

**CASE STUDY**

# How Johnson & Johnson expanded volunteerism in a virtual environment





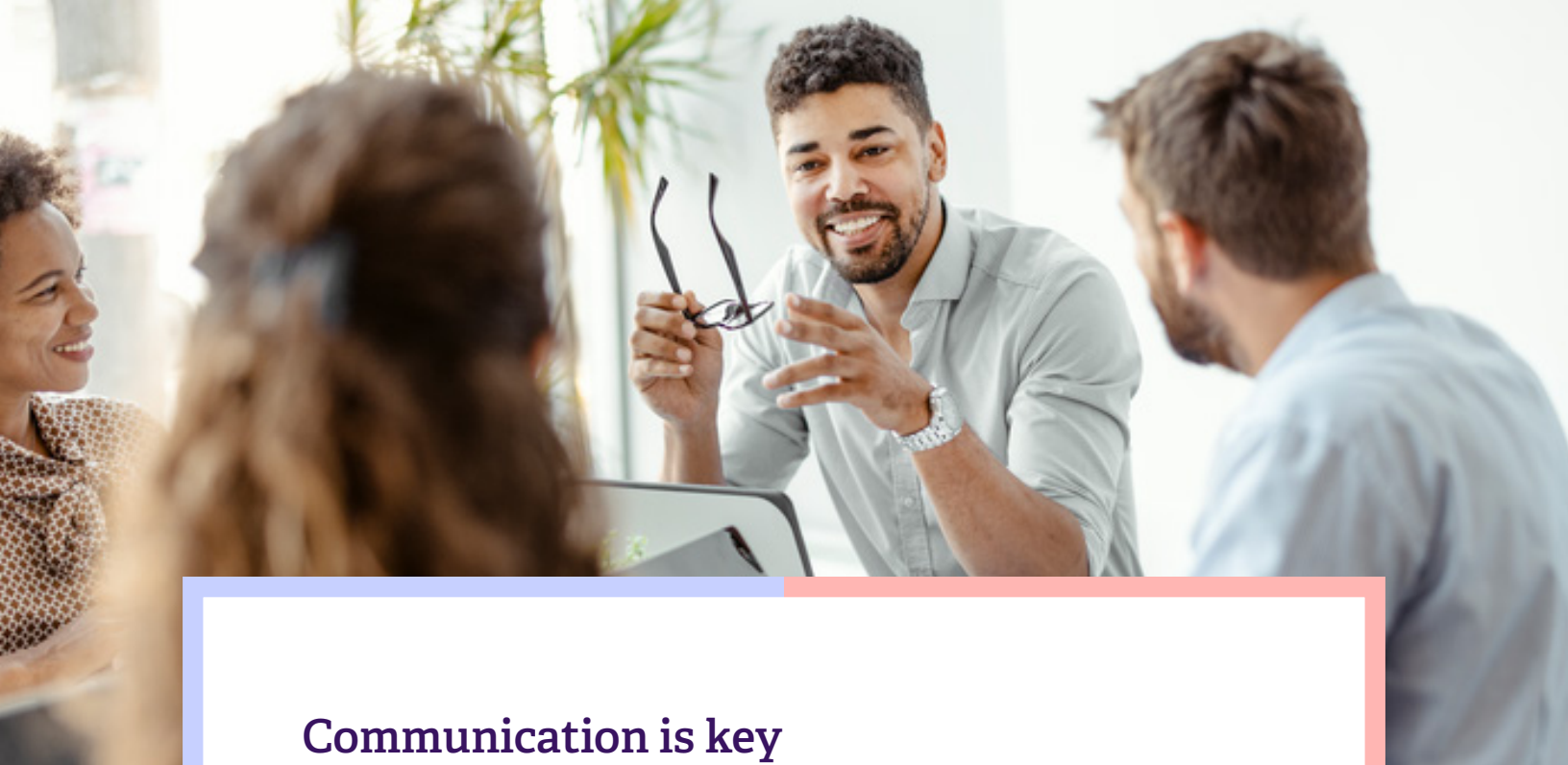
## CASE STUDY

# How Johnson & Johnson expanded volunteerism in a virtual environment

Johnson & Johnson stays true to its guiding principles by using their size and reach for good and working with partners around the world to forge a healthier and more equitable future for those they serve. Their [Global Community Impact](#) (GCI) organization drives programming for community giving, social impact, and other philanthropic activities around the world.

We had the chance to speak with Saadia Malik, manager of the Talent for Good program, and Yezenia Ramos, senior manager of employee engagement in North America about how their volunteer programs shifted in the wake of the global pandemic. Johnson & Johnson's GCI team approached the [transition of volunteer programming](#) by taking the initiative to put a pause on volunteering programs before the official shutdowns, and evaluating how best to continue delivering outcomes to partner organizations in a virtual format.






## Communication is key

One of the most important aspects of Johnson & Johnson's pivot to virtual volunteering was that they took the time to speak with their nonprofit partners to truly understand their new and changing needs. During our [CoffeeTalk conversation](#), Ramos notes that "We can't assume that the needs that they had in the past are the same needs that exist today." Additionally, they reached out internally to better understand their employees' capacity to give back as home life has shifted for many with stay-at-home orders and widespread closures. The goal was to come together and identify opportunities for continuous positive impact in ways that would be effective both for volunteers and the partners they are serving.

Fortunately, this pivot was made a bit easier thanks to the diverse programming already in place. Johnson & Johnson's GCI organization had experience with virtual and remote volunteer opportunities, which allowed for traditional programs to be transitioned more quickly. Communication remains a core element of transitioning with success, as it is imperative to understand that the prior needs of partner organizations may be changing.



“ We can’t assume that the needs that they had in the past are the same needs that exist today.”

— Yezenia Ramos | Senior Manager,  
Employee Engagement in North America,  
Johnson & Johnson

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The shift to virtual volunteering in this new environment also comes with some challenges, such as ensuring that participants have the proper technology or equipment, potential connectivity issues, working across time zones, and changing family dynamics. Malik notes that approaching these challenges requires mindfulness of the type of opportunities being presented to employees. Some methods to addressing these challenges include offering a variety of opportunities and being mindful of offering flexible options that are focused and shorter in nature. Johnson & Johnson’s GCI organization made the decision to enable a feature in their [volunteerism platform](#) to allow their partners to submit opportunities. This allowed for automation in communicating with nonprofit partners in order to expedite the process of offering new and sustainable volunteering opportunities.

After communicating with your employees and partners to gain an understanding of the needs and how they may best be met, start with programming that really speaks to where your employees’ passions and strengths are. Like any other initiative, starting small with a pilot program can allow for learning that will help the program grow over time.

## Getting creative

Johnson & Johnson encourages thinking outside of the box when it comes to creating impact. Sometimes it helps to start with something simple—volunteer initiatives don't need to be grand to have a grand impact!



### BACK THE FRONT-LINE

Back the Front-line is a social media campaign where Johnson & Johnson asks employees to submit 30-second videos to show how they are supporting the front-line.

### WORDS WITH FRIENDS TOURNAMENT

Words With Friends is a popular mobile game, and employees have taken advantage of the game's popularity by starting a tournament where participants can donate \$10 to join, and the funds are put toward one of the funds that have been started for COVID-19 response.

### NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Partnering with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Johnson & Johnson employees were able to participate by creating cards and notes of encouragement for hospital staff as well as patients to help share kindness and optimism.

To learn more about Johnson & Johnson's pivot to virtual volunteerism, listen to the complete conversation with Saadia Malik and Yezenia Ramos [here](#).

Volunteering no longer means you have to go somewhere and do something to make an impact—online service should be an integrated part of your strategy. Want to learn more about positively impacting lives through virtual volunteering? Contact us to discuss your [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#) needs today!