

ChangeMakers @ Work

A Corporate Citizenship Webinar Series

EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS FROM *THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GIVING BACK*

April 2019

Presenters: Alison Grenier, Head of Culture and Research, Great Place to Work Canada; Elizabeth Dove, Director of Corporate Citizenship, Volunteer Canada.

Alison Grenier and Elizabeth Dove shared results from the recent research study *The Business Case for Giving Back*, a collaboration between Great Place to Work (GPTW) Canada and Volunteer Canada, in partnership with the Corporate Council on Volunteering. The research goals were to quantify the business benefits with respect to employee engagement for building strong community investment programs and what are the winning practices. This report was informed by the largest survey of Canadian employees to date (66,000) from 300 Canadian employers on the connection between their levels of engagement with their workplace and their employer's commitments to community. The findings provide proof of increased benefits to business and tangible ways to create a corporate community investment program that improves employee engagement in their workplace.

Why does this information matter to employers? Alison Grenier of GPTW explained that employee engagement is the top issue on the minds of business leaders. It is the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work.

Telling the stories of the many ways Canada's Best Workplaces are giving back is important for advancing this cause, but this research wanted takes it a step further.

- Backbone of the research is a **correlation study** – looking at the relationship between employee sentiment about their employer's community investment strategy and **key business outcomes**
- Also examined some of the baseline programs used by organizations that are good corporate citizens (i.e. encouraging volunteerism and monetary contributions)
- This combined with **qualitative data** gave great examples of how organizations can create a winning CI strategy that resonates with employees.

The research found that organizations with strong CI programs also have more engaged employees. When people "feel good about the way my organization contributes to community", they are also more likely to:

Employee Sentiment

- **18% ↑** Career Commitment - want to work here for a long time
- **79% ↑** Brand Ambassadorship - would strongly endorse my organization to family and friends as a GPTW
- **83% ↑** Discretionary Effort - are willing to give extra to get the job done
- **57% ↑** Employee Impact - feel they make a difference

A deeper dive into business data for these high-CSR organizations revealed some other correlations:

Business outcomes

- **43% ↓** Voluntary Turnover
- **31% ↑** Job Applicants
- **19% ↑** Faster Revenue Growth
- **33% ↑** Innovation

Elizabeth Dove provided a comparison of Best Workplaces for Giving Back (BWGB) vs other workplaces showing significant differences in how they shared their Time, Talent and Treasure:

TIME

- 90% BWGB have PTO to volunteer
- 50% other workplaces

TALENT

- 83% BWGB align CI with unique skills, services
- 13% other workplaces

TREASURE

- 100% BWGB employee donation matching programs, financial contributions or in-kind donations
- 60% other workplaces

The BWGB research supports other recent data that confirms that **involvement in CI matters to employees:**

- 68% of Canadians, given a choice between two jobs, choose stronger volunteering culture (*Volunteer Canada, 2017*)
- 70% of employees would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to social and environmental issues (*Cone, 2016*)
- Employer = most trusted entity. Caveat: take a stand, involve employees in process and shared action (*Edelman, 2019*)

Volunteer Canada's resource: Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering provides a framework for alignment on community engagement between employees and their workplace. The Code:

- Articulates **value and impact** of ESV
- Outlines **guiding principles** for partnerships between workplaces and NFPs
- Promotes **standards of practice** for involving employees in meaningful ways while meeting the needs of the workplace and NFP partners

The report highlights great examples of company practices that match some of the Code Standards:

- Standard 6 Employee Engagement - Softchoice - empowers people to support charities of their choosing through two paid volunteer days each year, fundraising programs in which Softchoice Cares matches the total donations raised, and dozens of local employee-run activities each year that raise money and awareness for worthy causes.
- Standard 5 Evaluation – Stewardship Council at Ian Martin - Employees track their volunteer hours, access company supported volunteer events, and give to charities of their choosing.

Key takeaways from the report include:

- Building a closer tie between employees and corporate community investment is critical in upping employee engagement
 - On long term career commitment, ambassadorship, connection to discretionary effort and potentially innovation
- Communicate to employees, involve them in choices and actions that build the community investment program.
 - Support this with best Time, Talent, Treasure practices from the BWGB winners and Volunteer Canada Standards of Practice for employee community involvement.

The findings in this report build the business case for investing in the infrastructure and other resources that create a community program that employees feel good about, clearly showing the link between volunteering, community investment and employee engagement.

Listen to the webinar recording [here](#).

Download the report: [The Business Case for Giving Back](#)

For more corporate citizenship resources, click [here](#).

Great Place to Work® is a global people analytics and consulting firm that helps organizations of **all sizes** achieve better business results by focusing on the work experience for every employee—our research shows a clear and direct relationships between employee experience and key business performance results.

Q & A

Q. Did you look at any correlations on the impact of workplace volunteerism and philanthropy on personal philanthropy or donation behaviour?

A. That question was not analyzed in this research. However, for workplaces who complete GPTW culture audit, we can see that when employees are exposed to those programs in the workplace, it often does overlap in their personal lives. Some high performing workplaces do have platforms that celebrate employee engagement in all areas of their lives, both at work and outside work.

Q. Can you explain the statistic of 57% increase in employee impact?

A. When people agree with the community statement, then they are 57% more likely to agree that “I feel I make a difference here”. Involving employees in decision-making and processes does help employees to feel they make a difference to the organization’s success.

Q. How do these statistics compare to US statistics?

A. Great Place to Work’s U.S. counterparts have not yet replicated this type of research. Best guess is that the connections would be the same, but overall benchmarks might be a bit lower than in Canada, as CI is a bit less prevalent in the U.S. companies Great Place to Work surveys. US does have a Best Workplaces for Giving Back list, which includes community engagement. For more information on this, please go to GreatPlaceToWork.com.

Q. Do you have any best practices on how we can ensure that companies keep diversity and inclusion top of mind?

A. Reports and resources on diversity issues are available on GPTW website. GPTW now factoring in consistency of experience across employee gender, background and job level when determining their lists.

Q. How have you controlled for other factors like good management practices, clear goals or great cultures that might also contribute to elements and findings on these slides?

A. This was positioned as a correlation study so GPTW have not controlled for other great factors which are contagious in an organization. There is a natural element that when an organization is doing well in CI, they may also have great communication practices, great leadership and great work life balance practices. This could certainly be looked at this in a future study.

Q. What is the most important takeaway for workplaces from this research?

A. Communication with employees is the cornerstone of success: involving employees in the decision-making processes, sharing impact and sharing successes with them.