

Corporate Matching Gift Program

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



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THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT AND MEANINGFUL ORGANIZATIONS IN the Southern California region doing incredibly important work. We sat with a couple of experts on the subject of corporate giving to get a sense of the current landscape of business philanthropy. In the spirit of corporate giving and the Community of Business™, we applaud the extraordinary businesses that have led by example and taken the process of corporate social responsibility to the next level by making good on their commitments to their nonprofit partners.

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM



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— REBECCA LIENHARD

How has corporate matching gift fundraising evolved over the past few years, and why is it becoming increasingly important for nonprofits?

WITZLING: Corporations are increasingly narrowing their giving to less nonprofits, preferring to support nonprofit organizations where their employees have a level of sustained involvement in addition to mission alignment.

How can nonprofits better partner with corporations to increase employee participation in workplace giving programs?

LIENHARD: Nonprofits can increase employee participation by working with the corporation to ensure workplace giving programs are not an add-on benefit, but integral to the company culture. Nonprofits can help corporations by looking at key connection points with employees, and leveraging the systems that are already in place. Is the giving program introduced during employee onboarding? Is it reflected in the employee handbook? Are involved employees recognized in

front of their peers? If these things aren’t in place, then the nonprofit can support their implementation by providing tools, such as customizable flyers or a welcome video that can be shared on the company intranet or staff notice board.

Can you share an example of a successful corporate partnership or matching gift initiative that made a significant impact on your organization or the community?

WITZLING: BioscienceLA applauds Amgen for its robust matching gift initiative that includes charitable contributions for employee volunteer hours. Employee volunteerism has the added value of providing additional staffing and resources. BioscienceLA’s new Sparks youth initiative would not have successfully launched this past year without the time, talent and treasure bestowed by Amgen towards the shared mission of uplifting youth interest in STEM careers.

What role does corporate matching play in strengthening long-term relationships between businesses and nonprofit organizations?

LIENHARD: Consistency! Long-term relationships between businesses and nonprofit organizations are strengthened through the partnership’s consistency. Rather than connecting via a singular event or fundraising opportunity, corporations demonstrate their commitment to the community via their matching gift program. Through repeat giving statements, thank-you letters from the nonprofit partner, or corporate highlights, employees are reminded of their employer’s dedication to the community and cause. Because of this, employees are reassured that their employer has vetted the nonprofit, and that trust increases buy-in and allows them to build expectations of the partnerships. Similarly, people

served by the nonprofit demonstrate higher brand recognition and awareness.

WITZLING: Corporate matching can be a bridge for nonprofits to cultivate donors into leadership roles and foster more sustainable relationships between nonprofits and the corporations involved.

How can nonprofits align their mission and fundraising efforts with a company’s corporate citizenship or ESG initiatives?

LIENHARD: We fill different niches, based on our strengths, location, values, goals and mission. Aligning with corporate citizenship or ESG initiatives starts with understanding the company and their priorities. Then, determine whether the nonprofit does align. Not every nonprofit will fit every company. And that’s okay! The goal is to find the right fit. Get to know the companies you would like to partner with. Understand their values and organizational culture. What makes them unique? How do they communicate and implement ESG initiatives? Start with research, but be willing to brainstorm together to see whether there is a good fit.

What recommendations would you offer corporations that want to build or strengthen a meaningful employee matching gift program?

WITZLING: Have a clear corporate mission of how the company positively impacts its local community and on a broader level. Then, seek feedback from employees on what charitable causes they are currently involved with or would be involved with that align to that mission. Finally, execute a meaningful matching gift program that is inclusive and accessible to employees.

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Vanessa Almendro
Chief Commercialization Officer, City of Hope
Board Member, BioscienceLA

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What characteristics make a nonprofit an attractive partner for corporations looking to expand their community impact?

LIENHARD: Corporations are looking for partners that align with their values, offer multiple ways to engage with the organization, and understand what matters to their employees. Corporations want a variety of opportunities for their employees. For example, one-day events might be compelling for employees just trying out CSR activations, whereas ongoing opportunities might be more attractive to employees who already know that they can make a long-term commitment. Similarly, employees will be more willing to engage if they can use their own unique skills and talents. Ultimately, partnerships reflect the interests and values of the corporation, employee and nonprofit. Therefore, attractive partner nonprofits will show a desire to understand the company culture and needs, and identify opportunities that align.



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— DAN WITZLING

If you could share one message with Southern California business leaders about the value of corporate matching gifts, what would it be?

WITZLING: Corporate matching and support of employee volunteerism to area charities has significant and proven co-benefit to improving corporate culture, productivity, and reducing turnover.

How can nonprofits demonstrate measurable impact to encourage greater corporate support and employee participation?

LIENHARD: Once a matching gift program is established, the nonprofit can provide regular updates, which can be disseminated to employees. Photos, stories and statistics remind employees of how their company's values and mission align with that of the nonprofit. Highlights aren't limited to ribbon-cutting ceremonies or program launches. They should represent the full spectrum of community impact, including things as seemingly small as a person gaining the stamina to walk up stairs unaided. This impact allows each employee to more clearly understand how their contribution made a difference, rather than feeling small in the midst of a large project.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

BIOSCIENCE LOS ANGELES COUNTY, INC. (BIOSCIENCELA)

BioscienceLA is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the growth, connectivity, and global competitiveness of the Southern California life sciences ecosystem. Serving as a neutral convener and ecosystem catalyst, BioscienceLA focuses on the greater Los Angeles Region as we bring together industry, academia, healthcare institutions, government, investors, entre-

preneurs, youth service providers, and community stakeholders to strengthen the region's innovation economy and expand opportunities for scientific advancement. Through its headquarters near international air and seaports, BioscienceLA provides a centralized hub for collaboration, networking, workforce development, knowledge sharing, and industry engagement. BioscienceLA serves as a symbol of the region's growing life sciences sector. Its Board of Directors is comprised of top organizations serving our diverse workforce populations such as Amgen, Cedars-Sinai, City of Hope, PhRMA, Reitler, LARTA Institute, and Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity. Learn more at biosciencela.org

TIERRA DEL SOL

The Tierra del Sol Foundation was founded in Sunland, CA, in 1971. Originally conceived by parents as an alternative to institutional care, Tierra began as an early demonstration of self-advocacy. Today, Tierra continues to champion inclusion and value for all individuals with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts. The organization's vision is that regardless of disability, all people live productive and personally meaningful lives. It maintains values of person-centeredness, passion, honesty, respect, and full engagement. Each day, Tierra fulfills its mission by empowering adults with developmental disabilities (e.g.: autism, cognitive disabilities, and Cerebral Palsy) to realize their potential, become as independent as possible within their communities, establish a valued role in society, and attain successful employment. Over the years, it has become clear that Tierra is not a place, rather it is a dynamic organization that empowers people with developmental disabilities to achieve excellence through Workforce Development, College to Career, and Careers in the Arts. Learn more at Tierradelsol.org.



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Tierra champions inclusion and value for all people with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts. Tierra has decades of experience with job training, placement, and long-term employment supports.

We are here to help you meet your diversity goals.



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