

# **BEYOND NUMBERS AND BASIC NARRATIVES**

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**A Guide for CSR and  
Employee Volunteer  
Program Leaders**



**POINTS  
OF LIGHT**



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## INTRODUCTION

### Today's workforce—*especially younger generations*—demands purpose-driven work.

Employees expect their employers to provide meaningful opportunities to contribute to social good, and companies that fail to meet this expectation risk disengagement and turnover. A [2023 Gallup and Bentley University study](#) found that 55% of Americans would switch jobs to work for an organization with a greater positive impact on society, with one in four willing to take a 10% pay cut. Among younger workers (ages 18-29), these figures jump to 71% and 29%, respectively.

But employees aren't the only stakeholders looking for purpose. Customers, investors and partners increasingly expect businesses to make meaningful contributions to the communities they serve. Despite this, employee volunteering remains an underutilized strategy. Too often, it is perceived as a “nice-to-have” rather than a strategic business function—lagging behind grantmaking, sponsorships and disaster response in corporate priority and investment. One reason for this disconnect is a lack of measurement. According to TCC Group's 2025 report, [Understanding the Emerging Field of Evaluation in Corporate Social Good](#), only 50% of companies are evaluating their employee volunteerism, matching and engagement. So, without clear proof of its value, employee volunteer programs remain sidelined, underfunded and overlooked by senior leadership.

To change this perception, CSR leaders must connect employee volunteering to measurable business outcomes and demonstrated community impact. The key? Data-backed insights paired with ethical storytelling. When impact data demonstrates volunteering's role in driving employee engagement, leadership development and brand reputation—and when ethical storytelling brings that data to life—executives are more likely to see volunteering as a critical business function rather than a peripheral initiative. Companies that integrate purposeful volunteering into their CSR strategy don't just create social good—they build engaged workforces, drive business success and strengthen their position as industry leaders in corporate citizenship.





## TO FURTHER ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT, IMPACT DATA AND RESPONSIBLE STORYTELLING MATTER BECAUSE THEY:

- **Build credibility and trust:** Data-driven insights provide real proof of impact, helping CSR leaders move beyond anecdotal success stories. When backed by data, an impact narrative is more authentic, transparent and verifiable, strengthening trust among stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors and nonprofit partners.
- **Demonstrate measurable business and social value:** CSR leaders must showcase how their programs drive both business outcomes and social change. By leveraging data, they can quantify success and make a stronger case for continued investment in CSR initiatives.
- **Enhance decision-making and strategy:** Data-driven insights allow CSR leaders to analyze trends, identify what's working and optimize programs for greater efficiency. Instead of relying on assumptions, they can make informed decisions about resource allocation, employee engagement strategies and community partnerships.
- **Engage stakeholders with meaningful narratives:** While data is critical, numbers alone don't inspire action—storytelling brings data to life. Ethical storytelling adds emotional depth and relatability, transforming raw metrics into compelling narratives that resonate. By combining impact data with human-centered stories, CSR leaders can illustrate the real-world significance of their initiatives, making corporate social impact feel more personal, tangible and necessary.
- **Avoid harmful or extractive narratives:** Unethical storytelling can reinforce harmful power dynamics, portraying employees or companies as “saviors” and communities as passive recipients of aid. By incorporating ethical storytelling principles—such as co-creation, accurate representation and dignity-first approaches—CSR leaders can ensure that impact stories amplify community voices rather than exploit them.
- **Strengthen internal and external advocacy:** Data-backed, ethically framed narratives help CSR leaders gain executive buy-in, secure funding and rally employees to participate in initiatives. Externally, they strengthen brand positioning, attract responsible investors and influence industry peers to adopt similar best practices.
- **Align with ESG and compliance expectations:** While ESG reporting is evolving in the U.S., it remains an imperative in the EU. Regardless of headquarter location, CSR leaders should be ready to provide clear, data-supported evidence of their initiatives' impact. Ethical storytelling complements this by contextualizing the numbers in a way that resonates with stakeholders.

By integrating data-driven insights and ethical storytelling, CSR leaders create compelling, truthful and responsible impact narratives that drive engagement, secure long-term investment and ensure their work leads to meaningful and sustainable change. CSR teams can then transform employee volunteering from an “extra” activity into an essential strategic asset that drives social progress and business success.



# MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: THE ROLE OF IMPACT DATA IN EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

## *Designing a Meaningful Data Collection Strategy*

As a CSR leader, your ability to demonstrate the impact of volunteer programs is key to securing leadership buy-in and investment, driving employee engagement and strengthening community relationships. A well-designed data collection strategy ensures that your CSR efforts are not just feel-good initiatives but measurable, strategic, community-centered and aligned with business objectives.

### WHY IT MATTERS:

- **Proves impact and ROI:** Leadership needs evidence that CSR initiatives create real value for communities and the business. Solid data helps justify budget allocations and program expansion just as data related to any other business function might.
- **Enhances stakeholder trust:** Employees, customers, investors and community partners want transparency. Reliable data builds credibility.
- **Drives strategic decision-making:** Data allows you to refine initiatives, allocate resources effectively and focus on high-impact programs.
- **Strengthens storytelling:** Ethical storytelling backed by data makes your case studies more compelling and prevents anecdotal-only reporting.
- **Supports compliance and reporting:** Many businesses must report CSR metrics for compliance, sustainability disclosures or progress toward commitments.

## *Steps to Designing a Meaningful Impact Data Collection Strategy*

A meaningful impact data collection strategy aligns with business objectives, employee-related goals and community impact. Without a clear framework, you risk gathering data that is either too shallow to drive decisions or too complex to act upon. It's important to identify and communicate metrics and impact goals with your nonprofit partners upfront—but just as important is remaining flexible and collaborative. Nonprofit partners know the programming and community best and can advise on which data points truly reflect impact. Ensure they feel comfortable sharing what's feasible to collect; setting unrealistic expectations will only result in meaningless data. When both sides align on outcomes and measurement methods, the result is more relevant insights and a stronger partnership.

Effective strategies focus on capturing the right metrics—those that demonstrate both social and volunteer value as well as business impact—while ensuring ethical and responsible data use.

- 1. Start with clear objectives.** Determine the impact you're ultimately trying to achieve. Ground your metrics in stated business goals and conversations with senior leadership and business unit leaders. Talk with your nonprofit partners about the community needs they're addressing, what insights they can realistically share after each project, and what might require additional resources (whether funding, subject matter expertise, or simply time) to measure effectively. Collaborating from the start leads to more accurate, relevant impact measurement and helps avoid extractive data practices.
- 2. Identify key performance indicators.** These data points should be essential signals of the areas you want to measure that are material to your business. There shouldn't be too many; the most effective KPIs are focused, meaningful, and clearly tied to your goals. Research industry standards such as [Points of Light's The Civic 50](#) and choose a mix of both quantitative and qualitative metrics.
- 3. Select data collection methods.** Use a range of tools to gather inputs, outputs and most importantly, outcomes such as general observations, pre-and-post project surveys, feedback forms, focus groups, internal systems, technology platforms and third-party tools. Don't forget that you'll also want to couple data collection with the best methods to gather real-life impact narratives.
- 4. Ensure data accuracy, consistency and privacy.** Standardize how data is collected across volunteer initiatives, and set up automated tracking where you can. If automation isn't feasible, make the process as frictionless as possible. Ensure that metric definitions are clear and provide training and support to volunteer leaders and nonprofit partners to ensure accurate and consistent data entry.
- 5. Analyze and interpret data.** This is where the fun begins! Identify trends and gaps. Compare data against past performance and benchmark industry peers or others with similar volunteer efforts. Use qualitative insights to provide context for numbers. Use generative AI to provide a first draft of analysis and its interpretations, then edit it to serve your purposes (and ensure relevancy and accuracy).



### Keep in Mind

Unethical data practices, such as inflating or cherry-picking impact metrics or failing to consider the community perspective, can undermine credibility. Companies shouldn't expect every intervention to yield immediate, measurable, large-scale community change. Meaningful impact often takes time and sustained investment. Instead, focus on what's reasonable to evaluate, such as short-term effects on program participants, while acknowledging the broader context and complexity.

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**Communicate findings effectively.** Executives, employees and external stakeholders require different messaging approaches. Think about how you will best reach your stakeholders and align with those communication channels (e.g., impact reports, dashboards, marketing content, social media, intranet and internal newsletter content, company websites and convenings). Use data storytelling to bring impact to life. Combine key metrics with human-centered examples, and provide context and insights that give the data meaning.

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**Continuously improve.** Use insights to refine programs and set new goals. Be open to evolving KPIs based on changing priorities. Seek stakeholder feedback to improve collection methods.

A well-executed data collection strategy transforms CSR from a “nice-to-have” into a “must-have.” By designing a system that captures meaningful impact, you can elevate CSR’s role in business strategy, employee engagement and social change. By defining objectives, selecting relevant KPIs and integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights, companies can move beyond vanity metrics to craft a compelling data narrative that drives executive buy-in, enhances program effectiveness and amplifies impact.

### **What Impact Data Should You Collect?**

Traditional volunteer programs often focus on tracking hours served, but this metric alone does not capture meaningful impact. Instead, CSR leaders should prioritize community-driven outcomes, ensuring programs address real needs and are changing lives and improving community conditions. You should also consider employer-related metrics to help prove the business case for investment and the personal and professional impact volunteering has on employee volunteers.

Because CSR teams should place emphasis and effort on collecting outcomes rather than just inputs and outputs, on the next page, you’ll find a list of various outcomes to consider. Keep in mind that the nature of your company or foundation’s focus areas will affect the types of community outcomes expected. To refresh your knowledge of the differences between inputs, outputs and outcomes along with a primer on measuring impact, check out ACCP and True Impact’s guide to [\*Measuring Corporate Social Impact: Recommendations for Better Partnerships and Reporting\*](#).



#### **Keep in Mind**

It’s also of primary importance to understand the current state of the social conditions the company’s CSR strategy seeks to improve. This will help you establish a baseline along with validating the need for corporate action, especially if acting on organizational values seems risky.





VOLUNTEER IMPACT (OUTCOMES)	COMPANY IMPACT (OUTCOMES)	COMMUNITY IMPACT (OUTCOMES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sense of purpose</li><li>• Belonging and connection to community, coworkers, leadership or the broader company mission</li><li>• Personal well-being like stress reduction, happiness or fulfillment</li><li>• New world view and change in perspective</li><li>• Deeper understanding of the root causes of community issues</li><li>• Leadership and skill development</li><li>• Belief in their agency to make a positive difference</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retention and turnover</li><li>• Internal mobility and leadership development</li><li>• Job satisfaction and engagement</li><li>• Productivity and performance</li><li>• Company pride and employer brand (e.g., attraction and recruitment of talent)</li><li>• New sales, leads, partners or market penetration</li><li>• Brand and reputational benefits such as change in customer sentiment or trust, earned media coverage, positive press mentions and social media engagement on volunteer or social impact related posts</li></ul>	<p><i>These KPIs will depend on the focus of CSR and volunteer efforts. Listed below are a few examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity-building improvements such as an increase in partners' efficiency, effectiveness and reach</li><li>• Improved health, well-being and nutrition of beneficiaries</li><li>• Enhanced educational outcomes and reduced dropout rate</li><li>• Increased community safety</li><li>• Cleaner environment</li><li>• Economic benefits generated for the local community, such as job creation or support for local businesses</li></ul>

A smart CSR data collection strategy goes beyond tracking inputs and outputs to measure true outcomes—how initiatives create meaningful change for employee volunteers, businesses and communities. By focusing on impact-driven metrics rather than vanity metrics, you can move from reporting participation numbers to demonstrating real value, strengthening business performance and validating the need for community support while driving lasting social change.

## SHARING THE IMPACT: THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

### *Communicating Impact Without Perpetuating Harm*

Social impact stories have the power to bring employee volunteering to life, transforming data points into compelling narratives that inspire action. A well-crafted story can illustrate the vital impact of volunteer efforts—how a single mentoring session improved a student's confidence, how a skills-based project strengthened a nonprofit's operations or how a purposeful volunteer experience fostered a sense of belonging among employees. These narratives make CSR initiatives tangible, helping stakeholders connect emotionally to the purpose behind the work.



However, the way these stories are told matters just as much as the stories themselves. For decades, CSR teams have been unconsciously conditioned to tell impact stories in potentially harmful ways, exacerbating stereotypes and focusing on the volunteer's experience rather than the communities they serve thus reinforcing an "us vs. them" dynamic. Responsible storytelling centers the dignity, agency and lived experiences of those impacted. It avoids framing volunteers as saviors and instead highlights collaboration, mutual learning and shared value.

## • Social Impact • Storytelling



- Social impact
- storytelling is the strategic and responsible use of stories and narratives to engage an audience in order to: **inspire and influence** others to take action; **build empathy** to connect with people and causes; or **educate and explain** complex and abstract issues.

By embracing ethical storytelling, companies can ensure their narratives not only inspire but also respect and uplift the voices of all involved. This approach builds trust with employees, nonprofit partners and the communities they serve, strengthening the authenticity and impact of employee volunteering efforts. When done right, storytelling becomes a powerful tool—not just for showcasing impact, but for deepening engagement and driving meaningful, lasting change.

### WHY IT MATTERS:

- **Inspires action and engagement:** Well-crafted narratives bring volunteer efforts to life, making the impact tangible and motivating employees to get involved.
- **Strengthens emotional connection:** Stories help employees, leaders and other stakeholders connect on a deeper level with the purpose behind CSR initiatives.
- **Builds trust and authenticity:** Ethical storytelling ensures that narratives are respectful, accurate and community-centered, fostering credibility with nonprofit partners and the public.
- **Avoids harmful narratives:** Responsible storytelling prevents framing volunteers as saviors and instead highlights collaboration, dignity and mutual learning.
- **Demonstrates real impact:** Shifting from anecdotal feel-good stories to impact-driven narratives helps companies show meaningful outcomes rather than just participation numbers.
- **Enhances brand and reputation:** Authentic, inclusive storytelling reinforces a company's commitment to social responsibility and strengthens its employer brand.
- **Drives long-term commitment:** Employees are more likely to stay engaged in volunteer programs when they see and understand the true impact of their contributions.




## Responsible Storytelling Practices in Action

Ethical or responsible storytelling ensures that narratives are shared with integrity, respect and responsibility, fostering true collaboration while strengthening both social impact and stakeholder trust. By aligning storytelling with CSR goals, you create narratives that authentically capture the impact of your initiatives — not just on employee volunteers, but on the communities they serve. When done responsibly, storytelling becomes more than just a communication tool; it reinforces accountability, deepens engagement and drives meaningful change.

Below are key practices that define responsible storytelling, along with what they look like in action:

- **Respect and Dignity:** Always portray individuals as whole, complex beings, ensuring their dignity is upheld. Represent their stories authentically and respectfully, never reducing them to stereotypes or one-dimensional narratives.  
*>> In Action:* Center the voices of those impacted, prioritizing their agency and lived experiences, and ensuring their stories are represented in a way that honors their full identity.
- **Asset-Framing vs Deficit-Framing:** Focus on defining people and communities by their strengths, aspirations and contributions, rather than their challenges or deficits. This prevents reinforcing negative stereotypes and fosters a broader vision of possibility.  
*>> In Action:* Highlight the resilience, talents and achievements of individuals and communities, ensuring that the story emphasizes their contributions rather than focusing solely on obstacles.
- **Informed, Time-Limited Consent:** Always obtain explicit, time-limited consent from individuals featured in your stories, ensuring they understand how and for how long their narratives will be shared. Involve them in the storytelling process, giving them the opportunity to review and confirm that their perspectives are accurately represented.  
*>> In Action:* Ask subjects for their voluntary consent before sharing their stories, ensuring they fully understand how their narrative will be used, and revisit consent if the story is used beyond the original timeframe.
- **Empathy and Sensitivity:** Approach storytelling with empathy, being mindful of the emotional impact on both the subjects and the audience. Avoid exploiting vulnerabilities for emotional or financial gain.  
*>> In Action:* Be thoughtful about the emotional tone of the story, ensuring that it conveys respect for those featured without manipulating their experiences for dramatic effect. Ask colleagues to review your words to spot harmful practices and to determine if the emotion elicited is what you intended.

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- **Transparency:** Be honest about the origins of your story and your intentions behind sharing it. Disclose any biases, simplifications or creative liberties taken in crafting the narrative.  
**>> In Action:** Clearly communicate to your audience how the story was created and any edits or modifications that may have been made, ensuring transparency in how the content is presented.
  - **Accuracy:** Ensure that all information shared is truthful and vetted. Be authentic about your company's role in creating impact—claim contribution if appropriate, not sole credit. Avoid exaggerating or manipulating details to make the story more compelling.  
**>> In Action:** Fact-check and ensure all data, quotes and events are accurately represented, and present a complete and honest picture of both challenges and successes.
  - **Collaboration:** Work collaboratively with the individuals featured in your stories, allowing their voices to guide the narrative.  
**>> In Action:** Regularly engage with the people whose stories you are sharing, ensuring the final narrative aligns with their values and perspectives.
  - **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure diverse perspectives and voices are included in your storytelling. Provide a platform for historically excluded groups to share their experiences.  
**>> In Action:** Actively seek out and amplify diverse voices—including employees, nonprofit partners and community members—through a range of formats like videos, blogs and social media, ensuring your storytelling reflects a breadth of experiences and perspectives.
  - **Accountability:** Take responsibility for the impact of your stories. Be open to feedback and willing to make corrections if any harm or inaccuracies are identified.  
**>> In Action:** Regularly evaluate the impact of your stories, actively listening to feedback from subjects, communities and audiences to ensure that your storytelling remains ethical and aligned with your values.

Responsible storytelling is an ongoing commitment—one that requires continuous evaluation, reflection and improvement. Gathering feedback from stakeholders ensures that storytelling approaches remain ethically aligned and impactful. Equally important is equipping volunteer leaders and communication partners with the knowledge and tools to navigate bias, uphold dignity and create responsible narratives. By embedding these essential practices into CSR strategy, leaders can foster trust, deepen engagement and amplify impact in a way that respects, empowers and uplifts all voices involved.

# COMMON PITFALLS WITH IMPACT DATA COLLECTION AND RESPONSIBLE STORYTELLING

When integrating impact data collection and ethical storytelling into a CSR or employee volunteer strategy, CSR leaders must be mindful of common pitfalls that can undermine impact, trust and credibility. Here are key risks and how to avoid them:

PITFALLS	SOLUTIONS
<b>Collecting Data Without a Clear Purpose:</b> Gathering large amounts of data without a clear strategy or intention for usage, leads to information overload, burdening nonprofit partners and irrelevant metrics.	Define key impact metrics upfront in collaboration with your partners and aligned with business and social goals. Focus on quality over quantity to ensure actionable insights.
<b>Extractive or Misleading Storytelling:</b> Framing impact stories as corporate heroism, where employees or the company are portrayed as “saving” communities.	Use co-created narratives that center community voices and emphasize collaboration, rather than a one-sided act of giving.
<b>Over-Reliance on Vanity Metrics:</b> Reporting only surface-level metrics without demonstrating actual impact.	Go beyond inputs and outputs to measure outcomes and long-term effects.
<b>Ignoring Nonprofit and Community Input:</b> Designing CSR initiatives, impact metrics and data collection tactics without consulting nonprofit partners or communities.	Engage nonprofits as strategic partners, ensuring data and storytelling reflect their abilities, needs, challenges and goals.
<b>Lack of Transparency in Data Collection and Reporting:</b> Selectively sharing only positive results or manipulating data to create a rosier-than-reality impact narrative.	Be transparent about both successes and challenges. Authenticity builds credibility and allows for continuous improvement.
<b>Violating Privacy or Consent in Storytelling:</b> Sharing personal stories or photos of beneficiaries without consent or failing to protect their dignity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain informed consent and revisit if the story will be shared beyond the original timeframe.</li> <li>• Avoid sharing sensitive details that could exploit or stereotype individuals.</li> <li>• Use first-person voices whenever possible to allow community members to tell their own stories.</li> </ul>



PITFALLS	SOLUTIONS
<b>Failing to Integrate Data and Stories into Decision-Making:</b> Treating data collection and storytelling as separate from CSR strategy, leading to reports that don't drive meaningful change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use data insights to refine CSR programs and make evidence-based decisions.</li><li>• Ensure impact stories inform leadership buy-in and employee engagement strategies.</li></ul>
<b>One-Size-Fits-All Storytelling:</b> Creating generic impact narratives that don't resonate with different stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tailor storytelling to your audience—executives want business outcomes, ROI, and engagement metrics; employees connect with peer stories and personal growth; nonprofits value partnership benefits and community impact.</li><li>• Maintain consistency in messaging while adjusting format and focus.</li></ul>

## CONCLUSION

Employee volunteering can no longer be treated as a side project—it must be viewed as a strategic company asset. By embracing data-driven insights and ethical storytelling, CSR leaders can elevate volunteer programs, securing executive buy-in and engagement across the workforce, all while fostering meaningful social change. Now is the time to shift the view of volunteering from “nice” to “necessary.”

For 35 years, Points of Light has been a trusted partner to companies and corporate social impact leaders, helping them build strong, data-driven, sustainable employee engagement strategies. Through expert guidance, tools and training, we empower organizations to manage, scale and maximize their impact. No matter the vision for your program or the impact it seeks to create, Points of Light can design a tailored solution to meet your needs. Learn more about our corporate programs by visiting [pointsoflight.org](https://pointsoflight.org) today.



## TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR ACTION

Explore additional resources, including articles and guides on impact data collection and responsible storytelling, to help you measure and communicate your program's value effectively.

### *Impact Data Collection*

- ACCP & True Impact: [Measuring Corporate Social Impact – Recommendations for Better Partnerships and Reporting](#)
- CECIP: [Global Impact at Scale: Challenges and Opportunities in Non-Financial Reporting](#)
- Data for Social Impact: [Free, online course](#)
- Impact Genome Registry: [Outcome Standards](#)
- Sharing Data for Social Impact: [Guidebook to Establishing Responsible Governance Practices](#)
- Social Progress Imperative: [Global Social Progress Index](#)
- Submittable: [Measuring Social Impact—A Guide for Grantmakers and CSR Professionals](#)

### *Responsible Storytelling*

- Creative Equity Toolkit: [Articles and resources on ethical storytelling](#)
- [The Dignified Storytelling Handbook](#)
- Ethical Storytelling: [Recorded webinars, guides and tools](#)
- MemoryFox: [2024 Ethical Storytelling Report](#) and recorded webinar series
- Michael Kass–Story & Spirit: [Expert guidance](#) and [LinkedIn newsletter](#)
- The Power of Asset Framing: [A Conversation with Trabian Shorters](#)



# IMPACT DATA COLLECTION AND RESPONSIBLE STORYTELLING CHECKLIST

Integrating data-driven insights and ethical storytelling into your employee volunteer strategy ensures transparency, trust and measurable impact. This checklist provides a structured approach to collecting meaningful data and crafting responsible narratives that enhance engagement and drive social change. Use it to track areas of strength and opportunity.

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## STEP 1: Define Your Goals and Metrics

Establish what success looks like for employee volunteer initiatives.

Set clear impact goals that balance business needs and community outcomes.

Work with nonprofit partners, HR leaders and others to obtain baseline data from which to improve.

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## STEP 2: Build a Strong Impact Data Collection Strategy

Determine key performance indicators (KPIs) beyond inputs and outputs.

Choose appropriate data collection methods for the KPIs you'd like to report on.

Establish data reporting timelines (quarterly, biannually, annually).

Create a dashboard or impact report format for ongoing use.

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## STEP 3: Implement Ethical and Community-Centered Storytelling

Ensure storytelling guidelines and templates align with ethical principles:

- Center community voices, avoiding a “savior” narrative.
- Share strengths and contributions rather than focusing on needs or deficits.
- Obtain informed consent for interviews, photos and testimonials.

Develop a storytelling framework:

- Who is the audience (executives, employees, external stakeholders)?
- What emotions or insights should the story convey?
- How will the story best reach relevant stakeholders?

Train volunteer leaders and communication partners in responsible storytelling.

Pair impact data with storytelling for well-rounded reports.



## STEP 4: Communicate Insights to Stakeholders

Tailor impact messages for different audiences:

- **Executives:** Business outcomes, ROI, employee engagement metrics
- **Employees:** Personal growth opportunities, meaningful impact stories
- **Nonprofits:** Partnership benefits, community success metrics

Create shareable content formats:

- Infographics or one-pagers for executive summaries
- Videos or testimonials for employee engagement
- Blog posts or CSR reports for external audiences

Use data visualization to make insights clear and compelling

Integrate feedback loops to continuously refine communication strategies

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## STEP 5: Continuously Improve and Scale Volunteer Programs

Regularly revisit your goals and adjust strategies based on feedback, emerging trends and business priorities. Successful volunteer programs are dynamic and evolve with both corporate and community needs!

Conduct periodic assessments to evaluate program success.

Use data trends to identify opportunities for expansion or refinement.

Stay informed on industry practices and evolving employee expectations.

Foster a culture of continuous learning by incorporating new insights into strategy planning.

Celebrate successes through recognition programs, awards and leadership spotlights.





# RESPONSIBLE STORYTELLING TEMPLATE: CAPTURING VOLUNTEER IMPACT

By following this structured approach and integrating asset framing, you'll ensure that volunteer stories are compelling, ethical and aligned with both business and community impact goals.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Project Name:**
  - **Date and Location:**
  - **Nonprofit Partner(s):**
  - **Purpose of the Initiative:** (What challenge or opportunity is being addressed?)
  - **Key Stakeholders Involved:** (Employees, community members, nonprofit representatives, beneficiaries)
- 

## FORMATS AND AUDIENCE

- **Intended Audience:** (e.g., executives, employees, external stakeholders, public)
  - **Best format for this story:** (e.g., article, video, social media post, report, presentation)
- 

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TIME-LIMITED CONSENT

- Have all participants provided informed consent for their stories, photos or quotes for the timeframe during which they'll be used?
  - Once the original timeframe has passed, how will you reconnect and re-confirm their continued consent?
  - Did you provide an option for participants to review or approve content before publication?
  - How were participants informed about how their stories would be used?
- 

## CAPTURING AUTHENTIC IMPACT USING ASSET FRAMING

- Describe the volunteer activity: (e.g., What did employee volunteers accomplish? What was the intended impact?)
- What strengths, talents or aspirations exist within the community that this initiative supports?
- How did volunteers contribute in a way that amplified community-led solutions?
- What challenges or opportunities did the community or nonprofit face before this initiative?
- What measurable impact was achieved? (Use data when possible: skills shared, outcomes achieved)



## COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYEE VOICES

- Quotes from community members or nonprofit partners: (Highlight strengths, aspirations and impact)
  - Employee volunteer or volunteer leader reflections: (How did the experience shape their perspective, grow their skills or enhance their leadership?)
  - How does this story align with company values and long-term CSR goals?
- 

## RESPONSIBLE STORYTELLING REVIEW

- Does the story respect the dignity and agency of all individuals involved?
  - Are you ensuring stories avoid savior narratives and reinforce community strengths?
  - Have you avoided reinforcing stereotypes or extractive narratives?
  - Is the story framed in a way that highlights collaboration and shared impact?
  - Does the story recognize community strengths and assets rather than focusing solely on challenges?
  - Have you ensured accuracy and transparency in all reported outcomes?
- 

## ACCESSIBILITY IN DESIGN

- Have you provided descriptive alt text for images so visually impaired audiences can access the visuals?
  - Does your video content include captions, and have you provided transcripts for any audio materials?
  - Is your language clear, simple and easy to understand for a wide range of audiences, including those with different literacy levels or non-native speakers?
  - Have you made the story available in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, video) to accommodate different accessibility needs?
  - Does your design ensure strong color contrast and use legible fonts and large print to support readers with visual impairments or dyslexia?
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## DISTRIBUTION AND IMPROVEMENT

- **Next Steps for Sharing and Amplification:** (Where and how will this story be shared?)
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** (How can we improve our storytelling practices for future projects?)



**POINTS  
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#### **ABOUT POINTS OF LIGHT**

Points of Light is a nonpartisan, global nonprofit organization that inspires, equips and mobilizes people to make positive change through volunteering and civic engagement. Through work with nonprofits, companies and social impact leaders, the organization galvanizes volunteers to meet critical needs for healthier and more equitable communities. As the world's largest organization dedicated to increasing volunteer service, Points of Light engages more than 3.8 million volunteers across 32 countries.

We believe that companies can be drivers of transformative social change in communities around the world and that this potential is fully realized when employees are inspired and engaged as part of the strategy. Points of Light supports companies committed to driving positive social change through a variety of ways, including:

- The Corporate Service Council.
- Social impact consulting and advisory services.
- Program design and management for corporate employee volunteer and civic engagement programs.
- The Civic 50 national and regional recognition program.

LEARN MORE AT [POINTSOFLIGHT.ORG](https://pointsoflight.org).