LESSONS FROM SCALING SOCIAL IMPACT IN A REMOTE WORLD

Featuring Twitter, Cruise, Okta, and 826 Valencia

THE ONE CITY FORUM POWERED BY sf.citi( );

January 2022

ABOUT THE REPORT

Social impact programs have always played a vital role in the community, bringing corporations and nonprofits together to give back and support those most in need. That became even more evident when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and pushed society to its boundaries. Communities in need relied on the support provided by social impact programs more than ever. While some services weren't affected by the pandemic, many social impact professionals were left navigating how to adapt existing programming to meet COVID-19 safety guidelines and address a new crop of issues.

How the pandemic impacted and changed social impact programming has been a major focus for sf.citi's One City Forum—a leadership committee of nonprofit executives and tech social impact leaders. The One City Forum elevated this topic by hosting an event series on scaling social impact in a remote world. During these discussions, social impact leaders highlighted the unique challenges presented by the pandemic and the creative solutions being used to navigate an increasingly remote world.

After almost two years since the pandemic started, we wanted to dive even further into the changing face of social impact work. For this report, we asked four members of the One City Forum to look back on how the pandemic affected their programming and what long-term impact it will have on their work. See below for their stories and key insights.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

KARL ROBILLARD
Corporate Philanthropy and
Community Outreach Manager
Twitter

AMANDA LENAGHAN
Head of Social Impact &
Community Engagement
Cruise

VICTOR CORDON
Senior Manager, Social Impact
Okta

BITA NAZARIAN
Executive Director
826 Valencia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TWITTER'S DAY OF SERVICE CONTENDS WITH THE PANDEMIC

Since 2010, Twitter for Good has been Twitter's biannual company-wide days of service and ongoing volunteering effort, providing Tweeps around the world with opportunities to come together to make an impact through service.

HOW DID TWITTER MAKE TWITTER FOR GOOD VIRTUAL?

- Sought new tools that'd work best in a remote setting:
  - *Thought through the absence of working in a room together and elevated tools that allowed asynchronous work*
  - *Changed the responsibility of the Events Team to help the Social Impact Team understand new tools and develop training programs*
  - *Absorbed the cost of some products so they could utilize products without passing the cost on to partners*
  - *Pushed for creative tools to engage participants such as Drawbridge*

The Lead-up to Twitter for Good May 2020

- Twitter (like everyone else) didn't know much about COVID-19 in the early days of the pandemic and once they realized lockdowns were not going to let up, they only had a couple of weeks to plan a fully remote Twitter for Good

- Their team had to rethink the entire 10-year program - likened it to "rebuilding Rome"

HOW DID TWITTER MAKE TWITTER FOR GOOD VIRTUAL? (continued)

- Made quick and strategic shifts to the program:
  - *Instead of the normal five key focus areas that Twitter for Good covered, public health became the number one issue, followed by mental health concerns and income inequality*
  - *Brought on new partners who they might not have thought of before but became acutely important to Twitter*

- Needed leaders to really focus on project management as a general capability during a transition of this magnitude

WHAT CHANGES DID TWITTER MAKE TO THE FOLLOWING DAYS OF SERVICE?

- Utilized feedback—from all participants— to create a better experience:
  - *Determined the types of activity people are willing to do from a screen such as more one on one activities like career mentoring*
  - *Found tools that were alternatives to staring at a screen and limited Zoom fatigue such as allowing employees to raise money through activities like biking, swimming, running, etc.*

- Decentralized the process by implementing tools to allow employees to create their own projects such as Twitter employees making 3-D printed masks and sharing the code so others could do the same

- Made it easier to donate which led to Twitter setting employee giving records in both 2020 and 2021

WHAT LONG-TERM IMPACT DOES THE PANDEMIC HAVE ON TWITTER'S SOCIAL IMPACT?

- Broke down traditional geographic boundaries and expanded Twitter's reach now that employees from around the world could join online

- Became more creative and clever about how to put on developing meaningful experiences

- Became more flexible on how employees can engage in service, separating employee engagement into three parts: as a way to volunteer, as a way to learn, and as a way to donate

- Became better at enabling Twitter as a product to be a vehicle for social impact:
  - *Twitter worked with the Legal Defense Fund to create a mechanism in their Twitter handle to report voter suppression in advance of the 2020 election and partnered with data and duration teams to retrieve and aggregate data on India's COVID crisis so that people could better understand where to go for help*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Prioritize active listening, the ability to be agile, and an open-minded approach to successfully pull off a large-scale transition in programming such as in-person to remote/hybrid volunteering.

2 Capitalize on using internal products and being global in how the company makes social change.

3 There's always room for improvement. Prioritize and integrate feedback from everyone involved to continuously improve your programming.

CRUISE'S CRISIS RELIEF PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO SIGNATURE SOCIAL IMPACT PROGRAM

Cruise partnered with The San Francisco Marin Food Bank and SF New Deal to leverage Cruise's all-electric autonomous vehicle (AV) fleet to help transport groceries and meals to the homes of residents experiencing food insecurity.

cruise

HOW DID CRUISE FORM ITS CRISIS RELIEF PARTNERSHIP?

- Brought a partnership mindset and went in with an open mind and let the community experts lead

- Led with a needs-first approach and directed the program based on our partner's needs instead of a predetermined solution or existing program

- Prioritized safety and consulted with experts to ensure that the whole process was safe for Cruise vehicle test operators and those they were serving in order to launch the program

The Lead-Up to the Partnership

- At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cruise was thinking about how to utilize their vehicle fleet and as the news of food insecurity was on the rise, they heard the SF Marin Food Bank was looking to scale their program

- Cruise leaned into this opportunity that allowed them to leverage their autonomous fleet to support their own community

HOW DID THE CRISIS RELIEF PARTNERSHIPS TURN INTO A PERMANENT PROGRAM?

- Worked closely with company leadership throughout the entire process and after a few months, formalized this long-term commitment by launching Cruise for Good and joining Pledge 1%

- Incorporated core company philosophies of making transportation more equitable and accessible into Cruise for Good's mission

WHAT LONG-TERM IMPACT DOES THE PANDEMIC HAVE ON CRUISE'S SOCIAL IMPACT?

- Leveraged the company's core product by dedicating at least one percent of the AV fleet to service the community in every market where Cruise operates

- Expanded upon existing partnerships and prioritized longer-term commitments with new partners

- Maximized the AV delivery program by also using it to glean business learnings and show the community how Cruise's technology can be used

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Build trust and communication upfront with new partners to spur a successful and potentially long-term partnership.

2 Let your guardrails down and be willing to listen. You don't need to reinvent the wheel or come up with a new solution, many organizations have the solution and need to be connected or need the resources.

3 Leverage what your company does best to meet a key need in the community and where possible, support existing organizations and their efforts that meet demonstrated needs.

OKTA LAUNCHES NONPROFIT TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Grounded in the belief that technology enables nonprofits to be as powerful as their missions, Okta's Nonprofit Technology Initiative's goal is to contribute to a paradigm shift in how nonprofits are funded and enabled to make a digital transition.

okta

HOW DID OKTA NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC IN ITS LAUNCH OF THE NONPROFIT TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE?

- Gathered insights on the digital infrastructure needs and capabilities of nonprofits by backing a TechSoup survey of nearly 12,000 nonprofits in 136 countries
  - *One of the key findings revealed that even if nonprofits had a digital strategy, only 25 percent of them have the resources to implement it*

- Enabled and expanded access to Okta's products by increasing the number of free product licenses available for nonprofits:
  - *80 percent of the world's nonprofits can cover their entire staff with Okta's products for free*

- Partnered with trusted community partners like Full Circle Fund to scope out a COVID-19-focused Tech Accelerator Program, which paired tech talent with Bay Area-based nonprofit leaders to co-create technology solutions in response to the global pandemic

The Lead-up to the Initiative's Launch

- Okta had been planning to launch the Nonprofit Technology Initiative before the pandemic started, building on its work investing in nonprofit digital transformation

- As the pandemic continued to unfold, it became clearer than ever that nonprofits provide a critical safety net, and technology could enable the mobilization of staff, volunteers, and donors

WHAT LONG-TERM IMPACT DOES THE PANDEMIC HAVE ON OKTA'S SOCIAL IMPACT?

- Doubled down on existing partnerships and prioritized long-term commitments to ensure partners could count on Okta's support for years to come

- Went beyond financial contributions to embed additional resources into partnerships, including employee time, product, and technical expertise, to help organizations meet their missions in more robust ways

- Developed programs that allow employees to give back in personally meaningful ways that are also conducive to Okta's ongoing remote work environment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Consider your company's expertise and determine how it might uniquely add value to the social sector.

2 Continue to expand and invest in existing partnerships, while also leveraging the expanded reach of remote work to tap into new communities and forge new partnerships.

3 Empower employees to find the issues that they're individually passionate about and create resources that allow them to start making the change they want to see.

826 VALENCIA'S IN-SCHOOLS PROGRAMS DEALS WITH THE PANDEMIC

In order to support teachers and provide individualized attention in classrooms, 826 Valencia brings volunteer tutors into San Francisco public schools that serve high percentages of low-income students of color and English Learners.

HOW DID 826 VALENCIA MAKE ITS IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM VIRTUAL?

- Utilized a responsive model in order to understand what's happening with their partners, families, and students and adapted programs to meet those needs

- Provided students and classrooms with the necessary technology to successfully participate in a remote environment

- Dedicated time for staff to learn new tools to support students and make guides on how to use products like Google Classroom and Zoom
  - *Repurposed volunteer training to emphasize more remote tutoring skills*

The Lead-up to the Virtual In-School Program

- 826 Valencia worked alongside schools and figured out how to transition education online due to the pandemic

- Each partnership 826 Valencia has with schools and other organizations look different from each other, which lets them adapt new programming to meet community need

HOW DID 826 VALENCIA MAKE ITS IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM VIRTUAL? (continued)

- Navigated the unique challenges of the online environment:
  - *Required more volunteers as they ensured no volunteer was in a room alone with a child, which led to heavy recruitment of volunteers*
  - *Developed new training programs on issues like cultural competence to prepare volunteers on what it's like to teach in people's homes*

- Made many microdecisions due to the constantly changing COVID-19 safety guidelines and rules

Photo by Malcolm Eaton

WHAT LONG-TERM IMPACT DOES THE PANDEMIC HAVE ON 826 VALENCIA'S PROGRAMMING?

- Encouraged more intensive support and fewer one-off experiences for students

- Allowed staff to develop more elevated online programming:
  - *826 Valencia prefers in-person programming, but a few programs worked really well online and they will continue to develop those*

- Demonstrated the value of parent engagement and connection with the families served by 826 Valencia, and how that impacts programming and students' success

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Generate more impactful programming by investing in and expanding long-standing partnerships that don't fizzle out quickly.

2 Prioritize and figure out how to integrate feedback from all participants to continually improve programming.

3 Create responsive programming by being open and adapting programming to partner's needs.