

MAKING IT WORK

Research shows how to motivate young Australians to support charities through workplace giving programs.

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Young Australians will make up 60 per cent of the workforce by 2025, and as they will be redefining the labour market they are a key demographic for a workplace giving program (WGP).

Their participation in charitable giving, specifically in the workplace, has plateaued. This is why it is important to understand what would motivate them to participate in a regular giving program.

In conjunction with the Australian Charities Fund, the Social Impact Hub ran a primary research study looking at the giving habits of Australians between 15 and 35 years old. There was a great deal of consistency among respondents regarding their motivations for giving. The strong themes that emerged fall into three broad categories...

1. EMOTIONAL AND PERSONAL CONNECTION – Being able to choose to give to charities that align with personal preferences.

2. TRUST AND VISIBILITY – Giving to charitable partners that are seen as reliable, trustworthy and financially transparent. Young Australians want to see the impact of their donation

and the difference a WGP makes collectively.

3. FINANCIAL CONCERNS – They are influenced by such issues as their level of disposable income, donation-matching by employers and the tax effectiveness of giving.

This demographic has a genuine desire to make a difference and help charities that resonate on a personal level. This age group is more socially aware than previous generations, and most have made ad hoc donations.

Despite this general awareness of charities outside of work, 15 per cent of employees in companies with a WGP indicated they were not aware whether their employer offered workplace giving.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Interviews revealed a dissonance between the establishment of a company's WGP and its ongoing implementation, with communication to employees often poor. For example, a WGP would be mentioned only briefly as an option during an employee's induction process, if mentioned at all.

This, and other key findings, have led us to make some general recommendations for charities about how to increase participation and motivate young Australians to take part in WGP.

Charities should ensure the outcomes of their work are well publicised so potential participants are not lost for lack of awareness. Social media is a non-intrusive way to communicate to this demographic. Employees who participate in a WGP can be automatically invited to join the charity's social-media sites where they can receive the latest notifications.

This can be further reinforced if charities host regular events in partnership with the employer, where the CEO or an executive can present the story of individuals or communities that have benefited from donations through the WGP.

Many of the participants in the interviews said emotional connection was a major factor in influencing their decision to donate, so a short video or presentation documenting a success story would be a powerful and emotive tool to convince people to participate.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

Furthermore, the engagement of the organisation's leadership at these events sets a great example and helps make employees feel that they are part of a socially mindful organisation.

Charity partners should be encouraged to regularly report on progress and the impact of donations. Sending "thank you" letters that can be displayed in workplace environments both acknowledge and remind WGP participants of their contributions. These reminders can congratulate employees for reaching donation milestones, or celebrate the completion of projects.

This places the WGP at the front of employees' conscience, further encouraging an ongoing commitment to workplace giving.

By employers and charity partners working together strategically, the number of young Australians participating in workplace giving should significantly accelerate over coming years.