



CSC Peer Session:

Engaging Global Employees in Volunteering

April 29, 2026

Key Takeaway & Emerging Practices

Global Strategy Is Most Effective When Anchored in Local Ownership

- Leading companies are adopting a “globally aligned, locally driven” approach, where a central team defines strategy, infrastructure, and priorities, while local teams determine execution based on what resonates in their markets.
- This model reflects broader business operating structures and helps ensure relevance across diverse geographies and workforce types.
- There is often a wide spectrum of local capacity, ranging from robust ambassador networks in some markets to single-point leads in others, requiring flexibility in how programs are supported and scaled.
- Global frameworks (e.g., ESG-aligned focus areas or enterprise-wide volunteer moments) provide consistency, while allowing local adaptation in format, partners, and activities.

Infrastructure and Enablement Are Critical to Scaling Participation

- Successful global programs prioritize foundational infrastructure, including volunteer platforms, tracking systems, and clear processes, as a prerequisite to scaling.
- Ongoing training and onboarding (e.g., platform tutorials, webinars across time zones) are essential to drive adoption and sustained engagement.
- Early engagement tactics (such as introducing employees to giving/volunteering platforms at onboarding) can significantly increase participation over time.



- Internal communications partnerships play a key role in driving awareness and ensuring opportunities are visible and accessible, particularly in large, distributed companies.
- Many members emphasized that lack of awareness, not lack of interest, is often the primary barrier to participation.

CSC Example: Providing an incentive, such as a donation gift card, for new employees to create an account and utilize on your volunteering platform encourages participation.

Ambassador Networks Drive Local Activation but Require Ongoing Investment

- Employee ambassadors, site leads, and volunteer champions are essential for maintaining continuity and driving participation at the local level.
- Effective programs invest in:
 - Structured onboarding and training
 - Regular touchpoints and communication
 - Recognition (both formal and informal) to reinforce value, especially since these roles are typically outside core job responsibilities
- Engagement models vary widely, from highly organized committees to informal local leads, but consistency in support and recognition is a common success factor.
- In environments with limited leadership emphasis, local champions often serve as the primary drivers of momentum.
- View [Key Takeaways](#) from our previous session on Ambassador Programs.

Scaling Requires Balancing Consistency with Flexibility

- One of the most persistent challenges is determining what to standardize globally versus what to localize.
- Organizations are increasingly recognizing that defining standards too early, without understanding local needs can limit effectiveness.
- Instead, many are focusing on scaling:
 - Principles and frameworks (e.g., focus areas, engagement models)
 - Infrastructure and tools
 - Signature moments or campaigns while allowing execution details to vary.



- Efforts to centralize historically decentralized programs (e.g., local volunteering) are ongoing, with companies seeking greater alignment without sacrificing local relevance.

Leadership Alignment and Business Integration Influence Program Traction

- Leadership support remains a key variable in program success and can fluctuate with organizational changes and shifting business priorities.
- In the absence of consistent top-down emphasis, organizations rely on:
 - Key moments (e.g., company milestones or campaigns) to re-engage leadership
 - Integration into existing business structures (e.g., site leads, company events)
- Embedding volunteering into existing company touchpoints (e.g., large meetings, onboarding, global campaigns) has proven to be an effective way to scale participation without requiring entirely new infrastructure.

CSC Example: One member coordinates with their internal events team to set up volunteering opportunities during existing sales meetings.

Designing for Realistic Participation Is Essential to Maintaining Nonprofit Trust

- Companies are prioritizing “right-sized” volunteer opportunities that align with realistic participation levels.
- Setting clear internal benchmarks (e.g., expected participation rates at a site level) helps avoid overpromising and under-delivering to nonprofit partners.
- This approach reflects a broader shift toward nonprofit-centered design, ensuring that volunteer efforts do not create unintended burden, consistent with broader sector emphasis on aligning with nonprofit capacity and needs.
- Hybrid and global work environments further reinforce the need for flexible, scalable engagement models.

CSC Example: A 10% rule is used by one member, with the acknowledgment that they can realistically commit to having 10% of their office attend a volunteer event.



Engaging Deskless and Global Workforces Remains a Work in Progress

- Reaching frontline, manufacturing, and shift-based employees in multiple markets continues to be a significant challenge.
- Promising approaches include:
 - On-site or kit-based activities that can be integrated into the workday
 - Leveraging existing gatherings to engage team members
 - Creating opportunities that include external stakeholders (e.g., customers or partners) to increase appeal

Cultural Context and Definitions of Volunteering Vary Widely

- Cultural norms significantly influence how employees perceive and engage in volunteering:
 - In some regions, volunteering is viewed as a personal activity rather than a workplace initiative
 - In others, employer-supported volunteering is expected and valued
- These differences require organizations to **rethink assumptions about what “engagement” looks like across markets**. Nonprofit partners aren’t available for engagements in every market. Instead of focusing on specific partners, consider making these shifts:]
 - Issue-based focus areas that resonate globally, rather than specific nonprofit partners
 - Flexible participation models that respect local norms and preferences

CSC Example: One member has a focus on food insecurity and hunger, with more opportunities for global engagement under one cause area. To meet more members focusing on hunger, register for our May 12 networking session [here](#).

Equity in Volunteering Access, Particularly Through VTO Policies, Is an Ongoing Challenge

- Disparities in Volunteer Time Off (VTO) policies across regions and employee types (e.g., exempt vs. non-exempt, office vs. manufacturing) can undermine program credibility.



- Inconsistent policies may lead employees to feel that volunteering is not equally supported across the organization.
- Companies are exploring ways to address this, including:
 - Adjusting VTO policies by region
 - Offering alternative incentives (e.g., matching gifts or “dollars for doers” programs)
- Creating a more equitable and globally consistent approach remains a complex but critical priority.

CSC Example: Non-exempt employees (such as those in manufacturing) generally don't have access to VTO policy benefits. As an alternative, you can ensure they have an opportunity to engage with communities through a matching gift program.

Signature Moments and Campaigns Help Drive Global Alignment

- Global volunteer moments (e.g., annual campaigns, purpose-driven days, or issue-based months) are effective for:
 - Creating shared experiences across geographies
 - Driving concentrated engagement and visibility
- These moments are most successful when paired with local flexibility in execution, reinforcing both global alignment and local relevance.
- Aligning campaigns with widely recognized observances (e.g., environmental or hunger-related initiatives) can further strengthen participation and resonance.