

How a leading manufacturing company motivates team member participation through an employee-centered approach to corporate social responsibility.





This anonymous manufacturing company is the global leader in motion and control technologies, providing precision-engineered solutions for a wide variety of mobile, industrial, and aerospace markets. With nearly 60,000 employees and a presence in 50 countries, the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy is focused on creating programs that address the unique needs of the communities where their employees live and work. In addition to its localized approach to CSR, the company distinguishes itself by placing employee engagement at the forefront of its initiatives, seamlessly integrating it across grantmaking, giving and volunteering, and disaster relief efforts.

We sat down with the company's corporate social responsibility manager to learn more about their employee-centered approach to CSR, how they tailor programs to meet the unique needs of their communities, and how they leverage [Bonterra Strategic Philanthropy](#) to drive participation and deepen engagement.

CUSTOMER

Anonymous manufacturing company

VERTICAL

Strategic Philanthropy

PRODUCT

Grants Management
Employee Engagement

Addressing community-based needs through targeted programming

The manufacturing company's CSR strategy is guided by three key focus areas: Community needs, STEM education, and sustainability. Team members are encouraged to approach these focus areas with a localized perspective, considering how they can tailor the company's programs to best address the specific needs of their communities. This ensures that employees' efforts align with the company's broader strategy but are also highly applicable to the unique challenges and requirements of each community. Here's a closer look at each focus area:

Community needs: Supporting team members, families, and neighbors by contributing to the advancement and well-being of the communities in which the company operates.

STEM Education: Investing in schools, universities, and community agencies to ensure students of all backgrounds have access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and the resources and support needed to thrive in the classroom.

Sustainability: Implementing long-term programs that help build sustainable communities, address key societal issues, and create a better tomorrow.

In alignment with the company's broader commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), they work to ensure that DEI principles underpin all three areas of focus. Rather than treating DEI as a separate and distinct category, the company intentionally weaves it seamlessly across all initiatives. In doing so, DEI isn't viewed as merely an add-on, but is considered an integral and central part of their CSR programs.



Innovating grantmaking with team member-led funding

Across all of the manufacturing company's CSR programs, employee engagement is at the forefront. While most companies have shifted to an employee-centered approach to giving and volunteering, many still restrict employees from participating in the grant decision-making process. In contrast, the company has adopted a distinctive team member-led approach, ensuring that funds are distributed based on valuable input from employees.



Each year, the foundation sets a grant budget and allocates dollars to each division based on their people count. From there, the division develops a voting process for selecting how the funds get allocated and which causes they will support. In many cases, the division has a team responsible for narrowing down the eligible organizations based on the country's criteria before handing it over to team members for voting and selection. This ensures that only vetted, eligible nonprofits are included in the voting pool. And to boost participation, many sites turn the voting process and check presentations into celebratory events with the selected nonprofits.

Through the company's employee-centered approach to funding, they have established themselves as an innovator within the grantmaking sector, and we're eager to see other companies follow in their footsteps. Even if your company can't allocate all its grant dollars to an employee-driven program, consider giving a portion of it to your employees and empowering them to work together to identify eligible causes that support community-based needs.

“ This approach is great for a ton of reasons. Since engagement is our primary focus, why not use our highest-dollar program to engage our workforce? It also helps make our programs more equitable. If an employee can't make a monetary donation themselves, the grantmaking involvement allows them to still give back to the community.”

— corporate social responsibility manager



Putting employee engagement at the forefront of giving and volunteering

Like their approach to grantmaking, the company's employee giving, volunteering, and disaster relief programs are centered on engagement and focused on addressing emerging community-based needs.

VOLUNTEERISM

To connect volunteerism to employee engagement, the manufacturing company offers incentives for team members who participate in volunteer activities with their colleagues. For example, if you volunteer alongside three or more team members, you are eligible for volunteer time off (VTO) and \$500 from the company in the form of [volunteer grants](#) (also known as a dollars for doers program). And if more than 20 people participate in the volunteer activity, the company will provide \$1,000 in volunteer grants.

Team members are empowered to select the organization and activity themselves, fostering a culture of collaboration and encouraging team building while making a positive impact on communities. Through volunteer activities, many teams have built long-term, ongoing relationships with nonprofits, resulting in additional support through grants and giving programs.

MATCHING GIFTS

U.S.-based team members are encouraged to contribute monetarily through the company's matching gift program. When a donation of at least \$25 is made to a verified 501(c)(3) organization, the company will match the team member's contribution on a 1:1 basis.

DISASTER RELIEF

When it comes to disaster relief, the company prioritizes responding to disasters or crises that directly affect communities where they have a physical presence, especially if team members have been impacted. These programs require a lower matching gift minimum of \$10 to an organization providing direct relief to affected communities.

By decreasing the matching gift minimum, the company was able to lower the barrier to entry into workplace giving and make it easier for people who wouldn't give at a higher threshold to support those affected by the crisis.

As a part of their disaster relief program, the company also offers team member assistance, which supports those who may have incurred critical expenses in the wake of a disaster and even encompasses "personal impacts" like a house fire or a flood.



Partnering with Bonterra to motivate employee participation

Prior to partnering with Bonterra, the manufacturing company managed its grants, employee giving, and disaster relief programs on different platforms. In early 2022, the company launched Bonterra Strategic Philanthropy to manage all its offerings in one central location and better bridge the gap between employee engagement and grantmaking. Here are some of the biggest benefits the company has experienced since implementation:



1 Standard customizations facilitated a smooth transition to the software

With the ability to customize the team-member facing portal using internal jargon and branded imagery, colors, and fonts, the company was able to embody its corporate culture through the platform. This also allowed the team to use the existing program terminology, reducing confusion and facilitating a smooth transition to the new software. “If we were pigeonholed into using pre-defined terms on buttons and portlets, we were concerned that our employees would be confused by the new language and potentially deterred from participating,” said the company’s CSR manager. Using the standard customizations ensured that the platform was constructed with familiar language and visuals, making team members comfortable and acquainted with the new site from the start.

2 Simplicity and ease-of-use incentivized participation

As a global company, one of the most important factors when selecting a CSR software vendor was simplicity and ease-of-use. According to their CSR manager, “It’s easy for us to lose people if they’re required to log into multiple systems for grant nominations and giving or volunteering.” As a result, the company favored Bonterra because of the ability to manage all programs in a central location, making it easy for users to navigate the system and find what they’re looking for. They also added “learn more” buttons throughout the site for team members who might be new to the system or unfamiliar with a particular program. And to ensure that the system was accessible for international employees, Bonterra helped the company translate the site into 11 different languages.

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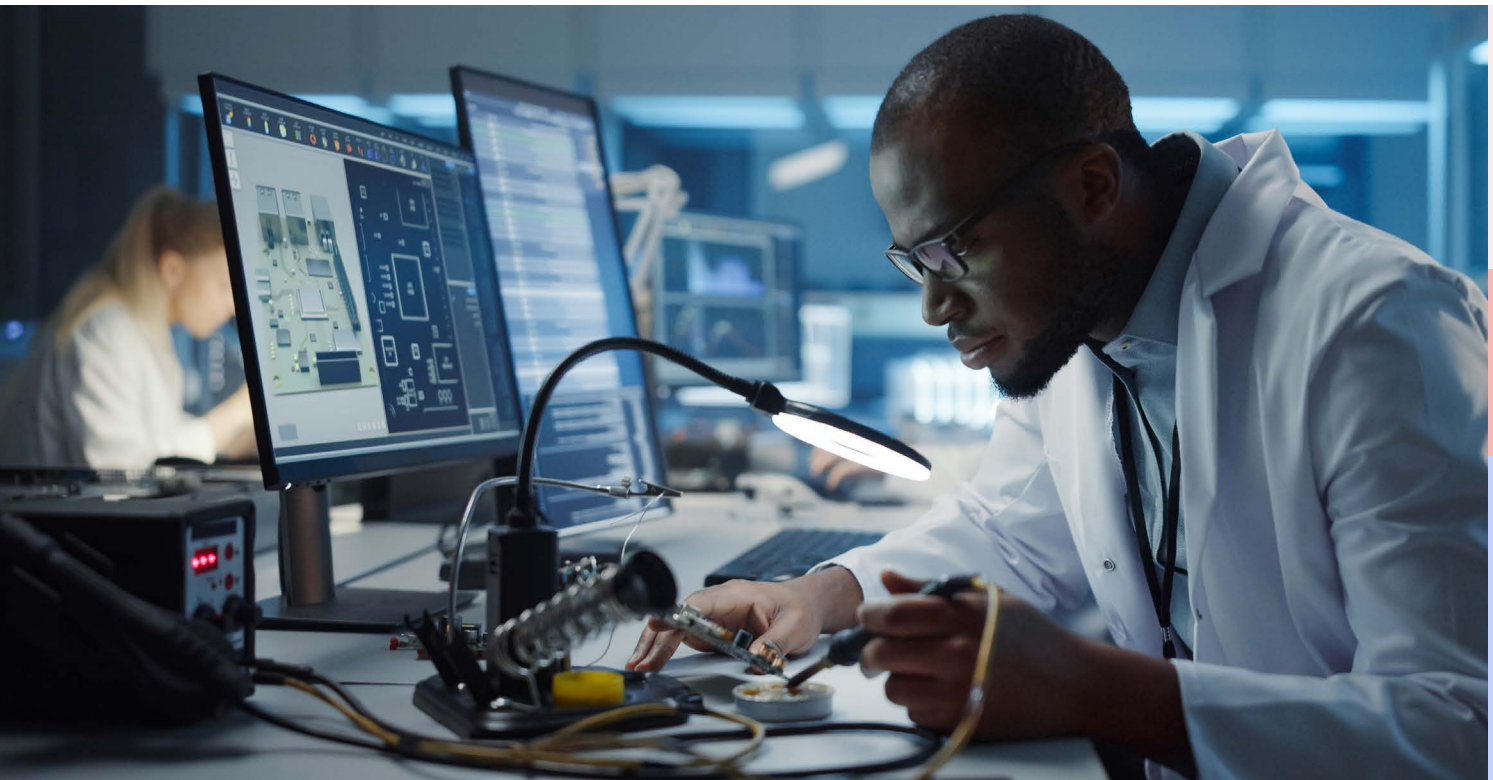
Insights enabled faster, easier reporting

For the company's CSR manager, being able to quickly and easily pull impact reports for key stakeholders is critical. Without the ability to demonstrate ROI, it's difficult to get buy-in for increasing the budget or scaling existing programs. They explained, "As someone who is required to interface with executive leaders around the world—from country councils to HR teams—[Bonterra Insights](#) has enabled me to quickly and easily deliver the data they're looking for across programs within seconds." The CSR manager added, "At a glance, I can dig into key data points like the number of active participants, gaining insight into program performance at any given time."

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Outsourcing disbursements ensured security and compliance

With [Bonterra's Disbursements solution](#), the company can establish eligibility and vetting criteria in advance, ensuring funds are directed only to organizations that meet the foundation's standards. This not only ensures compliance but also reduces administrative efforts spent on vetting organizations and keeping up with evolving regulatory requirements. The CSR manager explained, "In addition to the nearly 1,200 grants issued in 2023, we also match employee donations 1:1, which can quickly add up. By setting upfront eligibility parameters and outsourcing our disbursements, we effectively handle the volume of funds that require distribution."



Since launching Bonterra Strategic Philanthropy in early 2022, the manufacturing company has witnessed a 57% increase in employee participation across all its programs. They credit this significant increase to Insights, which equipped them with the data to effectively advocate for scaling existing programs and tailoring them to better meet employees' needs.

We applaud the manufacturing company for its innovative, employee-centered approach to CSR, focus on community-driven programs, and willingness to embrace the power of CSR technology. We can't wait to see their employee participation and engagement scores continue to grow year after year.



Wondering how your organization can leverage Bonterra Strategic Philanthropy to motivate employee participation?

[Start by scheduling a free demo with one of our experts.](#)