

Next Generation Workplace Campaigns



Executive Summary

Workplace giving campaigns have a strong foundation; however, in today's environment of economic and social change, workplace giving campaigns face new opportunities and challenges for continued success. In the most comprehensive and nationally representative study to date of workplace giving, the Center on Philanthropy surveyed more than 6,000 full-time employees and interviewed more than 40 company executives with and without workplace campaigns during 2008 and 2009. The study was commissioned by United Way Worldwide.

Findings indicate that as corporate and individual donors become more strategic in their philanthropy, workplace giving campaigns need to innovate to maximize their value and impact. In analyzing survey results, researchers have identified key strategies for building and sustaining successful workplace campaigns that address individual employee values and motivations, corporate goals, and community needs for philanthropy.

Changing Environment of Workplace Campaigns

- Changes in technology and the economy now allow enhanced workplace giving campaigns to meet the philanthropic goals of employees, companies, and communities.
- Effective workplace giving campaigns can provide a powerful means for individual employees to become both agents of change in their own communities and stewards of their employer's reputation, image, and brand in the community.
- The most successful workplace giving campaigns provide employees new opportunities for year-round community engagement and can take a variety of forms.

Workplace Campaigns Today

Companies across America encourage their employees to contribute to charity in the workplace through a variety of ways. Based on survey results:

- 36 percent of full-time employees worked at a company offering some type of workplace giving campaign.
- Giving campaigns took many forms including both formal campaigns such as United Way (offered to 70 percent of respondents with campaigns), the Combined Federal Campaign (10 percent), America's Charities (4 percent), and informal campaigns that partner the company with various nonprofits (27 percent).
- Almost one-quarter of employees with a workplace campaign were asked to give to more than one cause during the year.

The following findings from this report show that successful workplace campaigns can vary in form, but must align with the values and motivations of employees, companies, and communities.

Employees

- 54 percent of those asked to give to a workplace campaign donated.
- Employee donors who gave to workplace giving campaigns gave 15 percent of their total annual giving through the workplace. This was the second largest sector of their charitable giving, after religion.
- Over two-thirds of employee donors want expanded options when contributing their time and income through the workplace and want to know the impact of their donations.

Companies

- Companies were most likely to offer United Way workplace giving campaigns (70 percent of all employees offered a campaign were offered United Way).
- Company campaigns differed in complexity with a variety of branding, giving, and volunteering options.
- Companies value innovative giving campaigns that can advance their broader corporate responsibility goals and strategies. Companies seek philanthropic partners who understand and work with the company's commitment to support brand strategy while providing value to employees and consumers beyond the dollars they raise.
- Companies value efficiency and expect workplace campaigns to utilize technology to reduce the resources and time needed to run a campaign while expanding their options for sharing campaign information.

Communities

- Community attitudes affect the likelihood a company will undertake a campaign and the motivations of employees to give.
- Companies located in communities in which a large percentage of residents trust nonprofits are more likely to initiate and support workplace giving campaigns.
- Effective workplace campaigns can build loyalty among employees and support the growth of strong communities.

Strategies of Innovative Workplace Campaigns

Innovative workplace campaigns examined in this study developed a variety of promising practices that can build and sustain successful campaigns now and into the future. The most successful campaigns combined several or all of the following elements:

Expand opportunities for community engagement

Employees value the opportunity to be personally involved with organizations supported by the campaign, and when they are, they are more likely to give money to the campaign. Additionally, companies value the team-building and leadership benefits of campaigns as well and the positive exposure in the community for their work.

Align campaigns with company strategies and the values of donors

Innovative workplace campaigns find ways to customize their approach to complement corporate strategy while meeting community needs. Similarly, successful workplace giving campaigns must match the needs and values of individual donors if they are to effectively win their support. Workers today value their company's contributions to the community, and they expect their gifts to make a positive impact where they live.

Provide companies and employees personalized opportunities to contribute and volunteer

Successful giving campaigns incorporate the ideas and energy of the companies and employees they want to involve. By giving employees ownership of campaign events and offering a variety of options for contributing both time and dollars, campaigns can be both fulfilling and relevant to employees. Options can be structured in a way that motivates donors and allows them to give to causes they are passionate about or to specific nonprofits.

Combine technology with a personal relationship

Employee donors and companies expect campaigns to keep pace with technological advances. Successful campaigns that incorporate technology to inform and assist employee donors while cultivating a personal connection can be a powerful motivator for giving. Similarly, employee donors expect to receive campaign information electronically and, when given the opportunity, have embraced the ability to pledge, give, and share their stories online.

Share the impact of gifts

Companies and employees agree that a better understanding of the impact their gifts make would inspire them to give. Successful workplace campaigns find ways to communicate how gifts translate into progress and social change. Companies and employees expect these results to be accurate, up-to-date, and informative. They expect the information shared to be both personally moving and quantifiably compelling.