

Evaluation of the Giving Circles at Work Pilot

THE GIVING CIRCLES AT WORK PILOT

Giving circles are a form of collective giving where donors pool their resources - most often financial contributions. Donors collectively decide which organisations will receive funds. Giving circles are donor initiated and usually have an educational or community building component to the activity.

The Giving Circles at Work pilot developed and trialled this new model of giving in a workplace context. The pilot involved establishing seven giving circles within a large Australian corporate employer, with 67 employees participating as members of these giving circles.

Each giving circle had from 5 to 16 members, with employee donations matched by their employer. Each giving circle was led by a designated 'Champion', who was sometimes assisted by a 'Deputy Champion'.

Two models of giving circles were trialled. 'Cause-led' giving circles were focused on a specific cause area, such as 'refugees in Australia' and had a grant making process where eligible charities could apply to receive a grant. Members of these giving circles then voted to determine which charity would receive the grant and, in some instances, provided a smaller grant to runner up charities. 'Charity-led' giving circles focused on a specific charity, with the charity proposing various programs which the giving circle could choose to fund.

The total amount raised by the giving circles was \$45,328, which includes employer matching. Nine charities received grants, ranging in size from \$500 (for a runner up grant) to \$11,538, and with the median grant being \$5,180.

The pilot was developed and managed by Good2Give, who provided extensive guidance and support to participants through the process. This support included provision of 'toolkits' and the online Good2Give Workplace Giving Platform.

A comprehensive evaluation of the pilot was undertaken by the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University of Technology. This study included surveys of participants conducted before and after the pilot, as well as interviews conducted after the pilot. The full evaluation is set out in a report available [here](#) and summarised in this document.

SATISFACTION WITH GIVING CIRCLES AT WORK

As shown in the table below, there was a strong level of satisfaction amongst participants in the pilot.

Survey Question	Average Response (Out of 10)
I found participating in a giving circle in my workplace to be a satisfying experience	7.57
I would recommend participating in a giving circle to my work colleagues	7.63

85 per cent of participants found the experience positive (answering 6 out of 10 or more in response to the survey question) and 83 per cent were positive about recommending it to work colleagues.

CHANGES IN GIVING BEHAVIOUR

The evaluation found a statistically significant increase in the self-reported giving of money between the commencement of the pilot and its conclusion.

Survey Question	Average Response – Pre-pilot Survey	Average Response – Post-pilot Survey
How much do you donate to charities and causes you care about annually?	\$581.39	\$830.56

This is a positive and encouraging finding, which indicates that participating in a giving circle as part of the pilot may have an impact on the giving of money by employees.

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY AND ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORK COLLEAGUES DEVELOPING CERTAIN SKILLS

Participants felt that giving circles provided them with the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community and developed enhanced relationships with work colleagues.

82 per cent of participants responded positively to the statement 'Participating in a giving circle in my workplace made me feel that my work environment enables me to make a positive contribution to the community'.

DEVELOPING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CHARITIES AND FEELING THAT THEIR GIVING IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The ability to develop a better understanding of charities and feel their giving made a difference was a clear benefit to participants. The pilot showed a statistically significant increase in participants' understanding of charities they supported and the general operating environment for charities. It also showed that participation in a giving circle increased the level of research participants did on charities before deciding which ones to support.

"I think for me I just felt a lot more invested in the outcome of what the money was going to be used for" – Participant.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Particularly amongst 'Champions', participating in a giving circle provided an opportunity to develop communication, decision making and teamwork skills.

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Many of the benefits for employees result in benefits for employers. If employees feel more satisfied, engaged and motivated, this will have tangible benefits for employers in terms of productivity.

Other benefits include:

- Giving employees the opportunity to 'give back'
- Encouraging collaboration
- Creating a positive, giving atmosphere
- Fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities

In relation to how giving circles can help an employer fulfil their corporate social responsibilities, 80 per cent of participants responded positively to the statement 'Participating in a giving circle in my workplace made me feel that I was contributing to their employer fulfilling its social responsibility to the community'.

BENEFITS FOR CHARITIES

The charities surveyed were very positive about engaging with a giving circle and would recommend it to other charities. They also believed there would be benefits if more employers assisted their employees in setting up the giving circles.

Survey Question	Average Response (Out of 10)
Engaging with a giving circle of employees was a beneficial experience for my charity	8.71
I would recommend the experience of engaging with a giving circle in the workplace to other charities	8.14
Based on my experience engaging with a giving circle of Westpac Group employees, I would like more employers to support their employees to set up giving circles in the workplace	8.71

The benefits to charities include:

- Obtaining financial support
- Strengthening relationships with employees
- Raising awareness about their work

The giving circles at work pilot showed a statistically significant increase in participants' beliefs that charities play an important role in Australia.

This attitudinal shift amongst participants demonstrates the benefit giving circles in the workplace plays in terms of fostering an enhancing understanding of charities and the work they do.

OTHER FINDINGS

The evaluation also examined other aspects of the pilot, including the effectiveness of resources provided to participants, the role of 'Champions', and the importance of having support from business leadership. The report sets out these and other matters.

Overall, the evaluation concluded that there is a

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compelling case to roll out giving circles in the workplace more widely, and the report makes a number of recommendations on how the model could be enhanced.

For example, aiming to have larger giving circles would mean that pool of funds available for granting will be larger and would also increase opportunities for skill development amongst participants.