



# Building a Resilient Volunteer Ambassador Program At Any Stage

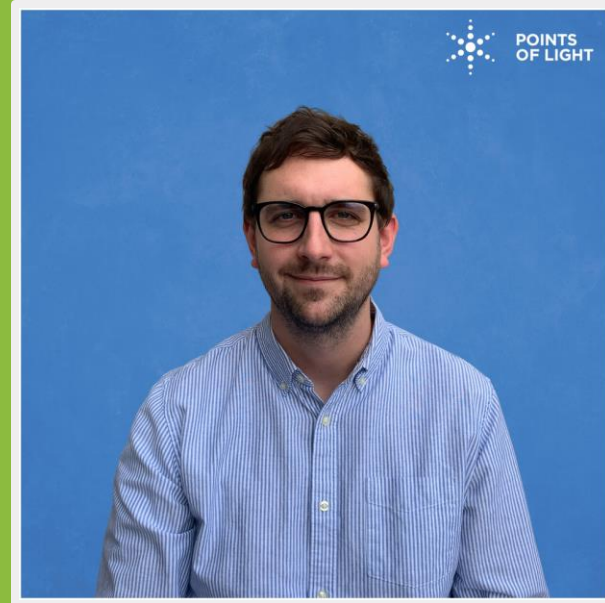
*March 26, 2026*



POINTS OF LIGHT



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# Session Goals



Assess your organization's current volunteer engagement levels and **identify opportunities for deeper impact.**



Understand structural approaches that balance **flexibility** with **accountability.**



Define a **clear purpose** and **strategic vision** for your ambassador program.



Leave equipped with **practical tools, resources,** and **next steps** to confidently implement or strengthen your program.



# What We Bring

- **35 years** of specialization mobilizing people for positive change through **volunteerism and civic engagement**
- Hands-on experience designing and implementing **corporate social impact initiatives**
- Insights grounded in **real-world partnership with sector leaders** and programs such as The Civic 50<sup>®</sup> and Corporate Service Council
- Experience **tailoring strategy and programs** to specific organizational goals and resources

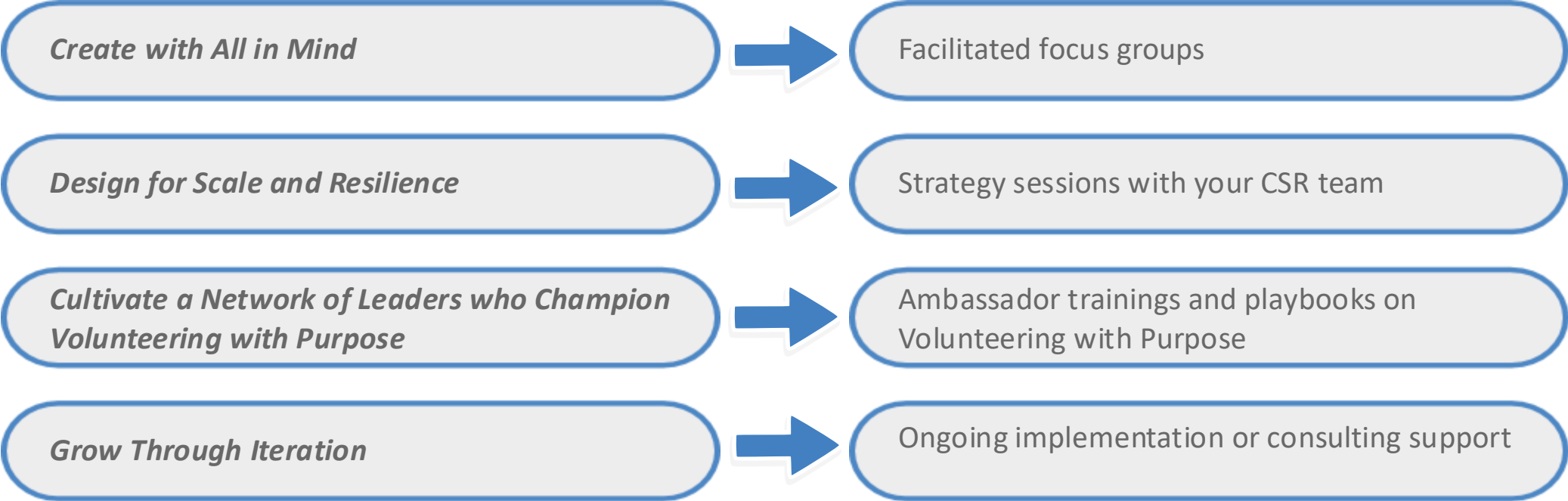
## Some of Our Partners

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# Our Guiding Principles

*Our Principles-Driven Approach to Building Ambassador Programs:*



# Today's Need for Support

## CSR leaders are being asked to:

- Navigate limited capacity due to layoffs
- Make the case for their work
- Achieve scale with a more limited budget
- Help their company navigate external factors

## In 2025...

**72%** of corporate social impact teams reported an expanded scope of work <sup>1</sup>

**54%** of CSR leaders were considering a job shift <sup>2</sup>

1. ACCP's 2025 Annual CSR Insights Report  
2. Benevity State of Corporate Purpose 2025



# How Ambassadors Bridge the Gap

CSR Leaders are being asked to...

Navigate limited capacity

Make the case

Achieve scale with limited budget

Help navigate external factors

Ambassador programs can...

Create **shared responsibility** for community engagement

Amplify **impact stories** and help track **measurable results**

Streamline **engagement** and build long-term **capacity**

**Empower employees** and **sustain engagement** during change



# Understanding Your Starting Point



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# Where Are We Starting From?

## **Still Stretching**

*No ambassador program; no current staff capacity or budget.*

## **At the Starting Line**

*No ambassador program yet, but open to investing limited staff time and/or budget.*

## **Picking Up Speed**

*Ambassador program in place, with limited staff capacity and/or budget.*

## **Hitting Our Stride**

*Ambassador program supported by dedicated staff capacity and budget.*



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*Find Your Ambassadors  
Worksheet*



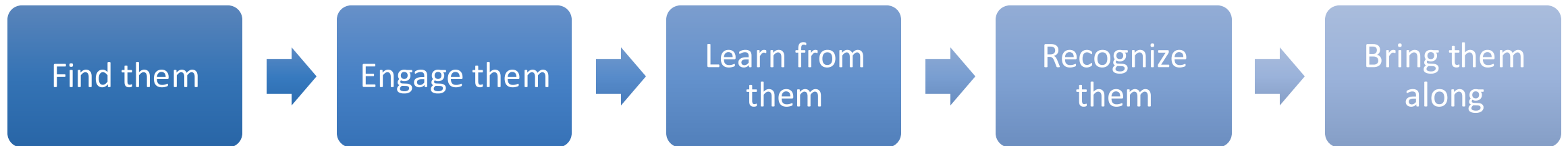
*Program Design  
Worksheet*



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# Finding Your Ambassadors

Who are your current ambassadors and how can you learn from them?

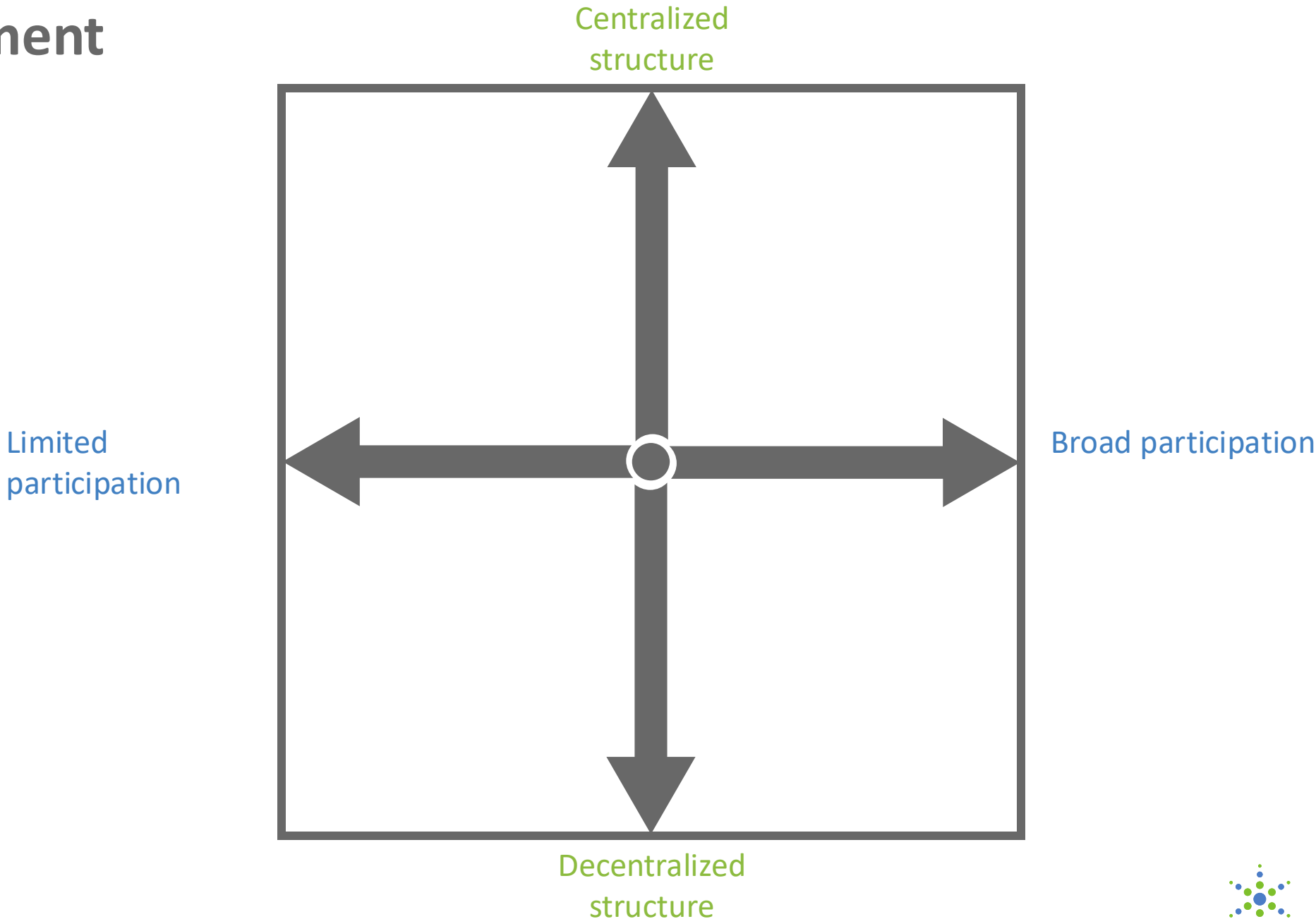


# Structuring for Success



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# Assessment Matrix



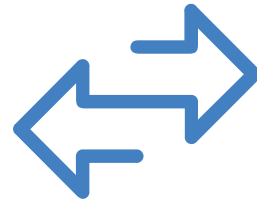
# Limited vs. Broad Participation

## Limited Participation

- May include a smaller group of employees from specific regions or work settings who represent larger regions
- Employees may need to be at a certain level or tenure to be eligible

### **Best suited for**

- Companies launching an ambassador program for the first time
- Smaller CSR teams with limited capacity



## Broad Participation

- Features participation from a wider range of employees, representing multiple departments, career levels, and/or geographic locations
- Often enables participation from a larger cohort

### **Best suited for**

- Companies aiming to represent all types of work settings and employee types as participants
- More robust CSR teams with capacity to manage a greater number of ambassadors

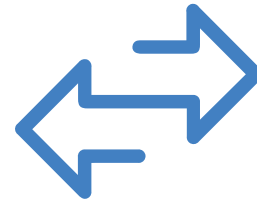
# Centralized vs. Decentralized Structure

## Centralized structure

- Clear, consistent roles and responsibilities
- Aligned processes for all ambassadors and business groups

## **Best suited for companies that**

- Have company-wide aligned focus areas and processes
- Have the capacity to use centralized oversight to ensure alignment, quality and compliance
- Prefer consistent implementation over localized customization



## Decentralized structure

- Adaptable or flexible roles and responsibilities
- More autonomy for ambassadors

## **Best suited for companies that**

- Do not require strict consistency in ambassador experiences or outcomes
- Prefer a light-touch governance model that supports rather than directs ambassador activity
- Value adaptability over uniform program execution



# Case Study: UPS

## Business Profile

- Global workforce made up of mostly deskless employees
- Strong network of Global Community Relations team that spans their entire global footprint
- Launched a new, modernized global CSR platform with Benevity
- Clear existing culture of service
- Some (informal) ambassadors, but without a unifying framework, training or formal recognition strategy

“It’s important for us to understand how [employees] are giving back and how it aligns with our strategy.”  
- *CSR Team Member*

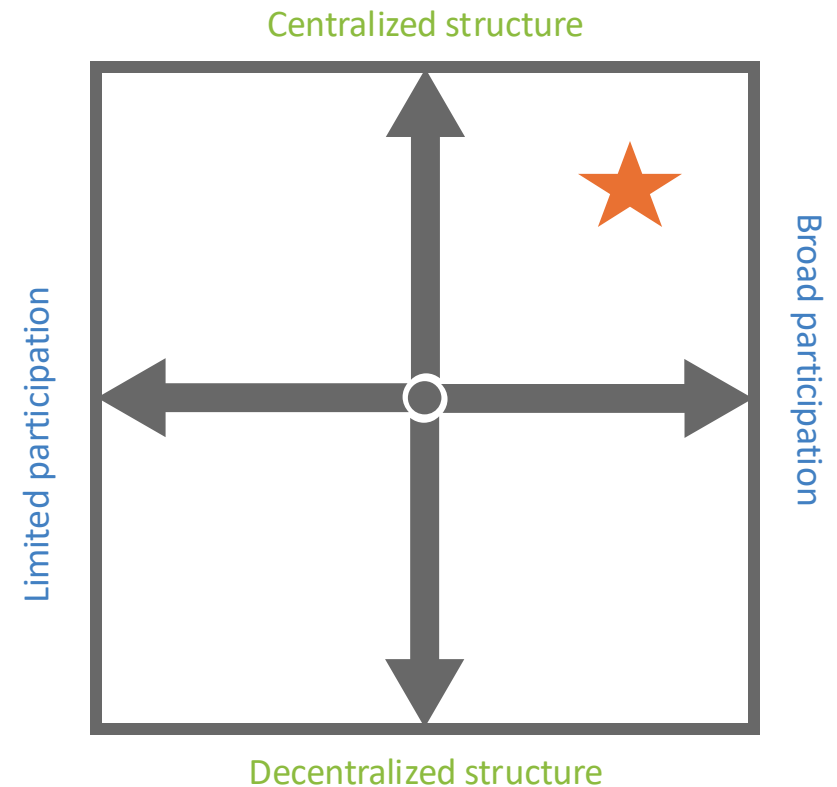




# Case Study: UPS

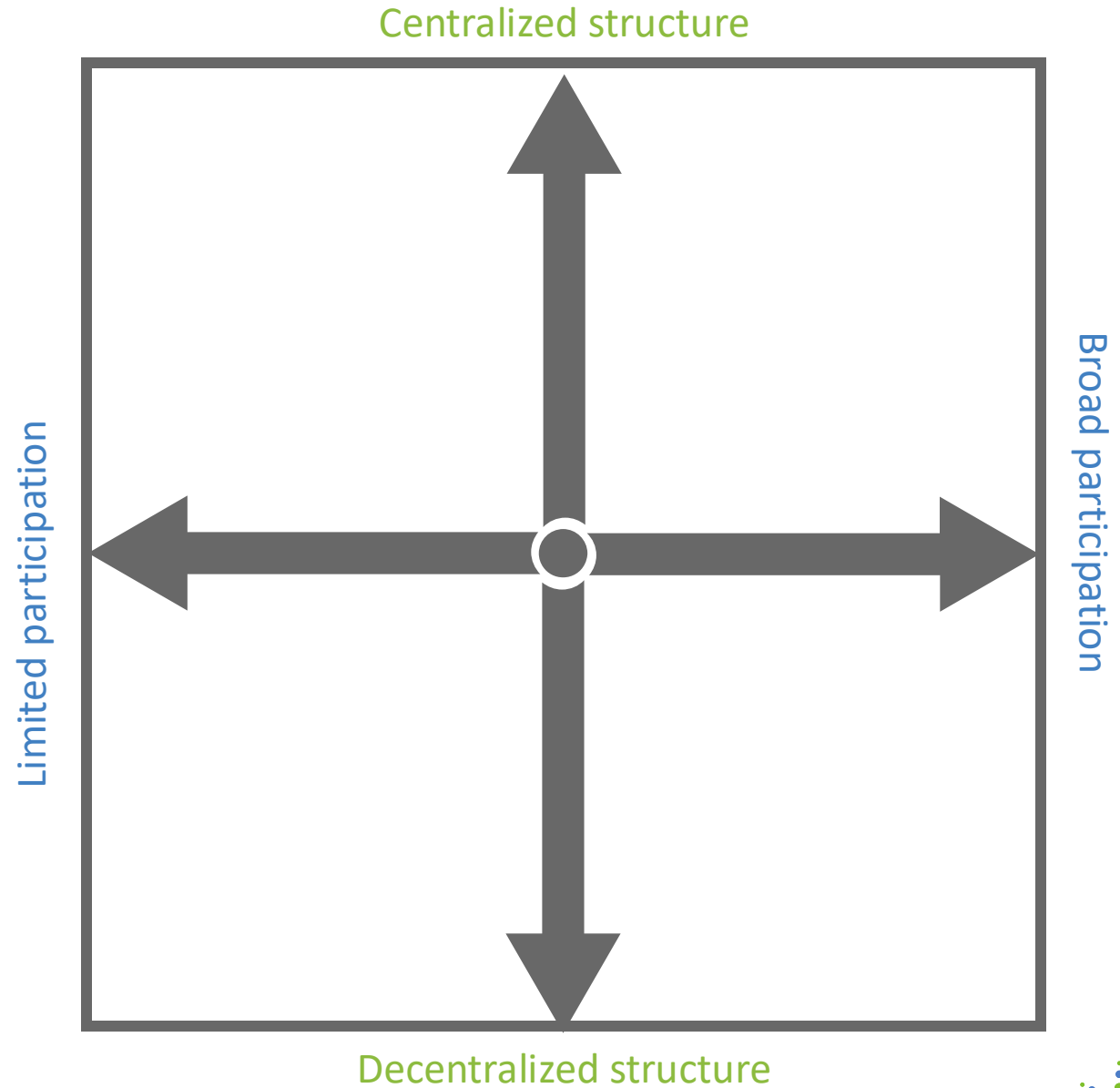
## Ambassador Program Framework

- Broad participation with a clear, centralized structure
- Clearly communicated the professional development benefits to ambassadors and leadership
- Led training sessions for ambassadors on employee engagement platform technology, programs, and community nonprofit engagement
- Clear program goals tied to employee, company and community benefits, supported by aligned KPIs
- Identified a dedicated staff member to lead program execution, facilitate ambassador engagement and measure outcomes to effectively scale the program



Reflection:

- *Where is your program today?*
- *Where should it be in its ideal state?*



# Program Design: Identifying Core Purpose and Program Goals



# Identifying Your Core Purpose

Why do ambassador roles exist in our organization, and what are they designed to enable?

What changes are our ambassadors uniquely positioned to help advance for our company and communities?

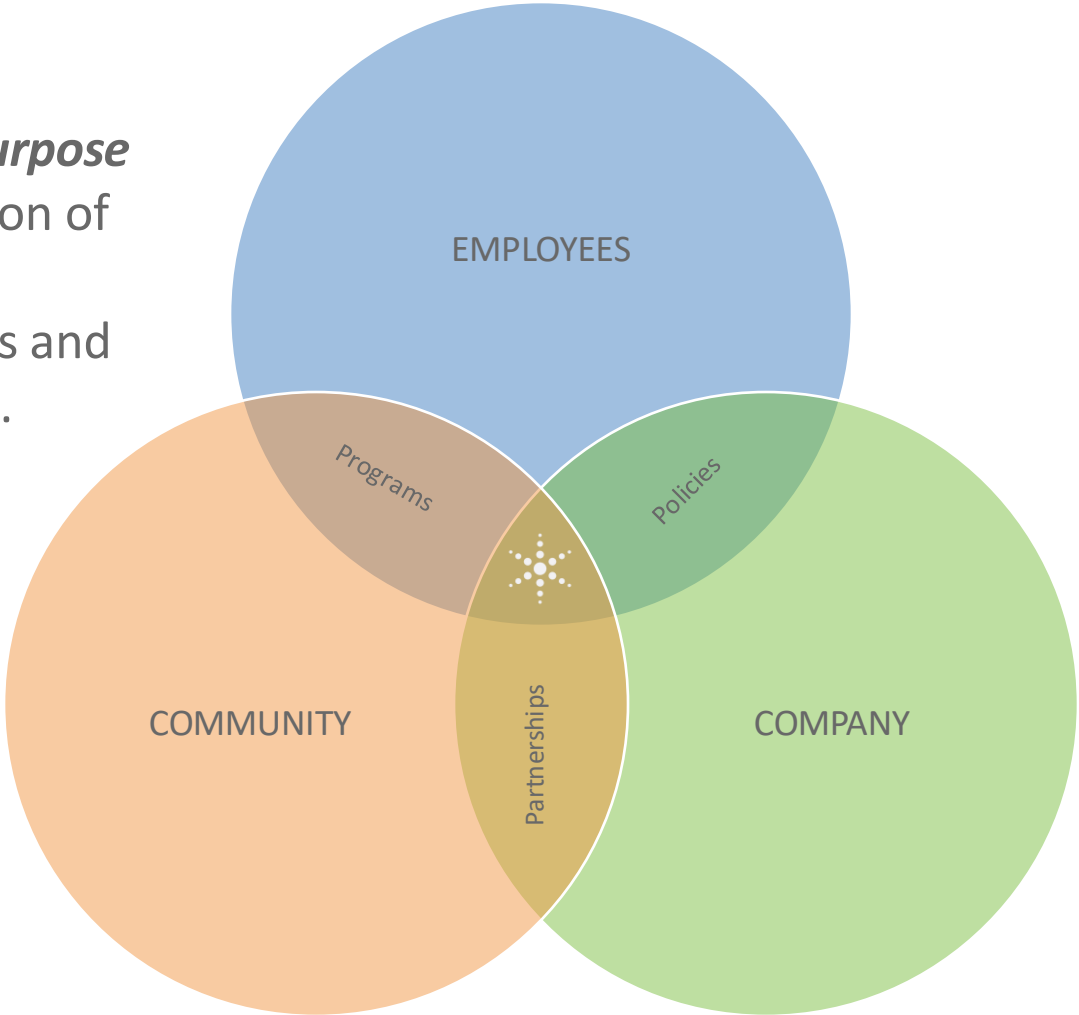
*“Employees serve as volunteer ambassadors to connect employees to the company’s purpose while driving meaningful community impact.”*

*“Ambassadors help to support and inspire colleagues to give their time, talent and treasures by aligning them with the initiatives and resources of the company.”*



# Corporate Volunteering with Purpose

*Corporate Volunteering with Purpose* means building at the intersection of **company** business purpose and priorities, **employee** motivations and **community** vision and priorities.



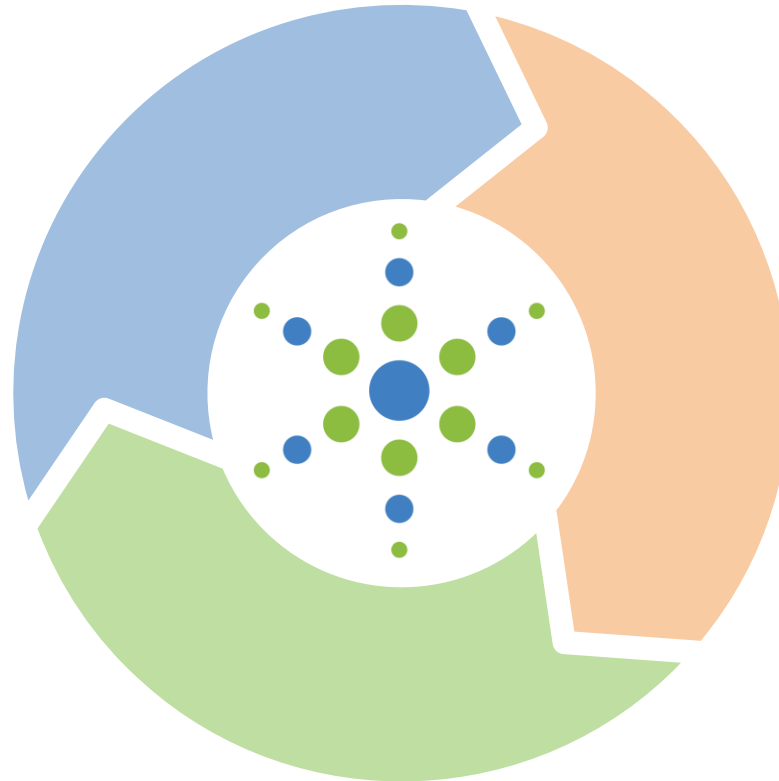
# Program Goals

## Employee

What benefit can an ambassador program provide to participants?

## Company

What broader team or company priorities should this program support?



## Community

What community impact will an ambassador program enable?



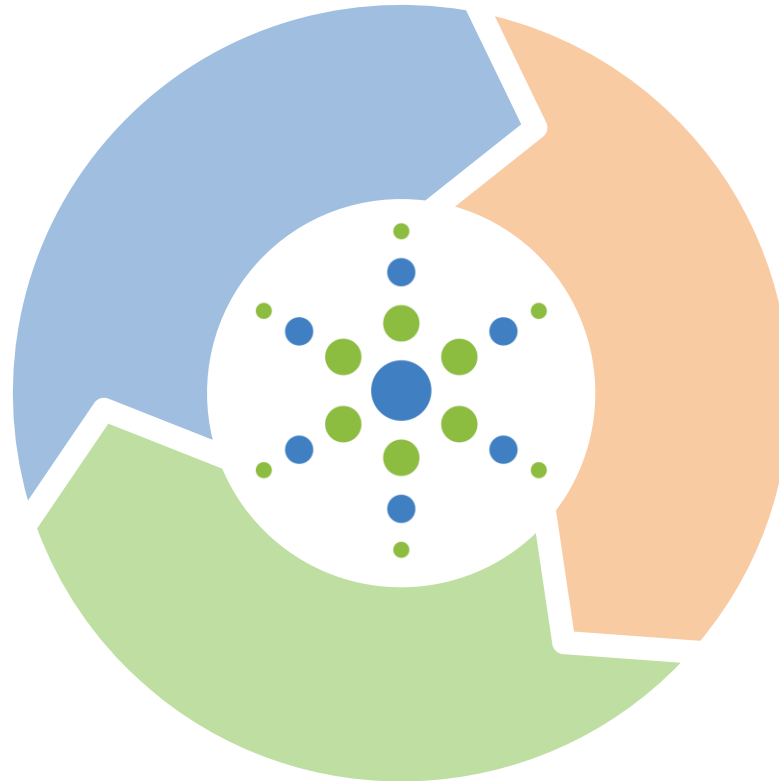
# Example Program Goals

## Employee

*“Empower employees to grow as community-connected leaders”*

## Company

*“Support company’s inclusive, purpose-driven culture”*



## Community

*“Deepen community impact by strengthening nonprofit capacity and expanding meaningful outcomes in local communities”*



# Examples of Connected KPIs

**Deepen community impact by strengthening nonprofit capacity and expanding meaningful outcomes in local communities**

- % of nonprofit partners who completed the annual community partner survey
- # of volunteer events executed
- # of returning volunteers

**Empower employees to grow as community-connected leaders**

- # of events with senior leader attendance
- % of ambassadors who list professional or leadership skills gained in annual ambassador survey
- # of ambassadors who receive promotions during or after their participation in the program

**Support company's inclusive, purpose-driven culture**

- # of employees that indicate they are proud to work for company on employee satisfaction survey
- # of employees who would recommend company as an employer
- # of stakeholders that respond indicating they have a positive perception of company

# Breakout Activity

**Spend 10 minutes drafting your ambassador program purpose and/or goals.**

*Already have them? Review and refine, making sure they reflect impact for your company, community, and employees.*

**Come ready to share a few highlights with the group.**



# Thank You!

*We can help take your ambassador program to the next level! Contact  
Jocelyn Nelson at [jnelson@pointsoflight.org](mailto:jnelson@pointsoflight.org)*



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