

# Our guide to running an employee volunteering campaign

Making the world a better place has always been central to Atlassian's mission. As a company, we contribute 1% of our equity, profit, employee time, and products to the Atlassian Foundation.

Giving back is embedded into our culture, and volunteering is the bedrock of our efforts. Volunteering improves job satisfaction and loyalty, strengthens team connections, and creates a ripple effect of positive social actions. In other words, it's good for employees, the company, and the world.

Use this guide to learn how we approach employee volunteering at Atlassian and how to kickstart your own campaigns.

## 5 reasons to run an employee volunteering and donating campaign

- 1. It's the right thing to do:** Nonprofits are tackling our planet's toughest problems without much to play with. Let's pitch in.
- 2. Connect your team:** Volunteering is a great way to strengthen team bonds – particularly if you're working in remote or distributed ways.
- 3. Boost employee engagement and morale:** Employees who participate in volunteering activities often report higher levels of job satisfaction.
- 4. Increase psychological safety:** Engaging in acts of kindness and volunteering can create a supportive atmosphere where employees feel safe to express themselves and take risks without fear of negative consequences.
- 5. Attract and retain top talent:** A recent [Deloitte survey](#) found that 95% of respondents believe it's important that their employer makes a positive impact in their community.



## How Atlassian gives back

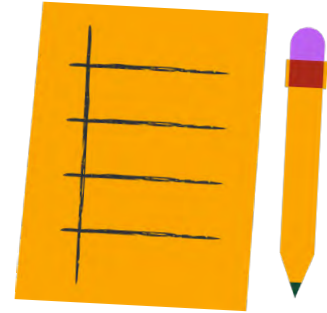
May It Forward is our annual campaign celebrating social impact. Throughout the month of May, we offer Atlassian employees meaningful opportunities to volunteer and donate, as individuals or as a team. Flexibility is the secret to its success because it encourages participants to join in ways that resonate with them.

May It Forward raises awareness about the importance of giving back to one's community while enhancing employee engagement and morale.

**Fun fact:** May It Forward started as a campaign to spread kindness during Covid19 with very simple ideas and options in local neighborhoods.

# How to run a volunteering campaign

Ready to run an employee volunteering and donating campaign? These six steps include thought starters, tips, and practical advice to get your juices flowing and help you create an initiative that's right for you.



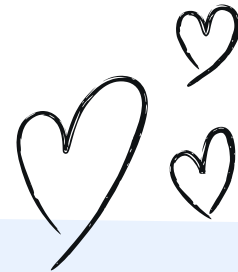
## 1. Define your event

Get a small team together and start by addressing these questions:

- **Why** are you doing this? How does it fit into your broader strategy?
- How will you **measure** success?
- What's the **theme** of the campaign and the impact you'd like to make? Do you want to support a certain charity or cause? Or is it a broader theme and employees can choose who they volunteer and donate to?
- Does your company have an [Employee Resource Group](#) or other interest group you could **collaborate** with to run the campaign?



Atlassian's [Project Poster template](#) is very helpful for defining the scope of your campaign and guiding your work.



PRO TIP

### Don't #@!% the nonprofit

"Don't #@!% the customer" – that's one of Atlassian's core values. We keep this top of mind when organizing volunteering and donating campaigns. We recommend collaborating with any nonprofits you want to support early in your planning to understand their needs and what works best for them.

## 2. Set up the event

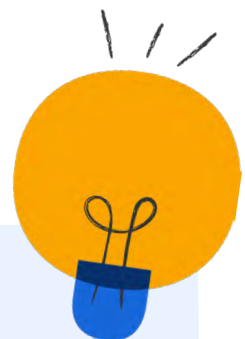
Next, it's important to nail down these essential elements. This ensures your campaign will be effective and successful. Here are some prompts:

- **Goals:** Set clear and measurable goals for your campaign.
- **Timing:** What duration is right for your team? A one-off event? A day, a week, or a month?
- **Branding:** Can you give your campaign a catchy name? If it's a major campaign that you're going to run multiple times, you could also consider creating a logo and other visuals to help build brand recognition.
- **Format:** Will your campaign be virtual, in-person, or a mix? Make sure your events are accessible and inclusive.
- **Target audiences:** Who are they and what do you want them to know, do, and feel?
- **Incentives:** How might you create buzz and motivate people to participate? (Ideas in the next section!)
- **Logistics:** Decide how employees can sign up for volunteering activities and donate to fundraisers, or how they might organize on their own. At Atlassian, we use [Goodstack](#) as our volunteering and donating platform. Depending on the size of your team and company, you might explore different options.

PRO TIP

### See what works for you

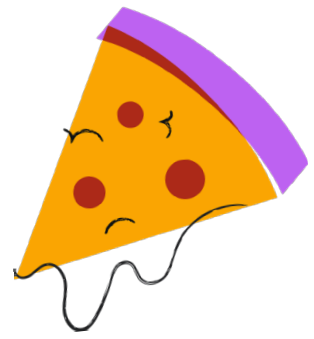
Our campaigns range from simple to elaborate. From small acts of kindness across the globe to highly coordinated efforts with deadlines and multiple organizations. If there's *one thing* we've learned, it's to be creative and iterate. There isn't a "best" or "right" approach – find something that works and gets people involved.



### 3. Create excitement

Getting people to sign up for your campaign can be a challenge in a busy and noisy workplace. Here are some ideas to motivate people to get involved:

- **Set a challenge:** Instead of rewarding individuals, you could promote a bigger, overarching goal and reward (e.g., “If we raise [amount of money], we will [action]” or “For every hour that’s volunteered during [campaign], we will [action]”).
- **Offer recognition:** Is there a certificate or badge participants can earn (physical or virtual)? Can you shout them out in any communications? Are there ways for people to share their philanthropic achievements as part of your company’s performance management process?
- **Offer rewards:** Consider offering small rewards for participation (e.g., stickers, swag, planting a tree for each participant). Another fun incentive is putting all participants into a draw to win a prize (e.g., money to donate to a charity of their choice).
- **Swap a team ritual:** Instead of adding to people’s calendars, could you encourage them to swap an existing team ritual for some volunteering?
- **Lead by example:** Share your personal story to inspire others.



PRO TIP

#### Find an executive sponsor

Gain the support of a high-profile leader and include them in your communications and events to encourage others to take part.



## 4. Promote your campaign

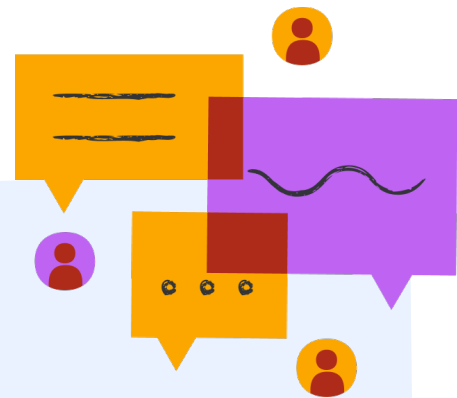
At Atlassian, we're big believers in testing, learning, and iterating. Here are some communications insights we've gained through that process:

- **Plan your communications:** Start with your campaign goals rather than jumping straight into tactics. To be successful, spread the word to the right people in the right place.
- **Always think audience first:** What's in it for them? Use "you" and "your" to make the reader feel like you're talking to them directly.
- **Use visuals:** Visuals like infographics, illustrations, gifs and short videos will help you tell your story.
- **Meet people where they are:** Tap into every communication channel that makes sense for your campaign's goals. At Atlassian, we use Slack, Confluence, email, newsletters, town halls, and digital signage in our offices to promote our May It Forward campaign.
- **Get it on the calendar:** Calendar invites are simple and effective.
- **Provide quick summaries:** We include a TL;DR at the top of our May It Forward information page, with 3-4 key points readers should know.
- **Create a tip sheet:** Consider creating a tip sheet for managers with talking points and suggested messaging to help them get their teams involved.

PRO TIP

### Voices that validate

Use testimonials from nonprofits, beneficiaries, or past volunteers to demonstrate impact and inspire others to take part.

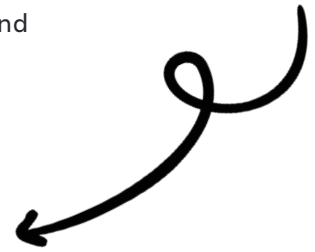


## 5. Run the campaign

- **Use your champions:** As the organizer, you don't have to do it all. Are there other people within your organization in different locations who might want to run an event?
- **Coordinate logistics:** Introduce each event and set expectations. Include an agenda, logistics, safety protocols, and ways to contact the organizer.
- **Capture the impact:** Capture photos and video footage (with people's consent), track volunteering time and/or donations, and document the event's success against your measurement criteria.
- **The gratitude attitude:** Don't forget to thank your volunteers for participating and the nonprofit for hosting the activity!



Our campaign Slack channels pump with posts from volunteers around the world sharing how they're making an impact. Encourage your participants to generate excitement with the tools they use to increase visibility across your organization.



PRO TIP

### Create friendly competition

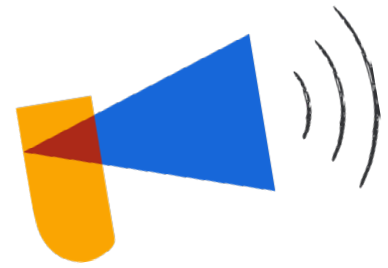
Foster camaraderie and increase engagement by creating friendly competition between departments or teams. Try creating a physical or virtual leaderboard, or another type of tracker. It works!



## 6. Share your impact

Spread the word to amplify your impact.

- The true impact of storytelling happens when your story becomes part of someone else's story. How might you **incentivize participants** to share their experiences, photos, or short video clips during (or after) the campaign? One thing that has worked well for us is to plant a tree for every post in the Slack channel we set up for May It Forward.
- We also share a **wrap-up story** the week after the campaign, including facts and figures, quotes, and a photo gallery for a feel-good scroll.
- Consider working with your company's social media guidelines (or team if you have one) to share the impact of your campaign on **social media**. This could be a post from your company's account and/or encouraging participants to share on their personal accounts. You might like to tag any nonprofits you worked with to give them exposure.



PRO TIP

### Run a retrospective

After every campaign, we get together as a team for a “retro” to talk about what went well, what didn't go so well, and what we might do better next time. (Test. Learn. Iterate.) For more on how to host an engaging retro, here are some [ideas](#).

