**Talent Development + CSR: A Game Changing Partnership for Impact**

**11/1/22**

Speakers:

* Lindsay Firestone Gruber, President and CEO at Taproot Foundation
* Jessica Clancy, SVP, Corporate Social Responsibility at Comcast NBCUniversal
* Valerie Chort, VP Corporate Citizenship & Sustainability and Executive Director of the RBC Foundation at RBC

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So welcome back to the next session here in our US Pro bono summit, I am so thrilled to be able to kick us off together in the session today in our true hybrid capacity and having our panel as happens in COVID times being split up and being both in person and on our screen here. And again, a tremendous thank you to AIG for helping us make sure we had the technology to make all of this possible. This is talent development, and CSR a game changing partnership for me. And one of the ways I want to queue up this session ahead of being able to introduce my esteemed panelists, I suppose my sort of Fireside Chat colleagues, a little fires fireplace going behind us is that across all the different pro bono summits, we've had the chance to hold in prior years, particularly when having the chance to dig in from the practitioner perspective. So from the source often volunteers either on the corporate front or from other intermediaries, one of the questions that comes up time and time again, are what are ways that we can help ensure that pro bono service programs can become more deeply embedded can become sustainable, truly within this ecosystem of the work, and can improve and grow over time. And when you pose that question to someone within a business, they will almost always say, oh, that's the exact job description of our fill in the blank name of the department, our people and culture department, our human capacity function or human resources function, there is so much opportunity when we can think about this type of programming, not just in a particular department in a particular box in a particular set of parameters. But starting always, first and foremost from the needs that we're all partnering together to support and address, and then putting together the building blocks that can make the most effective and impactful and connected programs happen.

So if we had the chance to have a combined sort of raising of hands in the room and online, which I won't force you to do both virtually or in person, one of the things we also typically have asked in the past is within any given company, what is the relationship between HR and CSR? And when we have actually asked that question in surveys before, we generally find the answers fall across two poles on opposite sides. One is that there's actually an acrimonious relationship, because these functions have largely been pitted against each other within a company to compete for what is often labeled as discretionary dollars. And then the other end of the extreme at times is that the function that actually brings his programs to life exists within this broader HR department. But a lot of folks otherwise kind of fall in this in between space where there is zero relationship between the two. And we at taproot have found over all of the amazing programs, we've had the chance to be a part of and support and grow some of the most meaningful impact. And some of the most deeply sustained and growing programs are those that come to life through a deep and thoughtful partnership between everyone uses their own names for it, but between the sort of CSR and HR functions.

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And I'm so excited to be able to bring to you today in real time, the leaders of programs across two companies, who I think are extraordinary examples of what it looks like when you can build these thoughtful partnerships in order to truly invest in the way these programs can come to life. So I'm really pleased to introduce Valerie Chort, who is the VP of Corporate Citizenship and sustainability at RBC and also the executive director of the RBC Foundation. And in that capacity, she's responsible for developing an integrated strategy that is aligned across RBCs purpose and business objectives. And through that creating positive social, economic and environmental impacts, which I wish that could be everyone's title Valerie, that's really an extraordinary job an extraordinary way to be able to describe how important this work is. And Jessica Clancy, who some of you had the chance to meet a little bit earlier, who's the Vice President of Corporate excuse me social responsibility at Comcast, NBC Universal, and in that work also oversees the work of the NBC Universal Foundation, and really has the chance to work across functions to build, manage and grow strategic partnerships. So thank you both for being here today, and for representing with you the deep partnerships and work that happened within your companies. And what I want to start to start us off with today is the chance to look at each of you, which is when it comes to your pro bono service programs. What you really see has this incredible opportunity in creating a partnership and what some of those considerations or barriers have been for folks as they think about bringing these partnerships to life. And Valerie I thought I would kick it to you first to shine a little light on what this has looked like in RBC and what you'd advise others to think about.

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Oh, that's great. Thanks so much, and it's a real pleasure to be with you

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So I'm just going to do a check in if you can give me a thumbs up, Lindsey, if everything is nice and clear, perfect. You know, when Lindsey first approached me on this, this topic actually had to take a step back and think about what is our relationship between HR and our program here at RBC, we call it corporate citizenship. Because it's really been quite a journey. And I would start first by just sharing that, it's really important to demystify what we mean by HR, what we mean by corporate citizenship or CSR. across both groups, that was a real learning for me, and I would just say, learning perhaps for you. When you think about HR is big, it can include learning and development include recruitment, it includes compensation and benefits. And it includes the employee value proposition.

So first, you have to really understand what's HR within your organization? What are their priorities? What's ahead in terms of things they want to accomplish? And how are they going to be judged in terms of measurement of success? Over the course of the year, what's their business plan around HR? So that's the first piece I would say, and very similar. We needed to do the same with respect to what we're doing with respect to corporate citizenship. What are the programs we're trying to build? What's our corporate citizenship strategy? Where do the role of employees fit into this journey? And then how do these two pieces come together to actually shape outcomes and programs that are actually beneficial to both and roll up to ultimately for RBC? What's the purpose of RBC in terms of helping clients thriving communities prosper? And so that would be the first takeaway that I have here in terms of really understanding what you know, how do we see this partnership evolving in this light, I can get into examples later. But the other piece I would share is the real importance of timing. In many cases, we tried to build programs throughout the course of my last seven years at RBC, and the timing wasn't there. So you know, currently, at this stage, we're really double. HR is really focusing on the employee value proposition and the employee brand.

So at this point, we're shaping some of the programs that are aligned to that specific area. About two years ago, they started focusing on a leadership development. And then we thought that these were real opportunities for us to work together in terms of what is the social impact Leadership Development Program? How could that accentuate and roll up and deliver on some of the programs and priorities that HR needed to do? So? I've got loads of examples on this. But my first takeaway is better share and communicate what each of your business imperatives are. And how do then how do you go one plus one equals five, not just one plus one equals two or less than two? In that respect.

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I love that. I think demystifying what each function within the business does, and what really define success, what they're held to what they're aspiring to do. There's so much potential there when you can really come to that shared understanding, and then dig in and build something from there. So I'm excited to get into and have more of those examples shared, I want to pose the same question to you just like what has this looked like? What have you learned within NBC universal income?

Thank you for having us. So what's very unique about NBC Universal is that we agree with our HR function, we actually affectionately call it the talent lab. But for the purposes of this conversation, we can call it MBC university. But we agree that inclusive leadership, empathy, cultural competencies are the traits we want to see in employees. And so that is well known throughout NBC Universal and throughout our organization. So from a CSR perspective, it actually was a beautiful partnership, because we knew going into the conversation that that is a priority of the company. And that's a priority for employees. And we were able to bring our talent lab programming like pro bono and others, that we felt like accelerated those leadership characteristics. And so I think really defining and understanding what are the competencies that your HR group wants employees to invoke at your organization and how in our, in our example, you can use service as a way to accelerate that. And so we've been able to build out a stream of programming that really leans into that ethos.

But one thing Lindsay and I were talking about, which I do think is worth mentioning is that before we have the talent lab and NBCU. I'm actually the idea for skills based volunteering originated out of HR. And it originated with a sort of really rudimentary program called HR for good, which is exactly what it sounds like and was probably more of your traditional program that still exists today in some capacity, but was very much our HR employees wanting to give their skills back to the community. And doing so through pro bono consulting. So having that to build on and to kind of build our ecosystem of pro bono has been really helpful, because we had sort of that initial buy in about where it started. And that came from an executive leadership position. So but I think NBC Universal was very unique, because the talent lab in its own right is both a physical space, and a stream of programming, and a set of principles that we all agree on. And so we're able to build around that. Yeah, I love that example, in particular, too, because for folks who are here with us today, coming from the corporate side of things, if any of the initial examples I shared with you resonated with you about needing to kind of thought out what might be a challenging relationship, or a non existent relationship between the sort of CSR and HR function, to actually have folks from within that function be among the first to pilot engaging in pro bono service can be an incredibly meaningful opportunity and accelerate, in some cases that that pathway towards bringing this to life.

So I'd love now to start making this real and jump into some examples. So I'm gonna kick it back over to you, Jessica, would love for you to begin sharing with folks what it has looked like when you can engage in this type of partnership and bringing this programming to like, what is the programming been able to include?

Surely it's done that Yeah. And I would, you know, remiss if it, it wouldn't look like it does without partners like tap, tap root. And our friends at pyxera. Global are here as well in the room, right? Part of our strategy is really identifying experts in the space are already doing this with other companies, we don't necessarily have to recreate the mechanisms and framework to implement them at NBC. So thank you, thank you to all of you. But what is looked like is getting proximate to what employees want, right? We've heard from employees that they're all on a different journey, As many of you had, and so much of what they want. And what they told us they want is deeper transformational service learning experience. And so we've been able to take that nugget, and build out a suite of pro bono programming at at NBC Universal, that really meets employees where they are in their journey, right, we have 30,000 plus employees, of course, everybody's on a different journey. Some of them don't want to be on a journey with us at all. And that's fine. And then some of them want to be really deeply engaged. So we have three programs to date that meet employees where they are, we have our sort of more traditional half day consultation program, we have a business lead pro bono program.

And then we have our you know, I call it our Cadillac version, which is our talent lab. And that is a program in which employees are nominated to the experience, and it is a learning and development and service experience. And they're nominated by their HR leaders because they meet specific criteria. Right? So we were talking earlier about how do you make sure that employees are sort of representative across the company. So we do that through a nomination set of criteria to make sure they embody dei principles that they've served, that they've had experience in service and volunteering, they show interest in leadership potential, and there are folks in the company we want to invest in. And then we build out in multi week, pro bono experience. And so what I will say the advantage, again, that we have at NBC is to come back to the talent lab, because of the talent lab is already an existing brand. So maybe some of you have some of these existing brands or programs at your company that you can align with the talent lab was already a well known brand within the company, which folks were eager to get into, they're eager to get into a training in the talent lab. So being able to leverage that really accelerated, I think, the way that we've been able to build pro bono within the company, versus really starting on our own. So that goes to the collaboration point that you were making earlier, as well as how you work closely with your colleagues to lean into something that's already there from an infrastructure perspective. That's great.

And Valerie, I know you've so many incredible examples of what collaboration has looked like as your various programs that come to life, but love to give you the floor now to share a bit about that. And one thing that you brought up before in prior conversations I wanted to note now as well as very similarly to what you were hearing from Jessica, there is so much space and opportunity for learning for development in the experience of this work. But always of course starting from the shared philosophy that with this service, you are bringing the new capabilities to the table folks are bringing the skill set that specific match are being nominated for the right fit. And now the ability to be able to enhance and lean into different competencies in a new and different environment in a different setting can bring so much added experience there so Valerie would love to kick it over to you

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Some of your examples. Well, I wanted to also kind of ground this in terms of where does this program belong as part of our broader corporate citizenship strategy. And about seven years ago, we decided that we needed to revamp that strategy. And so, you know, I won't go through all the levers, but the real key ones are, we needed to focus on key societal issues in terms of corporate citizenship. Part number two was, if we focus, we could bring a more than money approach to solving for those issues. And the third was really ensuring that we were developing an impact measurement framework so that we can hold ourselves accountable in this light. So with these three pillars, and if you take pillar number two, in terms of a more than money approach, a real lever and or more than money approach was our talent, we needed that commitment to make it really easier for our talent to get involved and contribute to the broader social impact that we were looking to achieve. So that was the context in which we actually continued to evolve some of our programming. And the one that I'll talk about actually two of them.

The first is, is Ignite. And that is a program that is shaped to really grow talent, our BIPOC talent and provide them with a kind of bespoke opportunities in this regard. And the other is related to a social impact leadership program. So we call itself and in both of those cases, the opportunity is to again, in both cases, employees are nominated to participate in this in this program, they get partnered up with a charitable partner. And then it's a 12 week program that really works in terms of collaboration with taproot. taproot is a real strong partner in this regard. And I will just talk a little bit about why that's so important in a minute. But they work together on solving some really complex problems for our challenges for charitable partners. In this regard. Surrounding the framework that we have, there is a series of advisor so each project has an advisor from the Royal Bank, and also an executive sponsor. So it actually imparts, let's say, we have 30 partners, 30 partners, and six in terms of a program has 180 employees that participate, plus another 30 executive sponsors and 30 executive advisors. So the the amount of people that are involved in this journey is becoming significant. And I would say a couple of things, it needs to be really important for not only for the employees that are participating to have a really positive and meaningful experience, but it's also the same for charitable partners.

And we were very became very important for us to recognize our our influence, we are one of Canada's largest corporate funders, we have a budget of close to $170 million a year. And we just felt that in some cases, when we were inviting our partners to participate, they kind of felt like they had to submit a project or do something in this regard. And that was not going to lead into a really positive experience for both our the partner and also the the employees that were participating. So we made it really clear that this is, you know, the submission of a project was really key. And that we needed to have a person or a partner that would really help make sure that the partners understood what they needed to sign up for. You knew they needed, they needed a project manager, they needed to be sure that the the project was was very well defined, that they were committing to the 12 weeks, because you've got a group of six people who are looking to deliver on on on the commitment as well. So that kind of relationship really needed to be done well, and then we needed to make sure that we were really clear with respect to what were we looking to achieve for both the social impact but also the leadership development opportunities. And then we parted with a few other people who are also rounding out the Leadership Development Program to fulfill some of those expectations as well.

And then at the end of the session, we then close it off with really a deep dive to for the lessons learned from the charitable partner but also with respect to the advisors and then the also the employees that have participated and that's really helped us you know, course correct and improve the program overall. But I would just say at this stage, we have a waiting list to get on the program because it's become so much pop so popular and people have really felt that they really gained a significant amount of both leadership communities and capabilities and skills, but also a real enhanced visibility of the social. The not for profit and charitable sector, and many people just don't really have real visibility of getting under the hood and seeing what really happens, and how do organizations really evolve? So that's kind of our program in a nutshell. And I can answer some more specific questions as needed.

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When I think great segue from there, and I want to have the chance to pose this question to both of you as well, is thinking about how this programming has also been supported by and is in support of the overall purpose and culture within your company. One thing that I think is both so representative of that, but also seems to be a core contributing part of that, as well, from your examples to Valerie, is the depth of that executive presence and involvement, the commitment of having advisors, in addition to participants on teams speak so clearly to the dedication internally to this programming, and not just as a program in and of itself, but for how deeply it also relates to the overall purpose and mission and focus of RPC. Can you speak a little bit to how this programming and work has been able to be so deeply connected to the company's culture overall?

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Well, it's definitely connected to our it's just part of the culture, I actually just didn't believe that that was the case, when I first joined RBC, I came from Deloitte and Deloitte has an unbelievable culture as well. But there's just something different with respect to I would just say that the closeness of RBC in community, and if you kind of think about the history, in the Canadian context, it's a little bit different in the US, but we have more of a capital markets and wealth management, businesses, but in Canada, you know, the history of a bank is being in community, you've got a branch like you are in community, because you belong to that community. And so that relationship is really, really close. So it's just already part of the culture would be point number one. But I would just say, if you look at the element, belief driven survey, I just feel like it is there is a moment in time where we really do have an opportunity of engaging our employees in a different, more meaningful way to really rebuild or build a sense of belonging in a way that really, again, adds value to society, but also adds value to the company as well. So it's becoming more and more evident that, you know, employees expect companies to take a stand where stand needs to be taken to lead with intention and authenticity. And that is also translated in terms of providing employees with an opportunity to do more within the realm of their day to day work. And I do find that's going to be a strategic differentiator, moving forward the ability of finding opportunities for those two pieces to come together.

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Thank you for that, and just gonna, you're already referencing talent labs and VC University. Can you speak a little bit to how this has played a role and as a part of the overall culture in the company? Yeah. And I mean, I think that to like, being nominated into a talent lab is sort of gives the program's gravitas. And so I think, as you think about our holistic strategy was very intentional. And, you know, from an MVC perspective, it was the first time in which we took our learning and development and infused it intentionally with service learning and volunteering, right. And so it very much made the statement that service learning and volunteering were core components of how we wanted to develop employees, and how we fundamentally believe that service learning and volunteering develop employees. And I will say a big part of that just very tactically is that when we build pro bono, the whole first part of the day, is about the employee. It's about empathy. It's about leadership. And it's about connection, all of those skills are translatable to when they go and consult with a nonprofit and the pro bono setting where we spend the first part of the day, helping them get close to those skills, make connections with other employees around the company. And we actually work with another partner that we support narrative for, which really believes in the power of story. And we help people learn through each other's stories. And so they're they practice deep listening, empathy, and really get close to, you know, other folks and where they're from. And you take all of that into your consultation with your nonprofit, they have a much bigger and broader perspective, right? We've really sort of widen the aperture of what it means to connect with a nonprofit and how to provide service so I think that is very unique to us. And I'll just say that, you know, one way we know it's working is that we have businesses now who come to us all the time who have people who've been involved in our talent lab and say, How do I do a pro? How do I stand up a pro bono experience with just my business. And taproot helped us do that specifically with film, which is, of course, a huge business of NBC Universal, we're about to do with news, of course, another huge business at NBCUniversal. And we've been able to see with some of our dei councils and some of our other inclusion committees, just their teams, identify nonprofits that are close to their work, and setting them up for success and pro bono consulting. So we know that we have our signature. But we also know that a huge part of that journey and making sure that it is successful in the organization, is if we can get the businesses to adopt. And I think that that piece about how this can also go so far, and helping to make this an effective and deeply sustainable program within the company also speaks to what this can mean for the field at large. So wearing my taproot hat and sort of zooming out or widening the aperture, using your return, which I like to think of as like an NBC News building, not there.

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One thing I think is so important, and that we believe in so deeply to is that this is all a part of really spreading the probono ethic. So at any one company, we want there to be incredibly impactful pro bono programs. But what it also means is that the professionals who are participating in this, who then get to be a part of a company where this is part of the culture of the company, and not just limited to a sort of checklist of anyone program, you bring it with them, they go to another company, and now as a marketing professional, as an HR professional, as a finance professional are asking where the pro bono program is or how they're able to engage in their skills in this way. So for our audience members, where regardless of where you might be, if you're within a company, or across other sectors, when we think about what it means to spread the pro bono ethics, so much of that also gets into the ability to really sustain and grow this whole ecosystem of support, because folks are bringing it with them in the culture and in leadership positions as they advance through their careers as well. So I want to make sure we're leaving time for questions for folks in the room and for folks on line. So I'm going to give you that little seed plant right now. So you can think of or start to pose the questions you'll have. And I'm going to take my turn first with a question, which is both of you have had the chance now to be a part of such incredible programs and programs that have grown so substantially, since your first interactions with them, I would love to hear from you. What's one key learning or insight or piece of advice, you would love to have gone back in time to tell yourself or your colleagues, when you were first beginning this journey, and in particular in the relationship between the sort of HR and CSR functions in bringing programming to life. And I'll let whoever the spirit Mr. Chairman,

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I think it goes back to the theme of collaboration. And that you really, it sounds a little it sounds trite, but you really have to have sort of buy in across the different stakeholders, because like any program, you know, without resources without real investment, and that's really where the taproot pyxera relationship comes in, right? Like, we need real investment to Valerie's point to scope the right project to match the right skills to make it scalable. And so I think, realizing that it is, you know, it is beyond transactional volunteering, and there has to be, you know, this core alignment, real investment and real true spirit of collaboration, to move a program like this forward. And build that, and I, you know, real learning is defining the intention of the program. So, you know, you've got to two areas. So the first and it's interesting, the first pro bono, or significant pro bono work that we did was actually very similar. It didn't come from HR, it came from our strategy team, we've got an internal strategy team, within the bank, and they said, Oh, you know, we we'd love to be able to take our strategy, knowledge and apply it to a charitable partner. And so they, we help them we did a first matchup and then we use that as a learning in terms of, you know, rolling up the program, and building it and expanding it and also getting, you know, developing the business case to do so. So I think that was just building on that a lot of this insight and Innovation often comes from within and you just have to find ways of incubating it and, and growing in and being the voice for that. So that just one point there. But the second point is define what the program's intention is, is it to deliver social impact and to grow and provide value to the target of a partner. Is it to define and grow the leadership capabilities for your talent?

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Is it to globalize your workforce, is it to deepen a sense of belonging, and therefore, you're going to create teams that are present across lines of business, and you're trying to build a cohesiveness and sharing and learning around the different parts of your of your organization, it's just really important to be clear in terms of what you're trying to achieve. And also be clear as how are you going to measure the success is it going to be a post survey is it going to be, you know, how you scaled an offer profit to do even even more and better things. So because if you're not clear, you're not going to have a clear path in terms of what you're trying to shape. And a clear example is, if you are leadership development driven, you may, you know, focus on that and, and create opportunities that are better anchored for leadership. And that might be at the detriment of the quality of the project that you're going to do deliver for a not for profit, because it won't be the best people to perhaps deliver what a charitable partner might actually need in terms of a new cybersecurity program, or a new HR strategy or so forth. So you just need to really be clear, so that you're shaping everything else. In light of the intention of the program, it seems, it seems evident, but it's really not. And only when you really call it out, and then you shape it, then you find ways of actually meeting a number of criteria. But it's just important to call out what is the criteria? What's this program for? And how are you going to measure success?

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Thank you, I will pause on my questions, then to see if there are questions we should open ourselves up to, either with our virtual audience or with folks in the room.

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Yeah, ask your question. And I'll repeat it back on our last mics here. Josh Cronin with the Thomson Reuters Foundation. I think both of the speakers, I'm just so impressed at the really innovative ways that you've integrated HR and CSR. And I'm wondering about the elephant in the room, which is ESG, which is really been growing, I think, in organizations, where are you at in your journey in terms of integrating that as another team and function organizationally that really intersects with your CSR work? And I guess, just to keep it pretty kind of just? What are the initial kind of considerations or questions you're thinking about? And have you learned from these past initiatives at all, when you're integrating ESG? So for those who wouldn't have been able to hear it quite as easily starting thoughts on ESG, and how you're seeing that opportunity for integration for overlap? I'm overly paraphrasing, hopefully, folks can also see on our wonderful live transcription, the more thoughtful and detailed version of the question, but what are you starting to see or experience or think about as it relates to this thing you call the elephant in the room topic, you know, certainly in the corporate realm of ESG.

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I can kick it off if you if you like.

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So, you know, our, I think it's important to, to say that there's an awful lot of, I would call it a lot of noise around ESG. In this respect, we've kind of pulled it back and said, you know, we would call it we've anchored our purpose and ESG together, so we call it purpose driven ESG. In this in this respect, and how we've shaped our ESG construct is, in fact, what are the major areas we need to focus on around our ESG pillars for RBC, its climate, its DNI, its youth success, and its financial well being, in addition to the big G areas that we just need to do, and you know, to earn the trust and be a strongly government, financial institution. So if that's those are the biggest constructs around ESG. In this respect, this falls right into the way that we deliver on that. So in order to deliver on those focus areas for us, in terms of ESG, we then bring our more than money approach, we bring our impact measurement framework, we bring all of the collective assets to deliver on the objectives of each of those specific pillars that roll up again, in terms of how we report on and disclose around ESG. So it is very much aligned within the construct of ESG. And I would view talent and what we want to achieve in this regard as a really big horizontal. So we bring, in this case, this program to deliver on much of the aspects of the ESG pillars. So it's a very good question, and I would I just take comfort that you don't need to overcomplicate it, you just need to call out what are the areas you're focusing on? terms of your ESG which are the which are the ESG topics and issues that you that are relevant for you to take on within your organization. And then you bring again these programs to to be in alignment with that. Do you use your word permanent? earlier question, it sounds like this is another really valuable area for that demystify, step to add so much value, because once we break it down from the letters to the actual needs, the goals, the substance, and you start to see where different initiatives already overlap and align, and then also to I'm sure where there are gaps and where there's important opportunities as well.

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I mean, I think I don't NBCUniversal rolls up to Comcast. And so you know, we have that additional oversight and framework that Valerie's point we're really rolling into. And so we've worked together, and you'll see that in our impact report, in which we address sort of what our ESG principles are, and how they're integrated into the company. But it's definitely you know, it's not binary in the sense of that, you know, this, it's over here, this is over here. I think those you know, those same principles apply. Were you know, IT environment or sustainability as a function, pace it within operations, because that we're that's where it makes the most amount of sense. But collectively, everybody who touches some form of ESG comes together and agrees again, on what our purpose, what's our impact how we deliver on that? And then we agree on that collective one.

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Um, I was curious, what was the impetus for your company to start these programs in the first place? Did that come from a general culture shift within the organization? Did it come from the employees themselves? Or was it perhaps maybe even suggested by your clientele, the impetus to start this program in the first place coming from employees coming from elsewhere in the company, clientele? We are she was our employees.

NBCUniversal is maybe more unique than other large companies, employees are at the center of everything that we're doing in terms of CSR. And we've been really sort of transparent and thoughtful and vocal about that. So yeah, we surveyed our employees and a pulse surveys are pre COVID. You know, where are we? Where do we want to be where to let go? And one thing that we heard a lot of was, you know, how do we promote and provide, you know, deeper transformational volunteer experiences? And so, but so I think part of our role in CSR is we use this phrase internally all the time, it is to meet the moment, and to think about, you know, this kind of current moment that we're in and how, how are our volunteering programs meeting, the moment and we know that employees want to be closer to our philanthropy, they want to be closer to our grant giving and want to be closer to solutions and communities. And pro bono is a way in which we can deliver on that. So it's a combination of both. And then, again, the kind of special sauce of the leadership development. That's a core sort of goal of the company, and this helps us get there. So but yeah, really starting with employee feedback and meeting employees where they are.

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But in our VC RPC Valerie, yeah, I would say it's the same, I would say the, we've had a number of programs for over the course of a number of years. So the programs around employee volunteering and helping our employees volunteer has been and rewarding them for their actions has been in place for a number of years, we've got our employee giving programs, we have opportunities of employees doing missions to learn about some of the programs we've done that for climate for DNI and so forth, how do we engage them to learn about some of the things that we do an engagement that way, so we'd have a series of programs to you know, as was mentioned, meet, meet them on their journey and make sure that they are able to participate in that way. And then it was really an evolution of how, how can you take and recognize all the things that we do and the value that we could bring beyond you know, either picking up garbage or painting this or doing that, helping our partners understand that we actually, you know, we have HR professionals, we have legal professionals, we have technology professionals, we have all of these things that are that that can add value in a greater way so that really started with evolution of volunteering at the creation of a program that would make it easier to do skills based volunteering in this regard, the testing, you know, with, with the employees in our strategy group that wanted to do this and applied it, the law group that does it regularly because, you know, if you're in a legal profession, pro bono is core to what you do, we also leveraged that group. So you had these pockets across the organization that we're starting to think about this. And it just became the right thing for us to do to actually test it with a few pilots, and then better engage HR, in that in that respect around leadership development. So that came, I would say, we probably started the program. And then leadership development came in through HR, and then we continued to evolve and grow the program.

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That's definitely a shared theme to the ability and the opportunity to pilot learn from that. And then to grow and expand that to such being truly large scale, far reaching and diverse programs in terms of the different types of preventive programming you have. For folks who are maybe just getting started on the practitioner side, you can start with one project, you can start with one department and have the opportunity to really grow it from there, which is great for folks, I think, to have the chance to hear real life examples that have been from different industries. Yeah, I mean, the only other thing I'll say is that we know that skills based volunteering is critical. And you know, we recently launched work on the creative impact Lab, which is NBCUniversal, kind of standing up at social purpose around storytelling, and us becoming the home of storytellers, telling the stories of other nonprofits. And a big layer of that is skills based volunteering, we are obviously home of creatives. And so how do we even take the creative community at NBC and, and allow them to flex their skills for a product which ends up being a marketing video or tic tock or sizzle reel for nonprofits. But rather than just sort of sourcing that work out to other agencies, we bring in our employees, and they offer their skills based volunteering, I bring that up, because it is not as formalized, let's say as our talent lab. But it is the same principles and the same idea. And it's because we have so much momentum from our pro bono programming across the company that we're able to take that and layer the idea of skills based into another core priority of the company. And I think some of those videos and examples are available online. Now. It's really inspiring and such an incredible way to amplify the stories of these incredible organizations.

10:15:41

Alright, I think we are at time now I always hate to cut up questions, but it also warms my probono heart that there are more questions to be asked. And you can definitely expect continued dialogue and follow up from us on this topic and sharing out of this information on from here. So a tremendous thank you to Valerie to Jessica, for your time today for opening up about your experiences and what you and your colleagues and your companies have had the chance to do. And to our audience members for jumping in and starting to engage with us on this topic. We're excited to continue to be able to have examples like this.

And for those of you who I didn't force to have you raise your hands where you might be within a company where there's maybe a not so warm relationship between the two functions, I hope there's a little something you've been able to take from this and start the process of selling that. And for those where this might be the first opportunity to engage together it sounds like between demystifying what the functions do within a company and what you're each aspiring to achieve. And what that looks like maybe piloting and having folks engaged from the outset, and then bringing in the assets that can often come within your talent function. Bringing in partners like narrative for to be able to engage in these best practices and thoughtful training can really, as Valerie said, I think turn one plus one into five in the way these programs can talk to life. So thank you both. We are now going to have a brief break until 315. Eastern. When we're coming back together for a session I'm incredibly excited about that, in some ways brings together pieces of what you have the chance to learn about from Francis earlier some of the insights from this conversation and being able to talk about some incredibly thoughtful program design from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina blue cross blue shield from the Carolina foundation. Some of the partners in the field and some Roots are a part of that program. So brief break until 315 Eastern and looking forward to bring y'all back into that conversation.