

# The 12 Commandments for Communicating Your Philanthropy

Generous companies do a great deal of good through their corporate philanthropy. According to its most recent survey, Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) reports that leading companies commit \$24.8 billion to corporate giving per year.<sup>1</sup>

Communicating about this and other CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities can be a delicate matter. Going “too heavy” will come across self-serving and inauthentic. Going “too light” risks missing out on positive publicity, not just for your company, but for the causes you support, as well. Such attention is valuable for nonprofit organizations; it often leads to increased fundraising and the opportunity to do more good for their communities.

## Benefits of Corporate Giving

Making the world a better place

Better relationships with local community

Elevated brand image generally

Improved current employee relations

Enhanced recruitment potential

Appealing to potential customers/clients

**\$24.8B**  
PER YEAR

committed to  
corporate giving  
by leading  
companies<sup>1</sup>

Here are 12 best practices that can help you strike the right balance in communicating about corporate philanthropy.

### 1. Clearly brand the program.

Many corporate giving programs – *3M Gives*, *Goldman Sachs Gives* – are clearly branded to make clear their connection to the corporation. Many companies – BNSF Railway Foundation, Merck Foundation – give through corporate branded Foundations.

### 2. Make corporate giving align with what you do and what your values are.

Giving is seen as more genuine when it has a clear connection to a company’s business or its clearly held values. For instance, Microsoft, a tech company, focuses on “areas in which technology can and must benefit the future of humanity.” And Johnson & Johnson, a health-centered company, focuses on giving to causes that help “change the trajectory of health for humanity.”

1. CECP.co

### 3. Gain reputational benefits by giving to high-profile, worthy recipients.

Particularly for companies that may be new or not well-known, a philanthropic association with a well-respected organization can boost corporate recognition.

### 4. Coordinate communications efforts with grantees.

Many nonprofits have sophisticated marketing and public relations resources in place devoted to promoting their programs, which can provide content you can link to or mine.

### 5. Have a dedicated web presence for corporate giving.

Many companies do this through a Corporate Giving or Citizenship or Corporate Social Responsibility link on their corporate website that goes to a dedicated section of the website. This page often includes a News/Grants subpage. For many companies, this is the main venue for communication about charitable giving.

### 6. Issue press releases announcing grants or other activity.

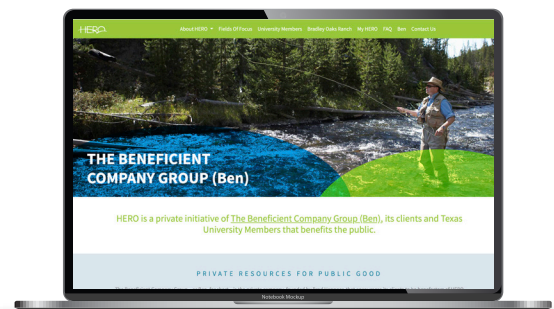
Press releases may be picked up by news outlets; they enhance SEO value, and may serve as a useful communication to anyone looking for the basic facts.

### 7. Leverage social media to share corporate giving news.

Companies typically do this through their overarching corporate social media platforms – typically Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Corporate giving posts are typically “mixed in” with other corporate posts and frequently link back to the Giving section of the corporate website.

### 8. Focus on the good.

The most impactful communications focus more on the potential positive societal outcomes of grants rather than on just dollar amounts, researcher credentials, the company’s services, etc. The idea is to communicate that a company cares about addressing the societal issue, not just self-promotion.



*The corporate philanthropy website associated with The Beneficent Company Group*



**9. Clearly define your audience.**

Corporate philanthropy programs are often targeted to people who do business with the company, and to the public in general, in order to raise the company's profile as a good corporate citizen. Internal audiences are also important, as employees and potential recruits often feel a positive identification with a company that is doing good, and motivated employees often volunteer for the charitable organizations supported.

**10. Share content on a regular basis.**

Frequently posted content demonstrates that a corporate philanthropy program is an active, integral part of the corporation, not merely a PR effort.

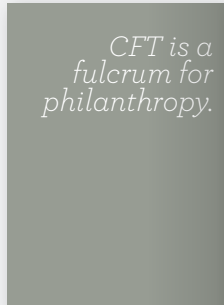
**11. Do more than cut checks.**

To convincingly communicate a commitment to corporate philanthropy, companies not only make donations, but sponsor events, have high-level employees attend events, or have employees volunteer and share their experiences on social media, etc.

**12. Work with an expert.**

Find a marketing agency with expertise in communicating about corporate philanthropy. SullivanPerkins has more than 20 years of experience helping charitable foundations, non-profits and corporations effectively communicate about corporate giving, CSR programs and philanthropic endeavors.

Communities Foundation of Texas



The Catholic Foundation



Southwestern Medical Foundation



The Ursuline Fund



To discuss further with SullivanPerkins, contact [info@sullivanperkins.com](mailto:info@sullivanperkins.com).