benevity™

E-BOOK

A corporate guide to putting the SDGs to work

7 strategies to create a successful SDG program

Tackling the world's biggest issues

While we've made unprecedented economic and social gains over the last few decades, that growth has come at a cost to our people and planet — and we've reached a tipping point where it's no longer sustainable. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promise action on 17 critical social and environmental issues — from ending poverty and homelessness to protecting the planet to fighting inequalities — by 2030.

While 193 world leaders have signed on to tackle the SDGs, governments can't achieve them alone. So the 17th goal is a call for businesses and citizens to step up — to collectively and systemically solve the world's biggest issues.

Taking the SDGs beyond business practices

As the SDGs increasingly gain profile, many companies have already aligned their business practices to the Goals. While it's important for companies to lead with purpose, we need to remember that purpose is also personal — and the SDGs were designed to be tackled through the collective action of everyone.

Taking collective action on global issues has long-term business impacts too, as people's identities become more intertwined than ever with the companies they work for and buy from — especially when it comes to Gen Z.

When we engage our people through purpose, it shows them we're all in this together. And, perhaps more importantly, it gives them a personal sense of efficacy that has the power to inspire a movement — with millions of people working together to solve our most pressing global challenges.

Did you know?

Porter Novelli shows that 90% of Gen Z believe companies must take action to help solve social and environmental issues, and 83% of employees and 72% of consumers consider a company's purpose when deciding where to work or shop.
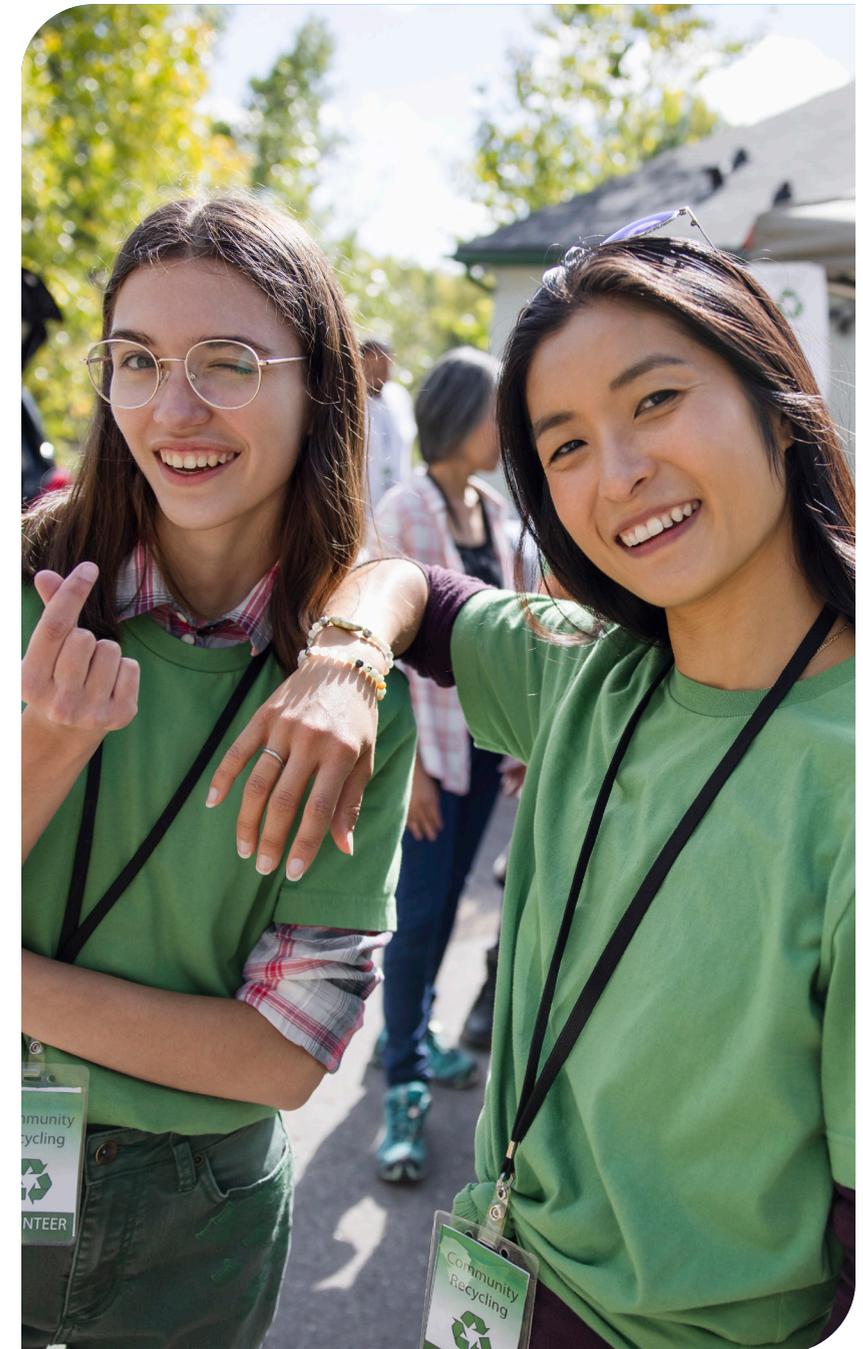
Cause pillar and SDG alignment

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good Health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Health & Wellness: 3 & 6 Environment: 7, 11 - 15

Education & Innovation: 4, 8, 9 & 11

Community Improvement: 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 - 12

Hunger: 1, 2 & 6 Human Rights & Equality: 1, 2, 5, 10, 16

International Development: 1 - 6, 8 – 10

A powerful engagement tool

Think of the SDGs as an incredibly powerful employee engagement opportunity. By incorporating the Goals into your workplace giving and volunteering programs, at a grassroots level, you're creating a sense of shared purpose for your people that will connect them to your company, their communities and the world. And beyond social impact there are also tangible business benefits around attracting, retaining and engaging top talent who are looking for more than just a paycheck from their employer. We know today's workforce cares about social and environmental issues: 81% of millennials said they expect businesses to act on the SDGs, in a 2016 Corporate Citizenship study, and the 2020

Edelman Trust Barometer shows that 73% of people expect their employers to provide opportunities to help shape the future of society. By combining a top-down approach of operational and sustainability practices with the power of your people, you'll be well positioned to have greater social and business impact.

7 Strategies to create a successful SDG program

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide tons of opportunity for employee engagement, year round. Below are 7 strategies to help you incorporate them into your giving and volunteering programs and see measurable impact.

1

Identify the Goals you want to focus on
Individual Goals will resonate with different people, and some will align nicely with your company pillars and your people's passions. The key to engagement is offering choice. Do a poll or look at data you might already have to see what your people care about most. Then look at the Goals that align with your company pillars. You might be surprised to see some overlap.

2

Run SDG campaigns
Now that you've identified the Goals you want to support, tie the SDGs into your giving and volunteering initiatives or, better yet, run several mini-campaigns focused on different Goals to boost participation in your programs all year round. One Benevity client took their month of service campaign and organized volunteer opportunities around four SDG categories: Human Rights, Health, Human & Natural Environment and Economic Opportunity & Employment. They also created news items explaining each of the categories, to help their people understand each of the SDGs better.

3

Leverage important calendar dates
Are there any noteworthy days or events your company and people want to support (i.e. Earth Day, World Refugee Day, International Women's Day, etc.)? These dates will align with one or more of the SDGs, and are a great opportunity for a timely giving campaign.

Did you know?
Among Benevity clients and their employees, Sustainable Cities and Communities was the most supported Goal in 2019, receiving 33% of total SDG-related donations and 34% of total volunteer hours, compared to other SDG categories.

"Think not about what perfection and nirvana looks like, but ask a much simpler question: What can we do next? And what might we be able to do together?"

—John McArthur,

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution & Senior Advisor, UN Foundation

4

Reward the passion
By offering corporate matches on the donations your employees make, or volunteer rewards for the time they donate, you can amplify the impact you're making together on the SDGs. Consider getting creative with a "super match," where you offer a higher match rate on donations to causes that connect to the Goals and your company's strategic pillars.

5

Promote, promote, promote!
One of the best ways to increase participation in your campaigns is to promote them, so spread the word! Use every channel you have — emails, intranet, news items, posters, communications from senior leadership and peer-to-peer. That last one is big, especially if your corporate social responsibility team is small. Find out who in your company is already passionate about the SDGs and get them involved. When the message comes from a peer it gives it a humanizing force, and we're more likely to want to want to get involved if a friend, colleague or someone we admire comes to us. So tap these local heroes to help.

Did you know?

Publishing and promoting featured campaigns can double participation!

6

Use technology that makes it easy
Enabling technology is critical to the success of your SDG strategy. If you have one tool that can handle giving, volunteering, corporate matching and granting together, it will be easier to align your overall engagement and participation in the SDGs across all of your programs.

7

Track your impact – and share it
To get a holistic view of the impact your people are making on the SDGs, the platform you use should also be able to track and report SDG-specific donations and volunteering. Then you can share that data at the end of the year for a cohesive impact story.

Did you know?

Employees are 2x more likely to donate when their company offers matching.

You can make a difference

It's easy to look at massive problems like poverty or global pandemics and feel like they're impossible to solve, but we're already making huge progress! Consider poverty, which might seem like a giant, unsolvable problem. Yet extreme poverty has already dropped by more than 50% since 1990. That's incredible! When we all pull together collectively, small actions add up.

It's all about reframing our mindsets, and looking at these Goals as a way to get everyone on the same page on what we all care about, so we can open up a world of opportunity for making a big impact, little by little.

We can't leave it up to government alone (especially in light of some of the policy decisions we've seen over the last few years), and we can't leave it up to a few innovative players either.

Let's finish what we started — together!

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 ›

Take action on SDGs with Benevity

When your people take action on the SDGs, Benevity's employee engagement solution serves as a single destination to help you track and report on the impact they (and your company) are creating. Whether it's giving, volunteering or micro-actions, you'll have the data you need to tell your story.

See Benevity in action

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.

Certified

B

Corporation