

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GIVING BACK

April 2019



**Great
Place
To
Work®**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Corporate Council on Volunteering | Conseil des entreprises pour le bénévolat
A VOLUNTEER CANADA PROGRAM | UN PROGRAMME DE BÉNÉVOLES CANADA

PARTNERING TO IMPROVE WORKPLACE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Volunteer Canada, Great Place to Work® and the Corporate Council on Volunteering (CCOV) are pleased to partner on this report.



VOLUNTEER CANADA

Volunteer Canada provides national leadership and expertise on volunteer engagement to increase the participation, quality, and diversity of volunteer experiences. Since 1977, we have collaborated closely with volunteer centres, businesses, non-profit organizations, government and educational institutions to promote and broaden volunteering. Our programs, research, training, tools, resources and national initiatives provide leadership on issues and trends in Canada's volunteer landscape. Visit us at www.volunteer.ca or find us on Twitter at [@VolunteerCanada](https://twitter.com/VolunteerCanada).



GREAT PLACE TO WORK®

Great Place to Work® (GPTW) is the global authority on high-trust, high-performance workplace cultures. Through proprietary assessment tools, advisory services, and certification programs, GPTW recognizes the world's Best Workplaces™ in a series of national lists including those published by The Globe & Mail (Canada) and Fortune magazine (USA). Great Place to Work® provides the benchmarks, framework, and expertise needed to create, sustain, and recognize outstanding workplace cultures. Visit us at www.greatplacetowork.ca or find us on Twitter at [@GPTW_Canada](https://twitter.com/GPTW_Canada).



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CORPORATE COUNCIL ON VOLUNTEERING

The companies of the [Corporate Council on Volunteering](http://www.ccov.ca) (CCOV) work collaboratively to deliver strong leadership in the area of corporate citizenship in Canada, particularly in employee community engagement. Going beyond volunteering to look at corporate community engagement more broadly, this leadership group brings together diverse and talented company representatives to: learn together in a supportive peer environment; benefit from Volunteer Canada's experience and consultation services; generate and promote thought-leadership on corporate community engagement practices; and support Volunteer Canada's mission.

The partners would like to thank the following CCOV companies for their financial support in the creation of this research report: CIBC, Deloitte Canada, RBC, Symcor, TD Bank.

Authors: Great Place To Work® and Volunteer Canada

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INTRODUCTION

EMPLOYEES HAVE SPOKEN: CORPORATE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMS MATTER TO THEM

This report is informed by the largest survey of Canadian employees to date (66,000) on the connection between their levels of engagement with their workplace and their employer's commitments to community. The findings provide undeniable proof of increased benefits to business and tangible ways to create a corporate community investment program that improves employee engagement in their workplace.

Supported by other Canadian and global research, it is clear that now, more than ever that employees are demanding a workplace committed to community and an opportunity to participate in and be supported by that commitment.

- **68%** of Canadians, given a choice between two jobs, would choose the one at the employer with the stronger volunteering culture.¹
- **70%** of employees would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to social and environmental issues.²
- **78%** of millennials only wanted to work for an organization with purpose and **69%** would leave their company for a similar one that was more purpose driven.³



Salesforce employee celebrating two million volunteer hours milestone.

NEVER HAS THIS BEEN MORE CRITICAL FOR EMPLOYERS

Why does this information matter to employers? Because employee engagement is the top issue on the minds of business leaders⁴. It is the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. The findings in this report are the business case for investing in the infrastructure and other resources that create a community program that employees feel good about.

BETTER FOR PEOPLE. BETTER FOR BUSINESS. BETTER FOR THE WORLD.

Employees who are given the chance to engage in social and environmental impact programs as part of their work life feel their work has meaning, encouraging them to bring their best effort to work and build a long-term career with the organization. It also exposes them to new perspectives as well as the social and environmental determinants affecting the world around them. It provides opportunity to increase their empathy, their skills and an appreciation of their ability to be changemakers through their work and other personal actions. All of this adds up to an enormous opportunity for employers to change the world, with the help of their employees, while creating business value through improved employee engagement in their workplaces.

RESEARCH SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This study aims to highlight and quantify the business case for building strong corporate community investment, specifically looking at the impact on employee engagement.

The primary source of data used for this research is Great Place to Work's Trust Index® Employee Survey. Each year, Great Place to Work® surveys over 10 million employees from 6 thousand organizations in 60 countries, making it the world's largest annual workplace study.

For this project, Great Place to Work® Canada examined over 66,000 Canadian employee surveys completed in 2018, plus aggregate data from over 300 participating Canadian organizations on the policies and people practices that support their workplace culture.

The research methodology was two-fold, incorporating, first, an examination of the correlations between employee sentiment about community investment and other factors that might drive business success (such as long-term career commitment, discretionary effort, positive brand ambassadorship and personal impact); and second, a comparison of business outcomes from the top and bottom quartile Community Investment Companies⁵ (such as revenue growth, introduction of new products, services and methods, applicants per position and voluntary turnover).

It is important to note that while this study does not aim to establish causation between strong community investment and business success factors or outcomes, the correlational findings build a compelling business case and warrant further controlled research.

It is also important to note the research does not measure the social or environmental impact of these corporate community investment programs. Rather it measures how employees feel about their workplace's community programs and the correlation with other questions measuring their employee engagement.

TERMINOLOGY

Corporate Community Investment: A workplace's contribution to community organizations or initiatives in the form of funds, people, services, or products. This includes donations, sponsorships, pro-bono services, and employer-supported volunteering.

Employer-supported Volunteering (ESV): An activity undertaken by an employer to encourage and support the volunteering of their employees in the community. This can include time, space, infrastructure and other supports for their employees to volunteer.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): A broad term that encompasses an organization's policies and practices that contribute to the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of internal and external stakeholders. This often includes building a diverse workforce, ethical supply chain management, reducing environmental footprint, as well as supporting employee volunteering, pro-bono services, donations of products, philanthropy, sponsorships, and other forms of community investment.

Employee Engagement: The extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work.



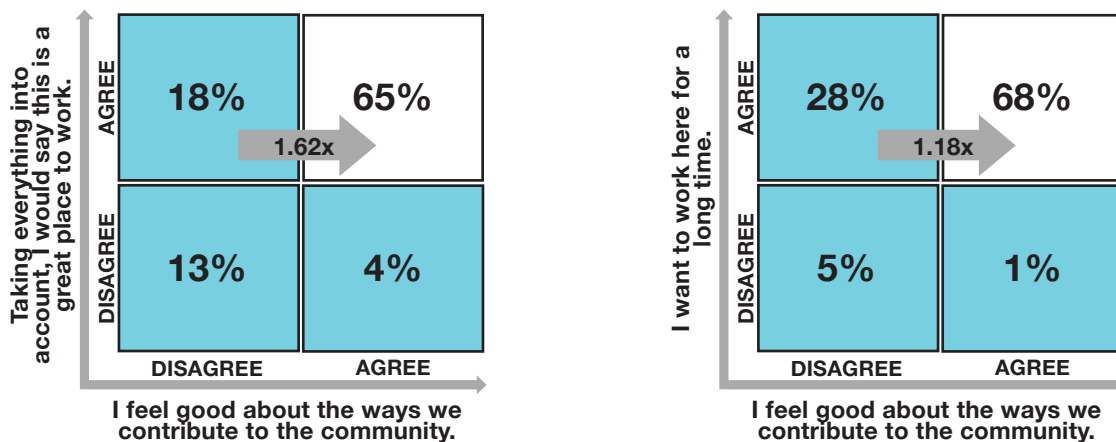
Urban Systems Calgary Foundation team participated in a Soup Sisters event. The soups produced by the team that evening went to Alcove, a centre for addiction recovery for women.

EMPLOYEE AFFINITY WITH CORPORATE COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS DRIVES KEY BUSINESS OUTCOMES

An examination over 66,000 responses to Great Place to Work®’s most recent Trust Index© survey shows that employees who “feel good about the way their organization contributes to community” are much more likely to feel engaged in their work and their company, which drives key business outcomes as outlined below.

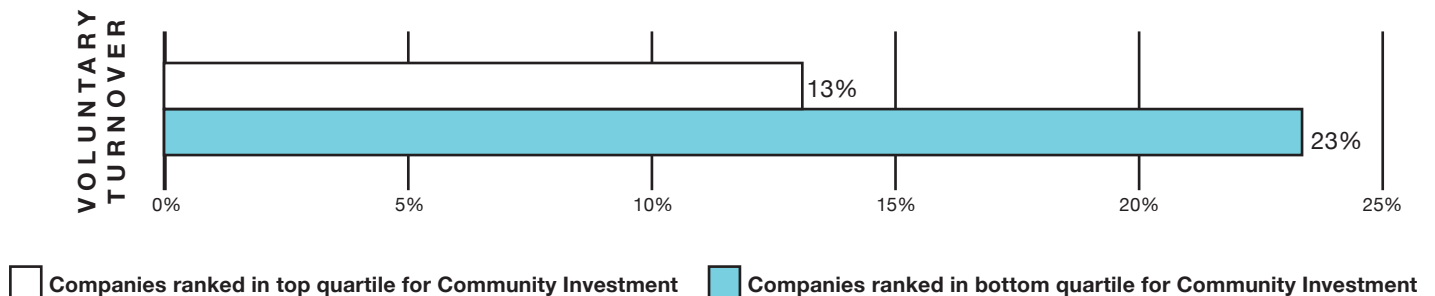
LONG-TERM CAREER COMMITMENT AND VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

When people feel good about the way their organization contributes to community, they are **1.62 times** as likely (62% more likely) to rate their workplace as “great” and **1.18 times** as likely (18% more likely) to want to work there for a long time.⁶ In short, these employees have a higher degree of commitment to the organization.



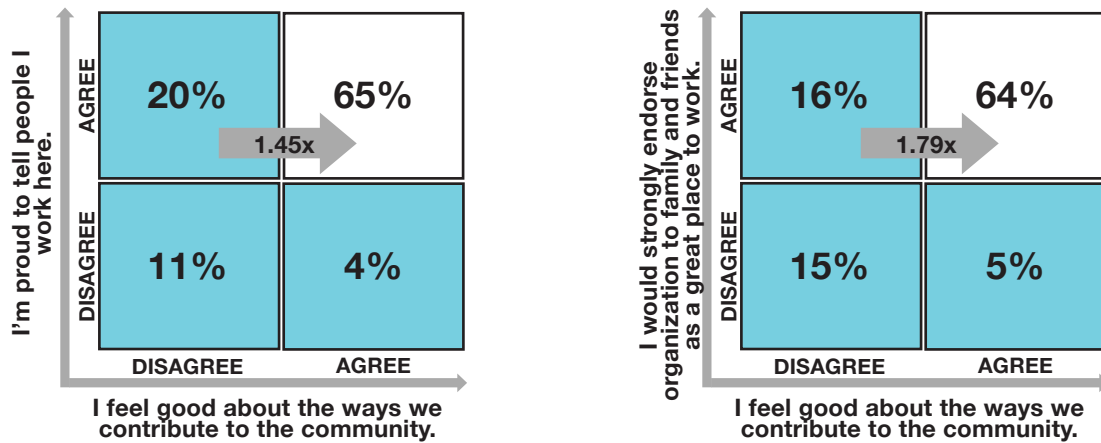
Organizations with favourable employee impressions of community contribution also experience 10% less voluntary turnover resulting in significant savings for the organization.

RETENTION



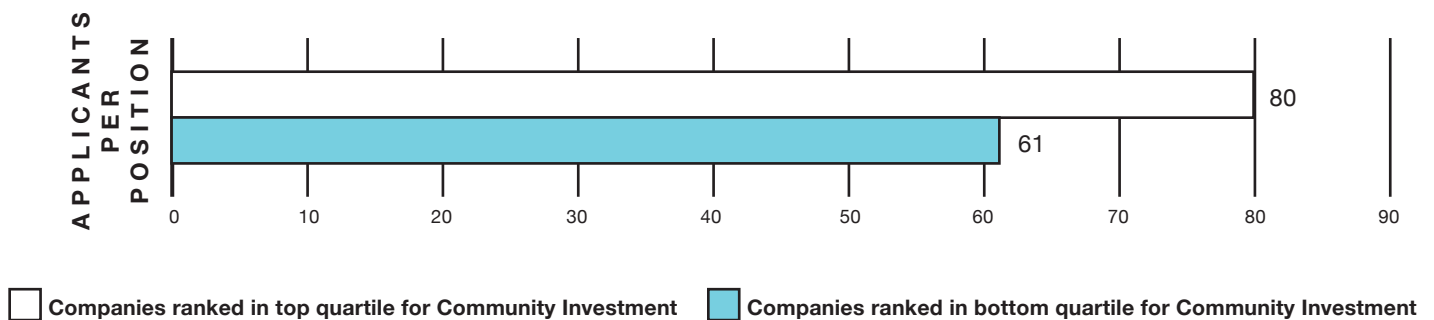
POSITIVE BRAND AMBASSADORS AND QUALIFIED JOB APPLICANTS

When people feel good about the way their organization contributes to community, they are **1.45 times** as likely (45% more likely) to proudly tell others where they work and **1.79 times** as likely (79% more likely) to endorse their organization to family and friends. In short, employees are more likely to feel proud of being part of an organization that gives back to community and makes an impact on people's lives outside of the workplace.



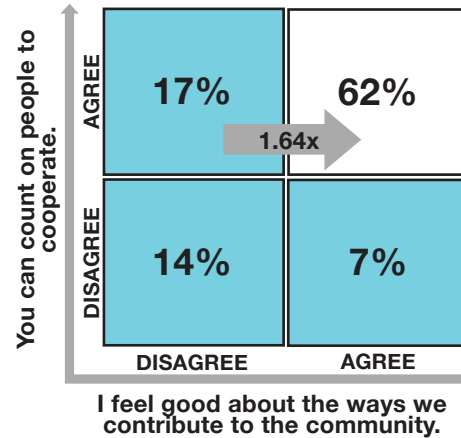
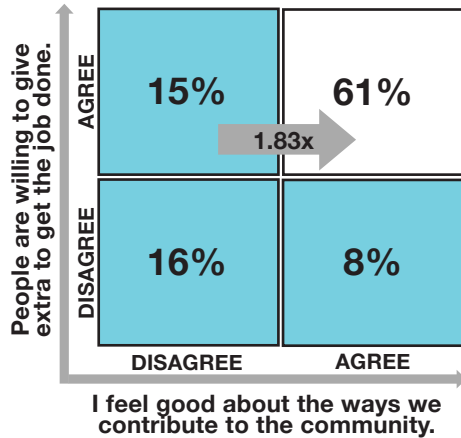
These employees are more likely to actively promote their work experience to others within and outside the organization, as a strong, socially responsible corporate citizen, which, in turn, attracts other like-minded people to the organization. On average, top quartile Community Investment companies receive over **80 qualified applicants** for every vacant position, a reflection of their enhanced internal and external brand, significantly reducing recruiting costs.

RECRUITMENT



DISCRETIONARY EFFORT AND PRODUCTIVITY

People who feel good about the way their organization contributes to their community are **1.83 times** as likely (83% more likely) to feel employees give extra to get the job done and **1.64 times** as likely (64% more likely) to feel that people co-operate with co-workers than people who don't. These employees perceive greater commitment to the collective needs of the organization than their own self interests.

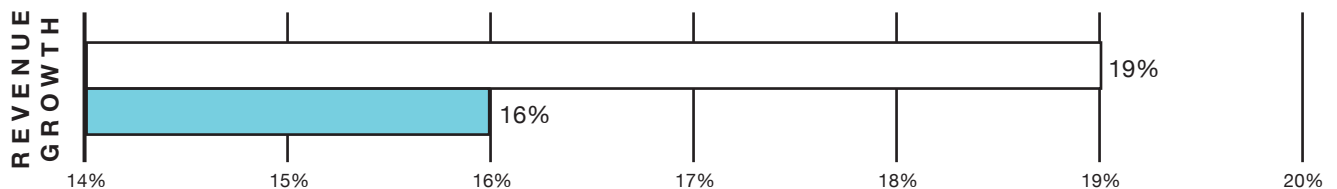


Not surprisingly, companies with higher levels of teamwork, cooperation and commitment enjoy a multitude of benefits including greater productivity, more engagement, more satisfied customers, and faster revenue growth than their peers. Top quartile Community Investment companies experience faster revenue growth than their peers, which could be due (in part) to the stronger sense of teamwork they experience.



Preparing backpacks for children in need as part of AbbVie's Week of Possibilities.

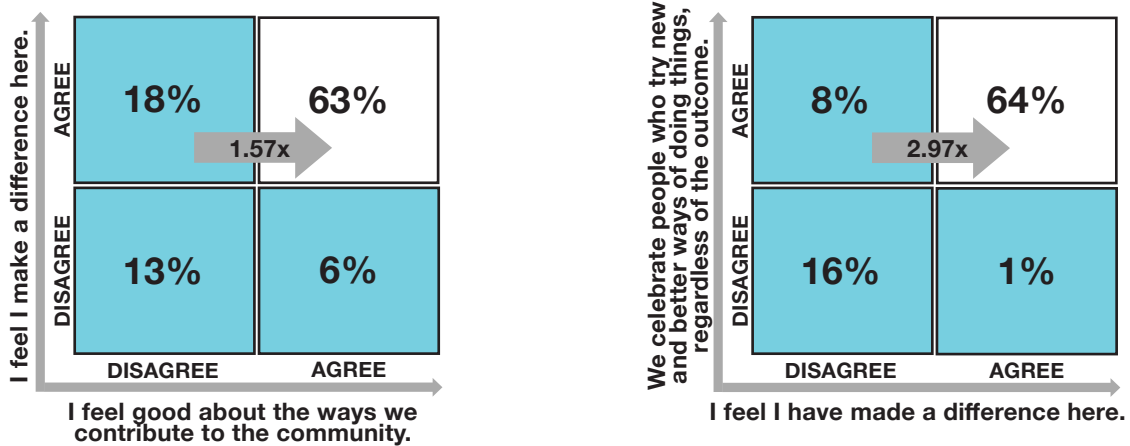
REVENUE GROWTH



Companies ranked in top quartile for Community Investment
 Companies ranked in bottom quartile for Community Investment

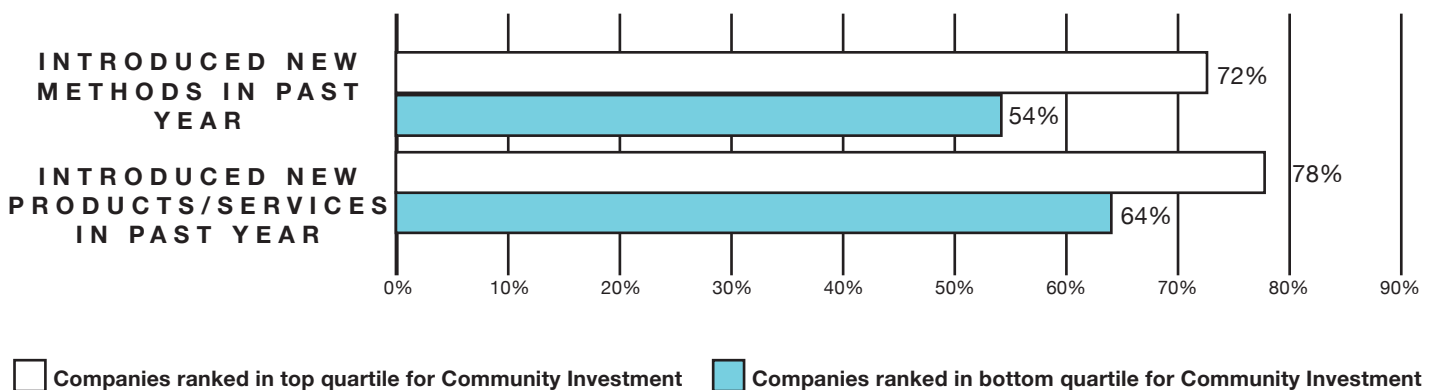
EMPLOYEE IMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT – A KEY DRIVER OF INNOVATION

People who feel good about the way their organization contributes to their community are **1.57 times** as likely (57% more likely) to feel they make a difference to the organization’s success. People who feel they make a difference are **2.97 times** as likely (197% more likely) to feel they are encouraged to try new and better ways of doing things, regardless of the outcome.



New research by Great Place to Work® has linked workplace cultures with higher levels of employee involvement and impact to greater innovation.⁷ Top quartile Community Investment organizations do experience higher levels of innovation than their peers, however more research is required to establish the causality of this relationship.

INNOVATION



LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Great Place to Work® has recently announced the 2019 list of Best Workplaces for Giving Back™. Organizations earned a spot on this list based primarily on positive employee sentiment about corporate community investment.⁸ So what are these organizations doing to create a great culture around giving back? Although there is no one right way to get there, it begins with a corporate commitment to sharing time, talent, and treasure with the community.



SHARING TIME

Best Workplaces for Giving Back	90% offer employees paid time off to volunteer (ranging from 4 to 100 hours annually, with 16 hours being most common)
Other Organizations	50% offer paid time off to volunteer (32% offer a set limit and 18% ad hoc)
Examples	Astellas provides five paid volunteer days off each year and posts upcoming volunteer opportunities on their Intranet. When Cisco employees volunteer on their own time, the company supports them by donating \$10 for every volunteer hour to their approved, chosen charity.



SHARING TALENT

Best Workplaces for Giving Back	83% align their community investment efforts with their unique products or technical/professional skills to maximize employee motivation and community impact
Other Organizations	18% align their community investment efforts with their unique products or technical/professional skills
Examples	Grant Thornton teams across the country organize volunteer tax clinics during January and February each year, for those in the community who need assistance and can't afford to pay for professional support. Trico Homes has partnered with the Chiniki Nation to help restore 159 homes that were badly damaged in the 2013 Calgary flood; this has evolved into a long-term Renewable Energy Project that will create employment, skills development, and revenue for the Nation.



SHARING TREASURE

Best Workplaces for Giving Back	100% back up their community investment strategy by offering employee donation matching programs, financial contributions or in-kind donations
Other Organizations	60% offer employee donation matching programs, financial contributions or in-kind donations
Examples	ATB Cares allows people to donate to causes that are important to Albertans. Donations can be made to any Canadian registered charity at ATBcares.com and ATB matches 15% of every dollar donated. In 2018, a total of \$4.8 million was donated to Canadian charities by ATB, their customers and employees. Stryker donate millions of dollars' worth of medical devices and equipment to overseas humanitarian missions, and loans or donates equipment for surgeons to take on their aid visits to developing countries.

CREATE A WINNING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY THAT ENGAGES EMPLOYEES

Many organizations recognize they have a responsibility to give back to the communities in which they operate and have built this into their business plan. The Best Workplaces for Giving Back™ have taken their commitment to the next level, with unique and creative ways to live out their community commitment. But it's not just what they are doing to create a sense of corporate citizenship for their employees – it is how they are doing it.



In the experience of Volunteer Canada and the companies of the Corporate Council on Volunteering, employee pride and connection to community investment efforts is best achieved through their participation. While participating in workplace-organized opportunities is motivating, so too is the opportunity to choose which causes they support and how. Providing a variety of opportunities to choose from, such as hands on volunteering, sharing their skills with a charity, or simply a learning session about a community issue can help facilitate this.

Guidance for creating better community involvement programs can be found in Volunteer Canada's Ten Standards of Practice (part of the [Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering](#)); which create better community involvement programs for employees. These corporate practices, developed in conjunction with the Corporate Council on Volunteering, are largely transferable as the foundation for any programs – employer-supported volunteering (ESV), donations, or otherwise – that engage employees in community. Excellent illustrations of these practices are demonstrated below by some of the 2019 Best Workplaces for Giving Back™.

INVOLVE EMPLOYEES

The employee-led **Softchoice Cares** program empowers people to support charities of their choosing through two paid volunteer days each year, fundraising programs in which Softchoice Cares matches the total donations raised, and dozens of local employee-run activities each year that raise money and awareness for worthy causes. The key to Softchoice Cares' continued impact and success is the tenant upon which it was created: for employees, by employees, to unleash the potential of people.

Standard 6 – Employee Engagement

The workplace creates a corporate culture that encourages, supports and makes it easy for employees to get involved. Employee volunteer recruitment and retention incorporate a broad range of internal strategies including: orientation, training, support and supervision with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback. Volunteer roles involve employees in meaningful ways that reflect their skills, needs, interests and backgrounds.

Since 2014, **Beyond Technologies** has adopted the school École Baril in Hochelaga Maisonneuve where they act as “Santa Claus” during the Christmas period to buy gifts for children who would otherwise not have any and organize a celebration with food and treats right before the holidays. Through employee donations and company matching, they raise close to \$20,000 and employees get together in the fall to purchase, wrap, and deliver the gifts to the children. This initiative was brought to the company's attention by one of their employees (whose mother works at the school) and Beyond Technologies employees love the experience.

TRACK AND SHARE

The Stewardship Council at **Ian Martin Group** has evolved into an integral part of their cultural fabric. Employees apply from across the country and the governing executive of the team selects the strongest applicants. They meet monthly and decide how the company moves forward on philanthropic endeavors. Employees track their volunteer hours, access company supported volunteer events, and give to charities of their choosing. Ian Martin matches every dollar raised (100%) for the two main charities they focus on over the year. Ian Martin matches 25% when employees prefer to give to a charity of their own choice.



Volunteering at a food bank as part of Ian Martin's annual B-Corp festivities.

Standard 5 – Evaluation: Tracking Measuring and Reporting on Impact

The workplace measures and evaluates the effectiveness of the ESV program in furthering the business' strategic objectives and its social impact. Employee engagement and workplace satisfaction are also tracked and measured. Feedback is solicited from employees, management and non-profit partner organizations.



Generosity Matters is a core value at Ryan ULC that inspires employees and drives the vision.

CREATIVE PROMOTION

Month of Service (MOS), is **SAP Canada's** signature corporate-led volunteering initiative. Every October, employees volunteer with local non-profits or support causes of their choice, globally logging tens of thousands of hours. To keep employee participation high and have some fun, SAP held a "Caption This" contest, whereby employees caption a photo of an SAP colleague engaged in a volunteering; their co-workers then vote for their favorite. The top-liked caption wins a \$1,000 donation from SAP for the non-profit of their choice. "Caption This" was a resounding success, with more than 200 submissions and nearly 3,200 views.

Standard 9 – Communication and Technology

The workplace develops a communication strategy to increase awareness, promote participation and deliver key messages to both internal and external audiences about the program and its impact. Employee volunteers are engaged and supported within the workplace through current technology.

Every year **Klick** creates an epic Holiday video to raise money for charity, using in-house talent, animation, creative design and videography. Last year, their "You Make Winter Warm" collaboration with YouTube star and songwriter Andrew Huang went viral with over 2.6m views! For every song download, Klick donated \$1 (up to \$10,000) to Operation Warm, to buy new winter coats to kids in need.

RECOGNIZE LEADERS

Rewarding employees for their volunteering and fundraising efforts is one of the distinct ways **RBC** lives its commitment to community and social impact. RBC employee can earn money for their chosen charities through the Volunteer Grant Reward (for volunteering outside of work time); the RBC Day of Service Grant (for short-term, team-based volunteering projects); and the RBC Team Action Grant (for participation in pledged events). Additionally, RBC's Global Citizenship Award recognizes employees who have gone above and beyond in serving their communities with an immersive WE trip to learn about on-the-ground initiatives in Kenya.

To recognize individuals at **Ryan** who either champion one cause or are always there to champion a number of causes, Ryan introduced their annual Community Outreach Heroes recognition. Ryan employees that best embody Ryan's Core Value of "Generosity" are recognized for their leadership and commitment of time and energy to Ryan's Outreach efforts across the country. Employees are nominated by their peers and selected by a team of Ryan's Community Outreach Liaisons. The selection committee reviews the nominations and selects six employees from around the globe to recognize at the Annual Firm Meeting.

Standard 10 - Recognition

The workplace recognizes and celebrates the contributions of both the ESV program and of the individual employees who give their time and talents, with ongoing formal and informal methods of recognition.



Employees at Pace Technical Services Inc raising money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation

Please refer to all of the Ten Standards of Practice in the [Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering](#) at [volunteer.ca](#).



At the end of the day, all leftover product is donated by COBS Bread bakeries to local charities.



Whirlpool Canada employees at their annual Habitat for Humanity build.

SIX CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR BETTER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

As you look at your organization's community commitments and programs alongside these findings, you may be trying to determine your next step in advancing your activities to create better employee engagement. The most productive conversations on this topic come from cross-departmental discussions, including participation by HR/Talent, CSR, and internal/external communications including public affairs and marketing. We recommend using these questions as the foundation of your discussions, supported by the data and examples within this report, as well as Volunteer Canada's [Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering](#).

QUESTIONS	IDEA STARTERS
1. What do we consider success for our community investment program?	Consider positive outcomes and indicators for society, employees and your organization.
2. What would our employees consider success? How do they want to be involved?	A survey and focus groups are a great place to start. A program committee made up of people from many departments and levels of seniority can keep your program aligned with employee interests.
3. How do we want to measure the success of initiatives that involve employees in community? What indicators would tell us the programs are resonating with employees?	Participation rate is indicative. Short post-activity surveys to employees, provided soon after the event get more accurate results than annual surveys.
4. What is our program missing? What outcomes would justify increased budget for this?	May include both qualitative outcomes (e.g. post-volunteer clean day survey says employees enjoyed it and would do it again) and qualitative (e.g. there is feeling of a more collegial culture since the food drive).
5. Are we using our best channels to communicate our company's community investment and opportunities for involvement to current and potential employees?	What are the channels employees prefer and trust? Who are the influencers and how can you better engage them?
6. What are the ways we can demonstrate to employees that we value the time they take from work to support the community?	Are there ways your organization is inadvertently undermining that message e.g. manager response to requests for time off to volunteer?

For more ideas and support, contact Volunteer Canada's Corporate Citizenship department at corporatetcitizenship@volunteer.ca.

ENDNOTES

¹ “[Recognizing Volunteering in 2017](#)”, Volunteer Canada, 2017

² “[2016 Cone Communications Millennial Employee Engagement Study](#)”, Cone, 2016.

³ “[The importance of work with purpose for Gen Y](#)”, Kin & CO, April 2016.

⁴ “[Predictions for 2016: A Bold New World of Talent, Learning, Leadership and HR Technology Ahead](#)”, Bersin by Deloitte, 2016.

⁵ Top vs. bottom quartile Community Investment companies were defined based on average employee responses to the Trust Index survey statement “I feel good about the way my organization contributes to community”

⁶ HOW TO READ THE GRAPHS

- “Agree” refers to survey respondents who agree the statement is “Often True” or “Almost Always True”
- “Disagree” refers to survey respondents who agree the statement is “Sometimes True, Sometimes Untrue”, “Often Untrue” or “Almost Always Untrue”
- “N%” equals the percentage of all survey respondents (66,000) who agree/disagree with each statement
- “N times as likely” is the probability that employees agree with the “Great Place To Work® Statement” if they agree (vs. disagree) with the community statement.

For example:

$$(65/(65+4)) / (18/(18+13)) = 1.62$$

⁷ Innovation By All: The new flight plan for elevating ingenuity, accelerating performance, and outpacing rivals. Great Place to Work®, 2018. <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/reports/innovation-by-all>

⁸ To be eligible for the list of Best Workplaces for Giving Back™, organizations must be Great Place to Work® – Certified in the past year and at least 90% of employees must agree with the statement “I feel good about the way my organization contributes to community”. We determined the best based on the overall Community Investment Index score from employees as well as the range and quality of programs that support Community Investment cultures.

