

# Member Meetup: Building A More Inclusive Corporate Citizenship

October 30, 2024

## Background Information:

The October 2024 Member Meetup focused on corporate strategies for building more inclusive practices within corporate citizenship.

One organization discussed its key values, highlighting integrity, humility, equity, and transparency as the four most important values for successful corporate citizenship. This is significant, as firm-wide values are integral for the foundation of actions to take place to make a difference. In order for more inclusive corporate citizenship practices to take place a strong foundation is vital. They also began to transform its social impact by empowering employees and providing social impact benefits for its workers. For example, allowing employees to volunteer or donate to firms that align with their values empowers individuals to take action that feels meaningful. This has resulted in better employee-firm relationships and retention rates for the firm. Furthermore, they introduced a Local Impact Program (LIP), which promoted new benefits to encourage group volunteerism and support local organizations. The key takeaways were to lead with values, execute with excellence, and create strategic alignment.

Regarding inclusivity, our other presenter has championed the idea of exploring different opportunities to include all people in firm-led programs, regardless of what role they play at the firm. This means creating CSR programs that allow everyone to engage and take action without being limited by skills or accessibility. Everyone has tools to make an impact in their community in a meaningful way, therefore their skill level shouldn't prevent them from taking action. Additionally, the idea of commitment is a key value to solicit change and make a difference.

## Analysis:

These steps for more inclusive corporate citizenship are essential for successful action and results. Creating strong and truthful values at the core of corporate citizenship efforts is essential for any action to make a difference. Once commitment and a value system are in place, providing programs, employee volunteerism, and charitable giving efforts become possible. Without a sense of purpose for the firm and its employees, it is difficult for meaningful results to occur. Additionally, empowering and encouraging employee efforts is key to successful corporate citizenship. Employees who are engaged, align with the firm's value system, and are empowered to volunteer or donate to causes and organizations that are meaningful to themselves will reap great rewards. Employees who feel empowered and agree with firm-wide values are more likely to be productive and satisfied, thereby leading to increased retention rates.

## Challenges, Solutions, and Strategies:

One of the main challenges addressed in this Member Meetup was the inclusivity and actionability of various CSR Programs. For example, some skills-based programs or volunteering can be meaningful in action but can prevent some employees from participating. More specifically, skills-based volunteering and programs that expect certain skills or qualifications can prevent some employees at a firm from joining. As a result, firm CSR programs and initiatives should focus on inclusivity for employees of all levels and capabilities.

Another issue is for employees to feel heard and to take action that feels meaningful to them. One solution to this is for firms to encourage employees to promote CSR efforts, whether volunteering or donating or other, that align with their personal values. This choice will allow employees to feel like they are making a difference while being supported by their firm. In addition to improving employee-firm relationships, this will also allow for more productive and satisfied employees.

## Actionable Steps:

1. **Establish and Lead with Clear Values**
  - a. Define specific values that guide social impact work
  - b. Use these values to evaluate and improve existing programs
  - c. Ensure values drive decision-making in program development
  - d. Consider values like integrity, humility, equity, and transparency
  - e. Align social impact values with broader company values where possible
2. **Transform Traditional Programs for Greater Equity**
  - a. Review existing fundraising and volunteer programs through an equity lens
  - b. Remove minimum requirements that create barriers to participation (e.g., minimum donation amounts)
  - c. Evaluate power dynamics in fundraising activities
  - d. Consider replacing single-organization focus with broader giving options
  - e. Implement transparent communication when making program changes
3. **Create Inclusive Benefits and Programs**
  - a. Implement volunteer time off policies
  - b. Establish matching gift programs with low or no minimum requirements
  - c. Design programs that connect different departments and roles
  - d. Create opportunities for both legal/professional and business services staff
  - e. Develop programs that allow participation regardless of skill level
4. **Implement Local Impact Initiatives**
  - a. Create programs that support group volunteerism
  - b. Establish clear funding mechanisms for volunteer activities
  - c. Allow flexibility in choosing local organizations to support
  - d. Enable cross-department and cross-company collaboration
  - e. Minimize administrative burden on nonprofit partners

5. **Build Sustainable Program Infrastructure**
  - a. Establish local champion networks to drive participation
  - b. Create regular communication channels between offices
  - c. Implement systems for tracking and recognizing participation
  - d. Develop mechanisms for sharing best practices across locations
  - e. Enable employees to have a voice in selecting charity partners
6. **Foster Strategic Integration**
  - a. Align social impact work with business objectives where possible
  - b. Create opportunities for skills-based volunteering
  - c. Develop partnerships that benefit both community and business goals
  - d. Consider ways to integrate social impact into core business operations
  - e. Enable cross-functional collaboration on social impact initiatives

## Additional BCCCC Resources:

- 2024 DE&I Advisory Board Bulletin: <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research/reports/diversity-equity-inclusion-advisory-board-report.html>
- Research Brief: <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research-briefs/higher-ratio-women-board-members-affect-ESG-performance.html>
- Research Brief: <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research-briefs/talent-war-advantage-promote-diversity-job-recruitment.html>
- State of Corporate Citizenship: <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research/reports/state-of-corporate-citizenship.html>
- Executive Education Course: <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/executive-education/find-a-course/diversity-inclusion-corporate-citizenship.html>