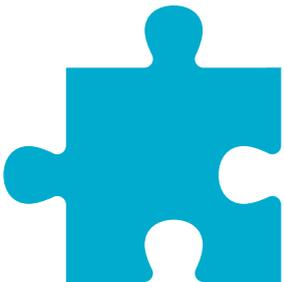


# Communicating Giving

Connecting better with people  
for greater community impact



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*The Temasek Trust Corporate Giving Workshops bring grantmaking practitioners together to share good practices of grantmaking. Discussions at the workshops have been incorporated into this series of Practice Guides that can help continue the conversation and inform more grantmakers.*

# Communicating Giving

Should philanthropy be done quietly? What is the purpose of communicating your giving and how should you do it? Communicating your giving is really about creating value, garnering support and forming deeper relationships towards greater community impact. To do these, you will need to include communications in your giving strategy right from the beginning.

This guide offers practical strategies on communicating effectively with your target audience. Through various case studies, you can also learn how local companies put their grantees and those whom their grantees serve before their brand in their communications.

# Why Communicate About Giving?

## Advancing the cause significantly

Communicating about giving is not just publicity. It is, more importantly, a channel for companies and corporate foundations to advance programmes and social causes towards greater community impact.



### 4 reasons why you should communicate your giving efforts

#### 1 For accountability

- Communication gives your stakeholders – both internal (within your company) and external (business partners, customers and the public) – assurance about the programmes or causes that you are contributing to.
- It builds and sustains legitimacy of your company in the eyes of your stakeholders, which helps with requests for more resources for future programmes or causes.
- Public announcements and acknowledgements also help you to stay true to the cause.

#### 2 For impact

- Bringing attention to and raising awareness of the cause you are supporting is a good way to garner support and mobilise resources.
- It helps to reach out to like-minded stakeholders and supporters. Greater impact can be achieved if the various players come together.
- Business partners, customers, the public, grantees and their communities can contribute to the cause together. You can make a stand, bring others with you and create a greater impact together.

3

### For corporate citizenship

- Your company's leadership and staff need to know how the organisation is responsible towards society.
- By communicating, you enable colleagues to play a part in corporate citizenship and take ownership in the giving. Having your company weigh in on its philanthropic efforts is a great recipe for success.
- It also ensures that everyone is on the same page to drive meaningful innovation for positive social change.

4

### For publicity mileage and branding

- A deep mindshare of your philanthropic efforts can contribute to sustainable market share in a highly competitive environment.
- It helps to build the reputation of your company.
- Partners want to be proud of doing business with you. Customers want to associate themselves with your products and services. They want to “share” and “like” your story.



#### CASE STUDY

## Standard Chartered Bank

### WHY COMMUNICATION IS NECESSARY

Corporate giving is part of Standard Chartered Bank's community investment strategy. Here are examples of how the bank communicates its giving to fit the above reasons.

**For accountability** Communication about corporate giving is included in the bank's annual report. The bank reports its annual monetary donation amounts and the number of Employee Volunteering days taken up by its employees.

**For impact** Since 2012, the bank has been running its *Silver Lining* programme to raise public awareness about ageing issues and promote active ageing and senior volunteerism.

**For corporate citizenship** Communicating giving to staff, partners and supporters helps to rally them together to further the bank's community agenda. It also creates pride in employees. For instance, creating videos that highlight employee volunteers' efforts has resonated strongly among the staff, who feel recognised and inspired to continue their efforts.

**For publicity mileage and branding** Corporate giving is part of the bank's corporate narrative, and communicating it builds the right reputation. It demonstrates to potential hires the culture of the bank and why it is a great place to work.

# What to Communicate?

## Planning the strategic messages

Communicating your giving begins with a well thought-out strategy. It is not only part of the giving strategy but it can be *the* strategy.

### Communication is strategy

Communication is strategy because it guides your giving programme and can even direct it in crucial ways.

Thus, communication plans need to be integrated into your giving strategy right from the start. The questions begin as far upstream as in any carefully considered grantmaking.

#### Important questions to ask when thinking about your communications strategy:



What **outcomes** do you want to achieve with your communications? This applies to the company, the sponsors, the grantees and their communities.



What are the important **messages** you want to communicate and to **whom**?



What are the **platforms** you wish to engage to reach your audience?

Meanwhile, having a good giving strategy also enables good stories to be told – a yay for your communications! For tips, see sidebar: *Do you have a good giving strategy?*

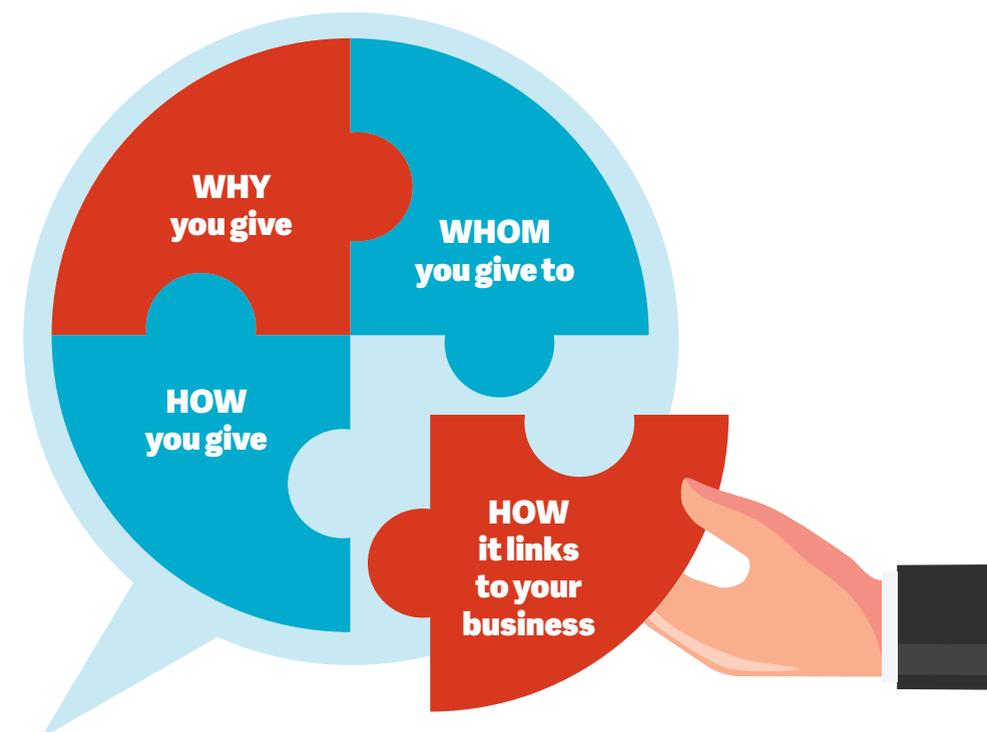
#### DO YOU HAVE A GOOD GIVING STRATEGY?

A good giving strategy makes strong giving stories. Be sure that your giving strategy includes the following:

- 1. Sustainability of the effort**
  - Is your strategy linked to your business? The better the link is, the more you can achieve sustainability. Give where your strengths are.
  - Do your programmes foster independence in your grantees? Do you invest in building capabilities, networks and systems for your grantees and their communities to plan, innovate and implement solutions?
- 2. Needs-driven vs. donor-driven giving**
  - Does your giving plan consider what is needed or only what you want to do and give?
- 3. Doing good to be good vs. doing good to look good**
  - What is your intention? Is your giving for show, or do you want to achieve meaningful community outcomes?

### What a good communications strategy looks like

A good communications strategy tells the compelling story of:



#### Important facts to communicate about your giving:

1. The amount given, monetarily or non-monetarily.
2. The number of volunteers and their hours.
3. The list of organisations supported.
4. The number of people served.
5. The impact on those who are served, backed by data.

#### TIP

**Make sure you present facts and data accurately.** Misrepresentations, over-stressing positive outcomes or underplaying problems can lead to public mistrust.

## Mission-focused communications

When publicising your giving, your communications should be community mission-focused or outcomes-focused and not company-focused. The stories you tell should focus on your cause and not your company so that it doesn't read as a branding or publicity campaign.

However, this does not mean your core business is separate from your giving. Doing your core business well helps your brand and credibility to support the community through your philanthropic efforts.



### CASE STUDY

## CapitaLand Hope Foundation

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ACROSS MULTIPLE AUDIENCES AND CHANNELS

CapitaLand Hope Foundation taps the strengths of its parent organisation, CapitaLand, in its giving programmes. As a real estate company, CapitaLand's strengths are in its property locations and reach, which the Foundation uses as gathering points – and even as communication channels – to promote social causes. By being strategic about giving and its communication of it, the organisation as a whole can achieve both its corporate and social goals.

### CSR Initiative: Collaboration with the Singapore Kindness Movement

#### The CSR campaign

CapitaLand's Raffles City Singapore wanted to embark on a CSR campaign to rally staff, tenants and shoppers for a social cause in Singapore's special bicentennial year. Thus, in 2019, the mall collaborated with Singapore Kindness Movement for the *Arts in the City: We Love SINGApore* exhibition, which gathered uniquely Singapore stories of kindness. These stories were presented through Singa the Lion figurines designed by people from all walks of life.

For this campaign, CapitaLand strategically leveraged its space and resources as a platform to engage a wider audience to do good together.

#### The message

To bring the local community together to share their Singapore stories and vision on what kindness and being greater means to them.

#### Intended outcomes

- Increase public awareness of kindness in the local context.
- Engage people from all walks of life to do good together.

#### How the communication plan was integrated into the giving strategy

From the start, the campaign was planned to be communicated to two groups of audiences (staff and the public) via three channels:

1. Staff volunteered in pre-event activities to raise awareness of the campaign and its beneficiaries.
2. The public were engaged in the event launch through a newsworthy exhibition at the mall: it showcased figurines of Singa the Lion designed by high-profile personalities such as celebrities and influencers and the beneficiaries.
3. The outreach was further amplified through partnerships with the mainstream media and social media influencers.

#### Immediate communication outcomes

- More than 5,000 hashtags and a media value of over \$550,000 were generated.
- Increased public awareness of the needy.
- Increased public awareness of CapitaLand caring for the community.

#### Wider campaign outcomes

- Increased engagement with multiple stakeholders.
- Increased traffic to the mall.

# When to Communicate?

## Getting the timing right

As much as it is important to know what to communicate, companies should also be strategic and sensitive on when to do it. Being quick is not always right.

### Consider the following before communicating



#### Is the timing appropriate?

Publicity about your company's giving or product in the face of a national disaster can seem opportunistic and inauthentic. Be sensitive to what is happening on the ground.



#### Will it reflect well on your grantees and the people they serve?

Nobody likes to appear as a charity case, especially those who are served by the programmes you are contributing to. If communicating your giving does not reflect well on your community partners and their service users – whether in photos, videos or print – consider not publicising or find more humane ways to do so. Always communicate with a spirit of care and concern.



#### Will a delay in communicating increase impact?

A story was told of an established foundation intending to commit a large sum of money to a cause. However, the foundation came to know that a think-tank was planning to do likewise, but their donation would only be gifted half a year later. Knowing that the foundation's publicity of its donation might jeopardise the think-tank's investment, the foundation decided not to announce its giving first but to do so together with the think-tank six months later. This combined publicity and donation doubled the impact of the giving.



### CASE STUDY

#### Standard Chartered Bank

##### DO WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE EVERY GIVING ACTIVITY?

*As shared by Winnie Tan,  
Head of Sustainability & Community Engagement, ASEAN and South Asia*

"In 2012, Standard Chartered launched a community initiative called *Silver Lining*. The objective was to address issues faced by the ageing population in Singapore.

At the beginning, our focus was on internal communication and about aligning our employees to the cause. This builds the foundation and key to the sustainability of our cause. Our external communication was limited to factual announcements and our participation in key events.

We are conscious about framing the communication efforts in the right tone and for the right reasons. Communication can be a requirement for compliance and a powerful lever for rallying support to do more. It can also be a way to build the company culture and employees' pride."

# Who Do We Communicate To?

## Finding the right audience

Defining your target audience is key in a communications strategy, as this will determine the message, pitch, channels or platforms – among other things.

## Differentiating your approach to each target audience

There is no singular or linear communications strategy that can reach out to your entire audience. You will have to identify your audience, categorise them and develop a targeted communications strategy for each of them. In corporate giving, categories may look like this:

Grantee
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>
Board
Management
Staff
Volunteers
Service Users
Service Users' Family and Caregivers
<b>External stakeholders</b>
Relevant Associations/Societies
Community Leaders
General Public

Company
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>
Board
Management
Leaders
Colleagues
Volunteers
<b>External stakeholders</b>
Fellow Grantmakers

"Communicating the value of a programme is not always about company profiling or publicity mileage. Often, it is about personally engaging with partners and social service users who have participated and been positively impacted by our programmes. They in turn communicate with conviction within their social network and circles of influence, and this can be a powerful means to gain endorsement and support."

*Ms Amelia Champion,  
Head, Corporate Affairs,  
SP Group*



## Who delivers the message is key

The role of communicating your giving does not lie solely with appointed company spokespersons. The people that are being served can be spokespersons too, especially if their stories deliver a greater impact. As one practitioner shared, "Sometimes, the issue is not the message but who is delivering it."

The two groups that are key in communicating giving are the **service users** and the **companies**.

### Service Users

Service users, families and caregivers can deliver the human touch and authenticity that others cannot. However, when asking them to share, be sensitive of their privacy and needs, especially those who are not familiar with publicity like social media. Here are some key points to note:

- 1. Respect their confidentiality**  
Appropriate permissions should be obtained in ethical ways in consultation with the grantee organisation for each engagement. This includes social media postings during volunteering activities.
- 2. Protect their dignity**  
Portray individuals, families and caregivers positively, preferably inspirationally.
- 3. Be natural**  
Find a balance between scripted and direct testimonials. A presentation that is too scripted may reek of inauthenticity, whereas a straightforward and simple one can be more impactful.
- 4. Be mindful of their time**  
Filming a testimonial video may take up more time than expected. Always prepare the interviewees for how long it will take and check if it fits their schedules.

### Companies

One of the best people to front a company's philanthropy is the CEO, management and their staff. This signals the company's commitment to their giving efforts, as well as the team work behind it.

A practitioner offered: "People like to see themselves in photos, videos and the news. Organisations may not crave media attention, but it is an easy way to create publicity and goodwill. That, together with project output and impact data, can help us to secure our budget from the Board. We also think about stakeholder management: Who are the parties that we care about? For us, they may include the government, regulators and cities."



## CASE STUDY

### SMRT

#### LETTING SERVICE USERS AND STAFF TELL THE STORY

As shared by Christina Low,  
Stakeholder Engagement, Corporate Communications

"Most of the time, we prefer the service users to communicate the giving. When they do, we will share their stories. Sometimes, they may not have the means to, and that's fine, too.

Our staff will also share their volunteer experiences and stories with the service users and the public. Our people are key to SMRT's caring culture. They find it very meaningful to contribute to the greater good, as they enjoy supporting one another and our service users. There is a sense of fulfilment for those who volunteer together, strengthening their commitment towards co-workers and SMRT.

We believe staff and service users' emotions and experiences will catalyse more giving within and outside of SMRT. To date, our volunteers have contributed to nearly 1,000 initiatives."

#### A Service User Speaks: Intergenerational Playground at St Joseph's Home

In 2017, SMRT sponsored an intergenerational playground at St Joseph's Home. It is the first of its kind built within a nursing home in Singapore. The playground provides a common space for residents of the home and children from its childcare centre to interact together, and thus, improve their overall well-being.

*"The intergenerational playground allows me to interact with the children – watching them play puts a smile on my face. When my children and grandchildren visit me, they will bring me for a walk in the garden and have a go at the playground."*

**Madam Chiew Joke Jong,**  
Resident of St Joseph's Home

#### An SMRT Staff Speaks: Community Chest Fu Dai Project

For the third year in a row, over 40 SMRT staff volunteers participated in the Community Chest Fu Dai event by packing and delivering 250 Chinese New Year goody bags to seniors and families on 11 January 2020.

*"I felt touched and motivated. It was heartening to see the smiles on the faces of the seniors when we delivered the Fu Dai to their homes. Knowing that an act of kindness can bring smiles to others also brings joy to me."*

**Ms Julie Lee, Service Ambassador,**  
Yishun Station, Trains



## Relationships and roles

Working together is important: many different parties can collaborate to make “communications” happen.

First, you have your internal stakeholders. Then, if you are working on the communications strategy with other partners, such as grantees and fellow grantmakers, there are other considerations, too. Each party has his/her own agenda, and to succeed in communicating effectively, everyone should be aligned.

Adapted from *Communicating for Impact: Strategies for Grantmakers* by GrantCraft (<https://grantcraft.org/>).



## Working with grantees

“Communications take time away from my programmes.”

Grantee organisations have varying capacities to deliver communications the way companies and foundations need, and not all of them would be open to the idea. Here are some tips to help smoothen the process:

### 1. Earn their trust

Grantees are more likely to work with you if they feel you genuinely care for their organisations and those whom they serve. Discuss and listen to grantees, and earn their trust from the beginning of the partnership.

### 2. Be sensitive

Show sensitivity to their concerns in promoting their work, especially when they are protecting those whom they serve. You can explore creative ideas around anonymity together.

### 3. Provide assistance where needed

Grantees may feel that spending time promoting their work takes time away from their real programme work. They also may not have the resources and relevant skills to do it. Grantees would appreciate ideas and advice on how communications can be done, and help from professional volunteers and funds to put together a video, event, or even to craft a good message.

### 4. Invest in them

Invest by building communications capabilities in your grantees. It is a critical skill for all grantees to have to build credibility and advance their causes with greater impact. And it will help with your own communication efforts, too!

## Working with communications colleagues

“The story is too simplified.”

In some companies and foundations, the communications colleagues are tasked with the role of philanthropy and giving. In others, the giving practitioners work with their communications colleagues for both internal and external communications – and challenges can arise.

Giving practitioners understand deeply the issues they support and the related complexities. They may feel upset and undervalued when their communications colleagues seemingly “over-simplify” the work and the cause in their messaging.

On the other hand, communications colleagues know that getting the right narrative read and understood means couching content clearly in relevant and compelling ideas and using the appropriate platforms.

One tip to bridge this giving-communications divide is to jointly strategise what to give and what to communicate about. Having a common end in mind (e.g. the intended programme outcomes and the communication objectives for the programme and the company) can make for powerful stories and community impact.

While this may not be possible for all giving programmes and activities, doing this for major or strategic programmes will be helpful.

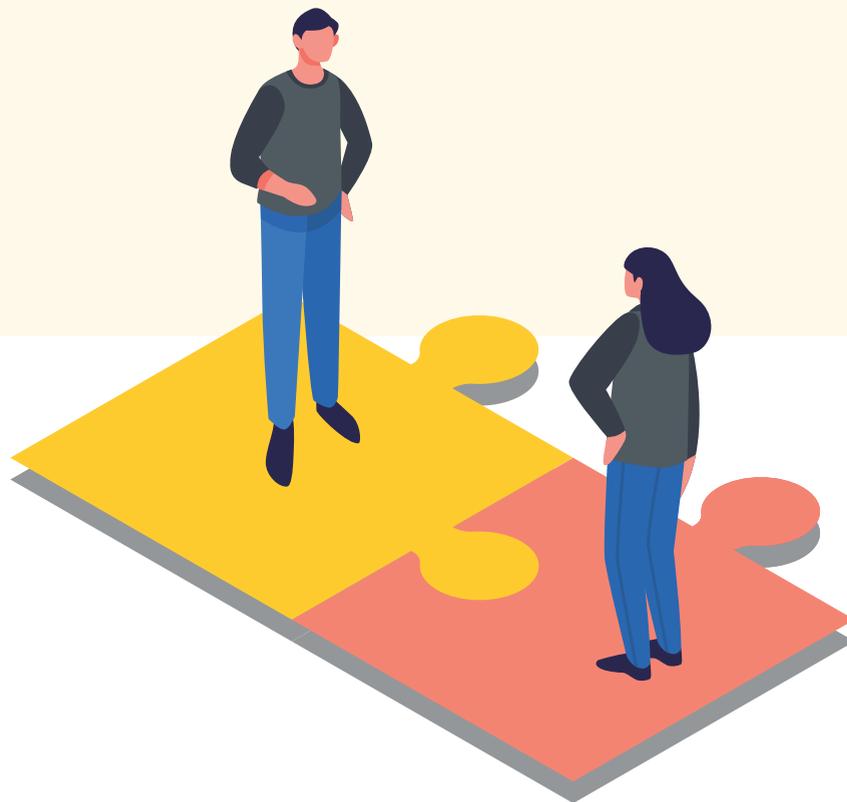


## Working with fellow grantmakers

“I was not aware of the plan.”

Partnering fellow grantmakers or other companies giving to the same cause is a valuable way to scale up impact. Sensitivity to roles and responsibilities is key when developing or executing a communications strategy across stakeholders. To avoid conflict, discuss the intent and other expectations early in the partnership, such as naming rights, line-up of mentions and preferred personas.

Keep dialogue channels open for partners to feel safe in sharing their thoughts and providing inputs to the communications plans.



# How Can We Communicate?

## Considering all angles

When it comes to communicating giving, we have explored the **why**, **when**, **what** and **who** so far. **How** then should the communicating be done?

There is a thin line between being factual about what the company does for others and chest-thumping to the world how generous and benevolent your company is. Remember: Your organisation's brand personality is seen and experienced through what you do, in addition to what you say you do.

Here are some guidelines towards tactful and effective communication:

### 1. Know your audience

Crafting a press release for the media requires a different tone, messaging and even medium, compared to communicating to the general public. Segmenting your audience and knowing who they are will add clarity to your communications.

### 2. Define your goals

What information do you want to communicate to the public and how? Is there information that should be kept private and reframed for public consumption? Setting clear goals helps your staff and stakeholders to communicate the right messages to the public.

### 3. Align with corporate branding for consistency

The way you communicate your giving efforts should not differ from your corporate branding for consistency in the eyes of the public. If you need to create a distinct corporate social responsibility personality, then relevancy is key to avoid a diffused brand personality.

### 4. Appreciate context as well as cultural and social sensitivities

Demonstrate appropriate sensitivity and sensibilities for different cultures and religions. For example, in 2019, two local Buddhist and Hindu organisations donated close to 40 tonnes of rice to various mosques for Ramadan (the annual fasting month for Muslims) in Singapore. They understood that local mosques use rice to make porridge to break their fasts as well as share the food with those in need. Their contributions speak of their sensitivity to what the community needs.

#### TIPS

The dynamics of a potentially unequal funder-grantee relationship takes on a new dimension when the giving crosses borders. All considerations become more pronounced when deciding on the right platform and when, how and who to communicate to.

## The heart of communication

Ultimately, communications in a giving strategy is about forming and deepening relationships with all those who are connected to your cause.

These tips can help you work towards a more meaningful journey of communicating:



### Only start when you are ready, inside out

Make sure your internal stakeholders (e.g. leaders and colleagues) are on board. When all are in sync, everyone can deliver a consistent message and experience.

### Bereal

Authenticity and sincerity are key. Don't give others a reason to wonder if your giving is genuine, or differently-motivated.

For example, "volun-tourism" has been heavily criticised in recent years, especially with the rise of social media, where volunteers use the platform to promote a particular cause but only as a one-off effort to brand themselves. You don't want to be perceived as being opportunistic at the expense of others.

### Treat others well

Tasteful communications protect the dignity of those served by the community organisations. Seek to empower them in their life journeys through your communication.

For example, constantly ensure that photos, videos and social media posts portray them as hopeful and cared for rather than dependent, desperate or incapable. Avoid stereotyping their personalities or situations. Take the opportunity to engage and demonstrate care through uplifting or enabling interactions with them. How you deliver the aid speaks volumes.

## CASE STUDY

### DBS Foundation

#### CEO AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANCHOR THE GIVING STORY

Q&A with Mythili Mamidanna  
Vice President, Group Strategic Marketing & Communications

Through DBS Foundation and its staff volunteerism programme, *People of Purpose*, the bank supports social enterprises – businesses with a double bottom line – by leveraging the skills of staff and expertise in the finance sector.

#### Why do you choose to involve your staff in giving?

When our staff actively participate in giving efforts, it makes way for more effective social change. As skills-based volunteers, DBS staff not only donate their time but also their skills and experiences to help social enterprises with their business challenges.

#### How do you communicate your giving among your staff?

We use internal channels such as the bank-wide intranet, events, email bulletins and newsletters. More importantly, we showcase successful case studies in our large townhalls anchored by our CEO and senior colleagues. By giving these stories of good centre stage, we signal our commitment to social impact as well as inspire participation from our staff to give back to the community.

#### In what ways do you encourage your staff to volunteer?

Across the region, we have set a yearly target of volunteer hours for our staff to achieve. Every staff gets two days of volunteer leave to pursue programmes involving education, environment and supporting the elderly.

We make it easy for our staff to give their time and skills through the *People of Purpose* volunteer platform, and our senior colleagues and experts are also mentors to founders of social enterprises. On top of that, our learning programmes are readily available to them.

We also encourage the bank to procure products and services from social enterprises by onboarding them on our online procurement platform. In short, we work to integrate social enterprises into the culture and operations of the bank.

Our workshop, *Communicating Giving*, was held in Singapore in September 2019.

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