

Session Summary

People-Driven Purpose

How can you continue to engage all of your people when the status quo doesn't cut it anymore? Hear how Xylem and Empower drove deeper impact in a tough year by finding new and creative ways to catalyze engagement with employees, partners and nonprofits.

Hosts

Emma Housman, Program Manager, Xylem Watermark, Xylem

Angie Ruddell, Engagement & CSR Manager, Empower Retirement

Attendees

200 attendees

Key Takeaways

- Move from transactional to transformational.
- Listen to your employees and community partners as you navigate through this new 2021 reality. Stay flexible!
- Take a step back and make sure your process and team are still supporting your program goals how you intend them to.
- Identify how people give back with the data. What are employees doing to get more involved? Xylem used this to run a global campaign.
- The CSR field is a smaller community and leaning on each other for advice and ideas helps address questions and learn.

Session Notes

- With the pandemic, programs needed to quickly adapt and respond. It required companies to pause long term goals and react to the moment's needs. Began to target how the needs of partners in different regions, which allowed for stronger relationships
 - Used ambassador programs, business resource groups and local partners to plan and shift the focus
 - Recognizing what the needs are for employees and the community
 - How did you use resources already in place to drive change?
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- Senior leadership and bottom-up approach
 - Business Research Group and using the influence they have within the company.

- Creating a safe place for employees to share their experience around topics like Black Rights. It's okay to be vulnerable! Leadership then responded to these conversations and how they could create for inclusion and equity. Educating internally and externally.
- Xylem leaned into their Community Impact Portal (CIP) last year to run matching fundraisers with our business partners. They nominated causes and then would set up giving opp pages that they could then share with employees and their communities and we could match donations automatically.
- What does 2021 look like in this new hybrid of online and offline? Shift to volunteering and people demonstrating the mission of the company. Break down the silos of what people think volunteering, granting and giving is.

Q&A Discussions and Conversations

- **What kind of communication channels and ideas are you leveraging to keep your people informed and engaged?**

At Empower, they used their community impact portal (CI portal), targeted emails and intranet article features; and leveraged their business resource groups to communicate and share ideas. The BRGs have their own intranet and the team leverages the announcement features.

At Xylem, they use Facebook Workplace and have a group called Watermark in Action that all employees are in. This is where they post resources and communicate about upcoming campaigns and global events, but it's also where employees upload photos and stories from activities, they do themselves which keeps people engaged. They've also used it to run virtual activities. For example, back in September they ran a disaster preparedness activity where they encouraged colleagues to build a personal disaster preparedness kit, and hosted an educational webinar about preparedness with their partner Mercy Corps. Then they made a donation to Mercy Corps for every photo a colleague posted in the Workplace page of their own disaster kit.

- **Any insights on how to engage colleagues without constant access to computers/internet for their jobs? Specifically, when you consider engaging essential workers in a manufacturing setting.**

Empower doesn't have a manufacturing segment; however, their call center folks are tied to customer calls and are not on email very often. They have access to Empower's matching program and paid volunteer time. Angie has noticed over time that their schedules are less flexible than other employees, and they are not as able to take advantage of volunteer/engagement opps. She had a few conversations with the senior leader over that division and spoke at their manager meeting to discuss opportunities and brainstorm scheduling ideas. They still struggle with it but are trying to provide quarterly engagement opportunities geared towards that group with advanced notice so schedulers can make sure they get the time.

They also did an internal grant contest. They had employees from all over the company nominate non-profits. They randomly chose 4 to win a grant and then employees voted amongst those 4 for a winner (if folks don't have access to computers, this could be challenging). Another thought is if you have a community partner who can bring a project to your manufacturing site?

At Xylem's manufacturing sites, they've seen a few approaches be successful, but it's still definitely a challenge that they're working on! But they've tried the following:

1. On-site activities - clean-ups/plogging that are right on site or in the surrounding area
2. Weaving in educational activities into standing meetings and town hall sessions - setting aside 30 mins for an activity or presentation
3. Building in an activity into site events. Their manufacturing teams in Europe have family picnic events 1-2 times a year, so Champions always plan for a volunteer activity to be part of that - often it's one that includes an educational component for kids that are in attendance. And if it is something off-site, they've had teams do activities in shifts so the site can stay up-and-running while some people go out and volunteer.