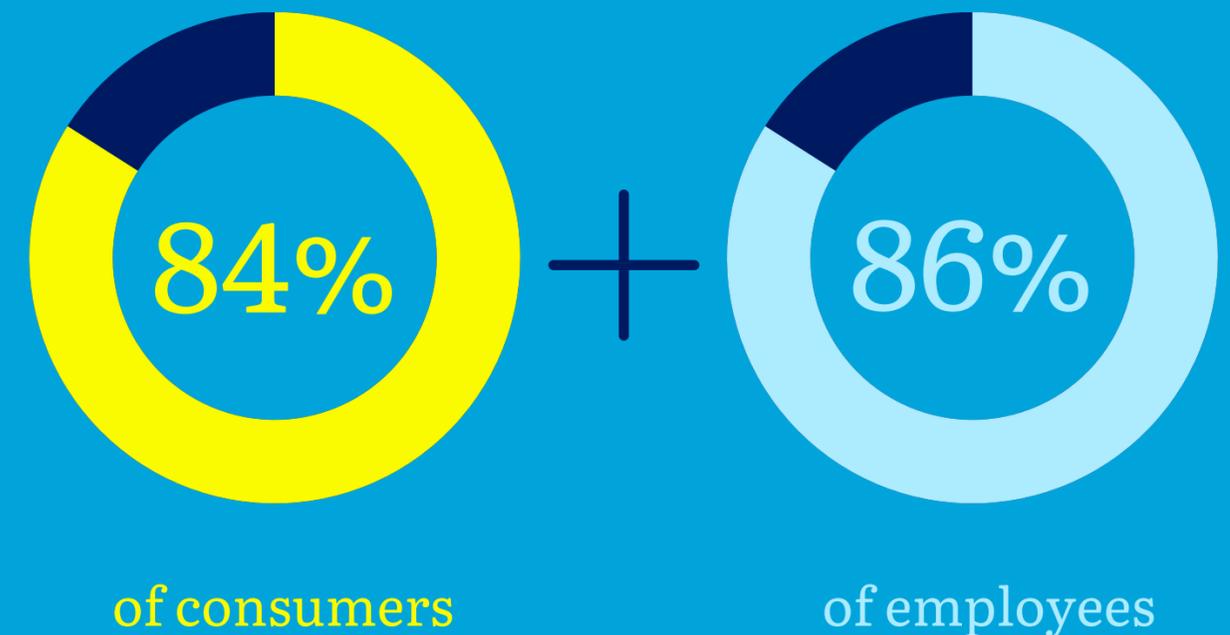
## Trend one: Stakeholder philanthropy

The various ways in which companies make social investments have changed over the years. One recent trend that stands out is the shift towards involving stakeholders in decisions over charitable investments. These stakeholders can include community partners, employees and clients.

Companies are now taking more innovative approaches to their philanthropic investments. Going forward, the watchwords will be democratic, trusting, collaborative and engaged stakeholder philanthropy – because that’s how the greatest impact is achieved.



### Views on stakeholder philanthropy



believe that stakeholders should have a say in the distribution of a company’s donations.

Source: Benevity-Wakefield, 2022, Engagement in Corporate Giving: How Companies Can Involve Consumers and Employees in Financial Decisions

## The shift towards trust-based philanthropy with Avast

As a corporate foundation, Avast supports various partner organisations, but its philanthropic strategy does not follow a traditional, transactional approach. Rather, Avast seeks out nonprofit organisations in local communities and encourages them to request the forms of support that they truly need from the company.

This trust-based philanthropic approach ensures that the company fulfils its CSR objective as it focuses on working with organisations that are valuable partners in the areas of digital freedom and digital citizenship.

At the heart of Avast's stakeholder philanthropy is a healthy balance between receiving funding and the freedom to build meaningful charitable partnerships that make a real difference in the community. With this approach, the Avast Foundation aims to inspire stakeholder philanthropy across the CSR sector.

*“Our approach is very much bottom-up because we want the communities to be fully embedded in the programme. In fact, they are co-designing them.”*

*“So the impact is much greater because they actually know their own needs and how to fix them – and we are just providing them the platforms, tools and funds to achieve their goals.”*

*“This is how we like to do philanthropy and it's a model that we're also applying to our employee engagement and community programmes.”*

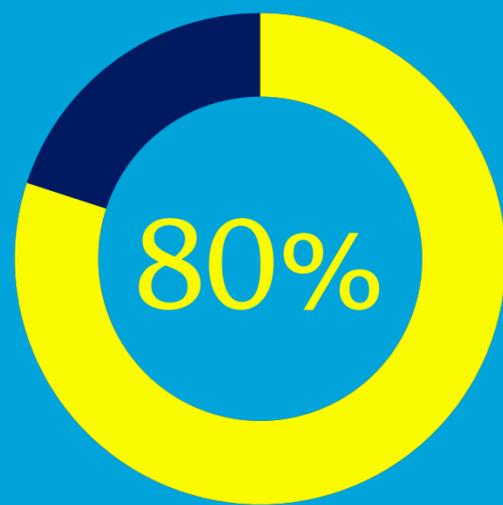


JULIA LOSEKOOT SZYMAŃSKA  
Community Relations Manager at Avast

## Trend two: Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB)

Fostering a diverse, fair and inclusive workplace is one of the most important criteria for today's employees and their careers, as it creates a real sense of community and satisfies the thirst for meaning.

When diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are lived in the workplace, it not only gives people space to be themselves, it also opens up new perspectives that create connections and drive innovation.



of employees believe that it is the responsibility of management to take social justice and equality measures.

Source: Benevity-Wakefield, 2021, Racial Justice and Equity Survey

*“I believe that it’s important to have a culture that is both top-down and bottom-up, where everyone feels they’re making a difference. And it’s important to be open and honest.”*

*“We’ve got an environment where people ask us challenging questions constantly, which is a very good thing. We want people to be able to ask those challenging questions because that keeps us on the ball. And, naturally, we’re always striving to do better.”*



HELEN ROBINSON

Diversity, Inclusion and Community  
Engagement Manager at Auto Trader UK

## Trend three: Employee resource groups (ERGs)

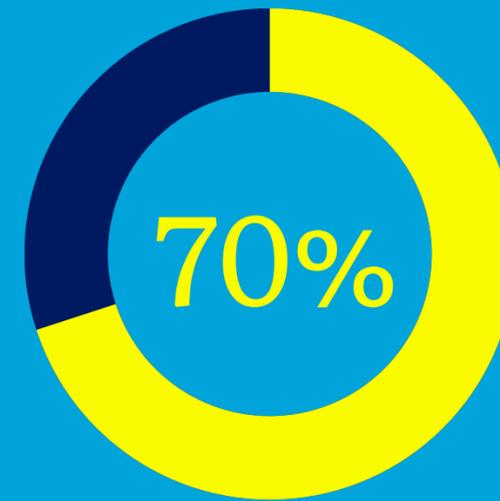
Employee Resource Groups are closely linked to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and they're one of the greatest resources you have to execute on your CSR strategy in 2023.

Safe spaces and affinity groups are important for both employees and management because they provide valuable insights into experience gaps, potential employee dissatisfaction and systemic biases or barriers. All of this knowledge will help you drive positive change within the company.

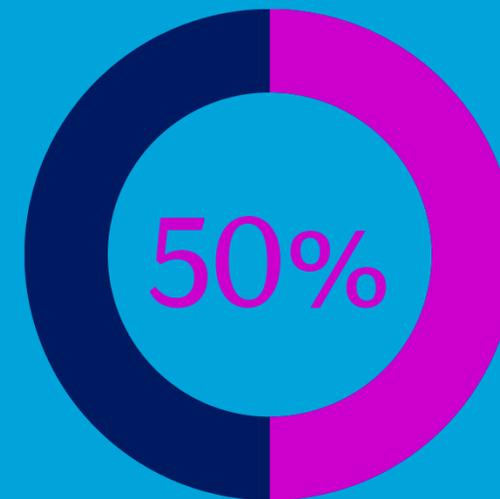
A foundation of trust, inclusion and equality is an important prerequisite for a sense of belonging. Only with satisfied employees can your corporate culture sustainably blossom and thrive.



### Facts and figures on ERGs



of people between 18 and 24 would be more likely to apply to a company if it offered ERGs



of employees said they would be more likely to stay with a company because it offers ERGs

Source: [What Black Employee Resource Groups Need Right Now](#), Harvard Business Review, June 29, 2020

# The importance of Employee resource groups (ERGs) with AutoTrader

Auto Trader is the UK's leading online retailer of new and used cars. One of their main CSR strategies is to strengthen their team and culture through employee-led networks.

With eight key facilitators and two network leads, these networks, or guilds as they call them, provide a space where all employees can contribute their ideas and be a force for positive change.

Each ERG has specific tasks and commitments which are presented to management twice a year. This bottom-up approach helps Auto Trader build a collaborative, interdisciplinary space that ensures employees can promote social change – all with the support of senior leadership.

*“Our employee networks are very important in terms of delivering and driving the work that we do internally because these are led by our employees. But they aren’t just a social space for individuals; they’re very much about helping us to drive strategy to make a difference.”*



HELEN ROBINSON  
Diversity, Inclusion and Community  
Engagement Manager at Auto Trader UK

## Trend four: *Virtual volunteering*

Volunteering is one of the first CSR commitments that companies tend to make – and for good reason. Volunteering not only connects employees with a sense of community, it also strengthens company culture. But with the rise of remote-first companies, it's not always easy to get employees involved.

For this reason, more and more companies are turning to virtual volunteering. The great benefit is that it makes your CSR strategy location-independent and crisis-proof.

Not only can you reach more employees with virtual volunteering, it's also more flexible. Volunteering programmes with virtual components allow your employees to participate from anywhere and at any time. Then, through tools like Benevity, companies can easily track and reward these volunteering hours.



# Virtual volunteering for a positive impact *with*



With nearly 1,800 employees around the world, remote-first company Duck Creek Technologies relies heavily on virtual volunteering to engage their teams.

In the remote environment, it's a challenge to bring employees together in one location. And this used to make it difficult for them to find suitable volunteering opportunities for their international employees.

Social Impact Associate Manager Sage Milton believes that their Duck Creek Gives Back programme is only possible with the help of the Benevity platform. With Benevity, Duck Creek now offers its international teams personalised, virtual volunteering opportunities that take into account their skills, preferred causes and personal interests.

Therefore, all team members can discover and contribute to causes that are close to their hearts. Their success is also tangible: in the first seven months of their programme, Duck Creek Gives Back recorded over 855 volunteering hours through the Benevity platform.

*“As a remote-first company, we needed to have that centralised location that would allow for global opportunities. When you’re sourcing remote activities on your own, it’s difficult to navigate the waters and see which organisations actually offer virtual opportunities.”*

*“Many nonprofits don’t have the financial backing to offer virtual opportunities. Benevity has been helpful to us as it has opened a lot of doors to give our employees a broader spectrum of opportunity.”*



**SAGE MILTON**  
Social Impact Associate Manager Duck  
Creek Technologies

## Trend five: *Environmental, social and governance (ESG) with focus on the “S”*

Company purpose has become important criteria for socially-minded employees and consumers when deciding who to work for or buy from. But purpose is also becoming increasingly important for investors.

Companies and industry leaders around the world are now focusing on environmental, social and governance (ESG) and developing strategies to better align the various aspects of their business with their ESG goals.

Companies generally have environmental and governance covered - but social issues are often neglected. However, this is changing, as leaders realise that ESG needs to go beyond reporting, compliance and risk mitigation. To really make a difference and effectively engage various stakeholders, companies need to ensure the social element of ESG is meaningfully represented.

In 2023, the trend is to bring social issues to the forefront – a development that is long overdue.



## ESG and a focus on social impact with **SAP**

SAP's CSR programme shows that social commitment and entrepreneurship are not mutually exclusive. This aligns with SAP's mission statement: To help the world run better and improve people's lives.

Maximilian Herrmann, who is responsible for social impact measurement at SAP, sees a holistic circular economy with a focus on the social aspects of sustainability as the goal of a successful ESG strategy. As one of the largest B2B companies in the world, SAP has an immense impact – meaning their ESG measures have a wide reach.

Therefore, SAP's CSR successes do not end with the company itself, but they go through its partners and are multiplied to customers all over the world.



### The success of SAP's *educational initiatives*

**70** countries with SAP  
educational initiatives

**119,000** trained teachers

**3.5 M.** participants around  
the world

# How to successfully approach **2023 CSR trends** at your company



# How to successfully approach 2023 CSR trends at your company



## **Engage both internal and external stakeholders**

As well as your CSR leads, team members and ERGs, invite your local communities and nonprofits to participate in the decision-making. It will help to create deeper partnerships and generate more impact.



## **Focus on transparency, accountability and action**

Remain consistent when implementing your CSR strategies and pay attention to authenticity, accountability, honest commitment and transparency. It's the only way to build trust with stakeholders.



## **Invest in affinity groups and ERGs**

Help your ERGs create an equal, inclusive environment for your employees to gather, plan actions, learn from each other and advocate for issues inside and outside the company.



## **Offer both donations and volunteering**

Give your employees the opportunity to get involved with the nonprofits you support, fostering an even stronger bond between your company and the community.



# Combine social and business impact

[www.benevity.com](http://www.benevity.com)

[Request a demo now!](#)



Benevity, a certified B Corporation, is the leader in global corporate purpose software, providing the only integrated suite of community investment and employee, customer and nonprofit engagement solutions. Recognized as one of Fortune's Impact 20, Benevity offers cloud solutions that power purpose for many iconic brands in ways that better attract, retain and engage today's diverse workforce, embed social action into their customer experiences and positively impact their communities. With software that is available in 22 languages, Benevity has processed more than \$10 billion in donations and 46 million hours of volunteering time to support 326,000 nonprofits worldwide. The company's solutions have also facilitated 770,000 positive actions and awarded 1.2 million grants worth \$12 billion. For more information, visit [benevity.com](http://benevity.com).