

Top 5 CSR and Corporate Philanthropy Trends of 2020



Philanthropy is not immune to trends. With its even greater number of stakeholders, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and philanthropy changes with the times as well. With a new year and a new decade approaching, it's important to take the time to ask ourselves how we can serve our communities with more impact and awareness. Here are five CSR and corporate philanthropy trends I see at the forefront of 2020 and beyond.

#1 Increased focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance.

Consumers want to align their spending with their values. It's the reason Patagonia continues to thrive as a business, and why 'Made Local' items fly off the shelf. Now we have a way for individuals to continue living out their values through their investment portfolios. Investment companies can put a filter on what types of companies you are investing in. For example, maybe you don't want anything that is engaged with coal, or tobacco, or you only want companies with an equal number of women on their boards. This is now being done on a regular basis, and companies are listening. [Focusing on their Environmental, Social, and Governance \(ESG\)](#) scoring and reporting means that certain businesses will be able to rise to the top for investors - and who doesn't want that? From what I can see, if you're not going after ESG, it's coming after you.

#2 Alignment with business.

When looking back at corporate philanthropy over the past decade, this may be the biggest change we've seen across the board. While it used to be that companies did philanthropy as brand marketing or because a CEO cared about a specific cause, this way of doing business has proved to be non-sustainable and unproductive use of resources. By [aligning your philanthropy with your core competencies and value proposition as a company](#), you are able to put resources such as human capital, expertise, and product as well as dollars into non-profits who are working in the field. This can make significantly more of an impact and bring more value. It's a win/win.

#3 Increased concern for the environment and sustainability.

What has come to light more often over the past few years is that no matter what issue area you are investing in, it's hard not to see climate change as a factor affecting the world's most vulnerable populations. Whether it's access to clean food and water, humanitarian crises, or issues of housing and homelessness, climate change is already starting to affect our world's most vulnerable populations, and will only continue if we don't start making changes. [Companies are making changes to their purchasing](#), to their own waste reduction, and to the causes they invest in. We can expect to see this ramp up more in the next decade and can hope we are writing a different story in 2029.

#4 There is power in partnerships and collectives.

Corporations don't work in silos. Ecosystems and partnerships are the way all of us move forward, and can be more than just business-related. Joining forces with other companies that work on similar issue areas means more impact, less spent on overhead, and more conversations around the issues facing our communities and our world. Pooling our resources also means that businesses of all sizes can work on big issues and build philanthropy into the business from the beginning.

#5 Leadership in areas that businesses have usually stayed away from.

There has been a shifting tide in recent years from businesses being agnostic on social issues to companies and CEOs taking a stand on both their individual and company values. Sensing the gaps of leadership and growing inequity, major business leaders from the [CEO Roundtable](#) recently redefined the purpose of a corporation, and we've seen business leaders across sectors sign Amicus Briefs for causes they are committed to, such as LGBTQ rights. Business leaders are being asked to take a stand, and leaders are rising to the challenge.

These are only a few of the many CSR and corporate philanthropy trends to come in 2020. We're in for an exciting year ahead as more organizations will not only align and expand their philanthropy efforts into untapped areas, but will do so in a sustainable, collaborative way. This mission is crucial to us at Pure Storage. We're looking forward to continuing to give back to make an impact in our community and worldwide.