

The Importance of  
**Corporate Social Responsibility:**  
*How 7 Companies Do Good Well*





As the popularity of corporate social responsibility (CSR)—aka sustainable business or corporate citizenship—continues to rise, it is evolving beyond being a trend to becoming the norm. Many of the most successful enterprise companies consider it a duty that helps the planet and the bottom line.

A 2014 Nielsen [study](#) found that 55 percent of consumers will pay extra for products and services from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact. On top of that, a good CSR program not only feels fulfilling to employees—it also helps [retain](#) them.

But figuring out how to incorporate a good CSR program that fuels high engagement can be challenging. Here are a handful of examples illustrating the importance of corporate social responsibility, what some of the world's largest companies are doing, and how they get their employees to participate

INTRO

## Target

Established as the second-largest discount retailer in the U.S., Target also has big goals to make a major CSR impact in areas such as wellness, sustainability, responsible sourcing, and education. Target says its team members give hundreds of thousands of hours volunteering in their community every year. Among the many ways the company is making an impact, it exceeded its goal in reducing water use by 10 percent. In addition, Target expanded its irrigation technology to an additional 601 locations and is trying to add 75 percent native and sustainable plantings in all of its new stores.

In its 2015 Corporate Social Responsibility Report, Target is transparent about the areas where it met goals and the ones where it didn't. Even if your company doesn't have 341,000 employees, it can only help your business long term if you set goals for how you can make an impact in the community and evaluate your business's success in reaching or exceeding those goals for next time.



## Toyota

Toyota strives for accuracy and precision in its record keeping, which is a first step on the path to corporate citizenship. For example, Toyota looks to ERA Environmental Management Solutions to help it maintain accurate and real-time record keeping of emission calculations to ensure regulatory compliance (which, in turn, led to cost reductions).

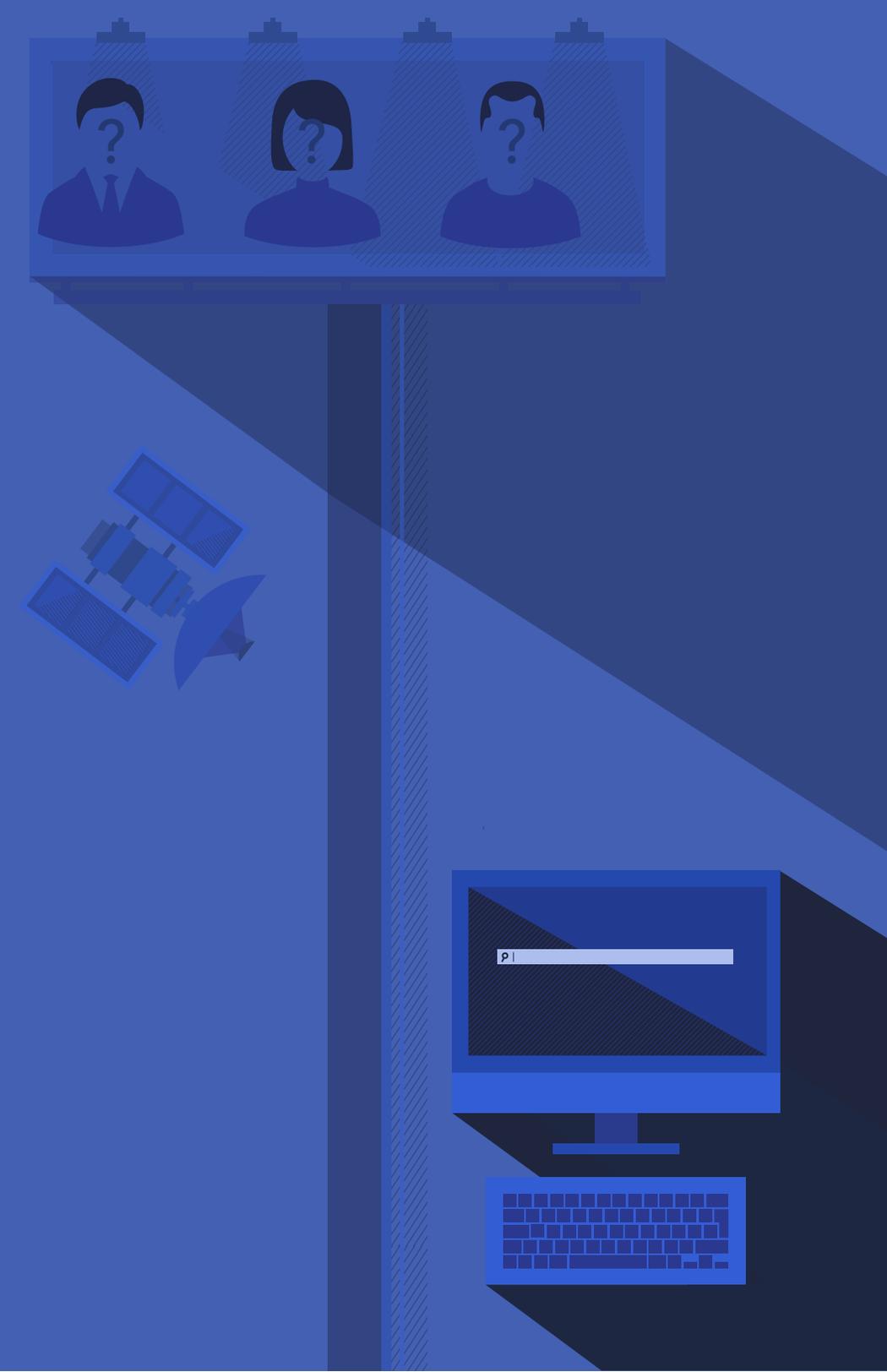
Many companies struggle just to keep up with regulatory requirements. "If you spend all of your time compiling spreadsheets or crunching numbers, you can't focus on innovation and improvements that benefit the environment as well the company bottom line," says ERA co-founder Gary Vegh. "Using software to automate record keeping and reporting can help increase accuracy while freeing up time to focus on improvement projects, lifecycle analysis, and other innovations that benefit the community."



## Google

Sometimes donating money, old clothes, or toys to devastated countries isn't enough—especially when it comes to natural disasters, which destroy buildings and displace people. When an 8.0 earthquake struck Sichuan province in China in 2008, Google and its employees raised \$2.6 million and donated \$1.02 million worth of free advertising to earthquake relief organizations, as well as developed a search platform for families looking for lost relatives. The corporation also provided China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping with satellite images of quake-affected regions to better aid and direct rescue efforts.

And despite its ongoing censorship spat, Google continued its CSR efforts with its China Social Innovation Cup. Whether or not Google re-enters the search market in China, it's done a lot to bolster its reputation as a CSR leader.



## Salesforce

Marc Benioff, chairman and CEO of Salesforce, champions a model of integrated philanthropy where he believes the company should invest 1 percent of product, 1 percent of equity, and 1 percent of time into the Salesforce.com Foundation to improve communities worldwide. Employees are paid for seven days of volunteer time to use over the course of a year (whether through mentoring students on STEM education, doing beach cleanups, or working in soup kitchens). Meanwhile, Salesforce donates and discounts software licenses to nonprofits, and it uses founding stock to offer grants for nonprofits focused on technology innovation. Salesforce and other enterprise companies stand to benefit from technological advancements made by other, smaller companies. So by supporting innovation at nonprofits, it aids in its own long-term growth. This model has become so well-known that companies are catching on and adopting it.



## Autodesk

The Autodesk Foundation supports its employees—from software engineers to product marketers—to help create a better world by allowing them to apply their expertise (using paid volunteer hours) through a pro bono program for nonprofits and startups. Every year, Autodesk employees worldwide come together and pour thousands of hours into volunteer activities, such as assembling 3D-printed prosthetic hands and packaging meals for schools, orphanages, and crisis-relief programs.

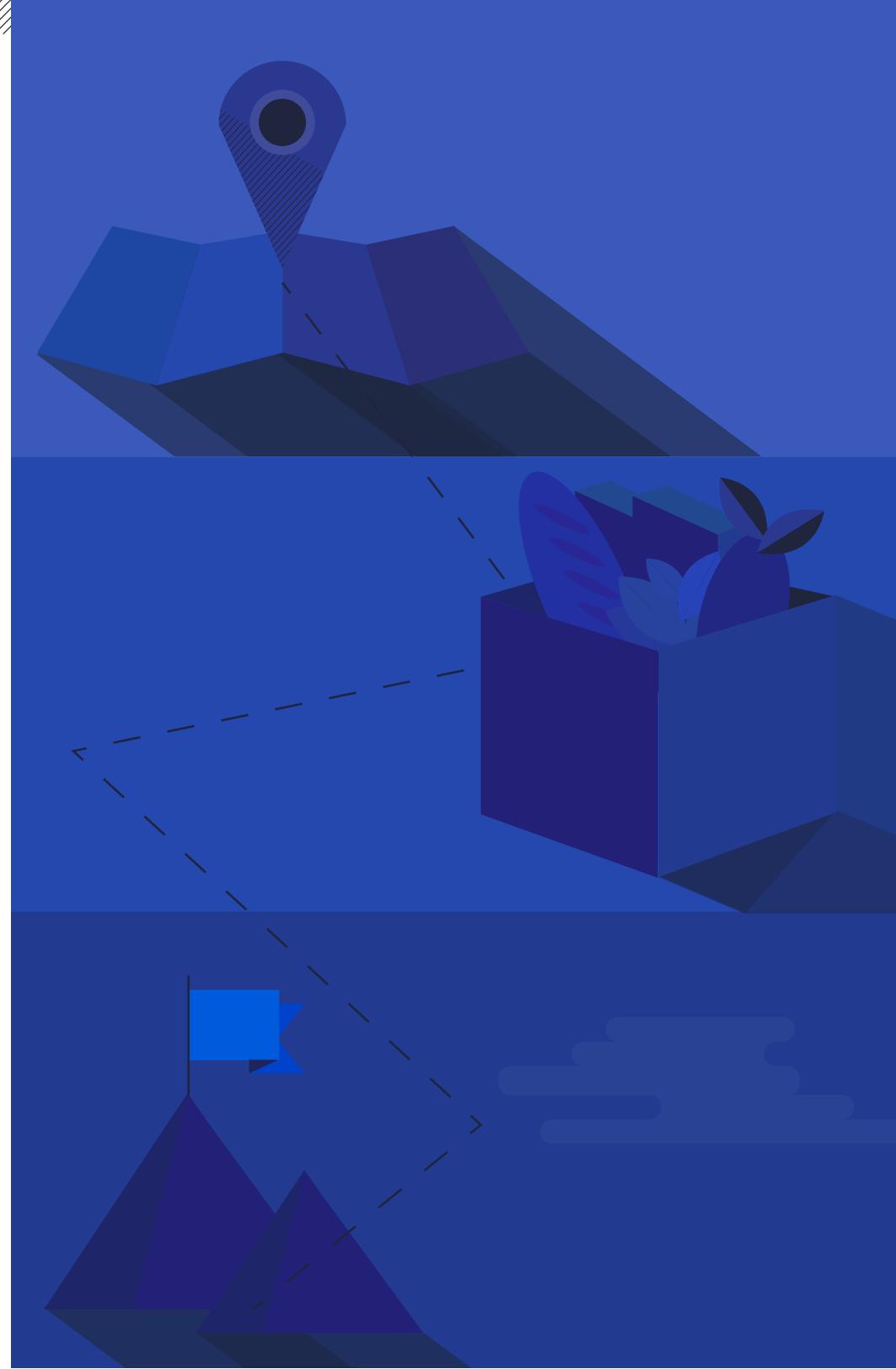
The company takes advantage of its employees' strengths and encourages them to help others outside of work through incentives like donation-matching programs, paid time for volunteering, and rewards for logged volunteer hours.



## Nike

As an organization whose mission is to “drive product innovation for athletes everywhere,” Nike participates in team-building activities such as a game modeled after *The Amazing Race*. When the teams stop at checkpoints along the way, they prepare pack-outs for rescue shelters or food banks on top of all that fun reality-TV stuff—bonding with the team and leveraging a spirit of friendly competition.

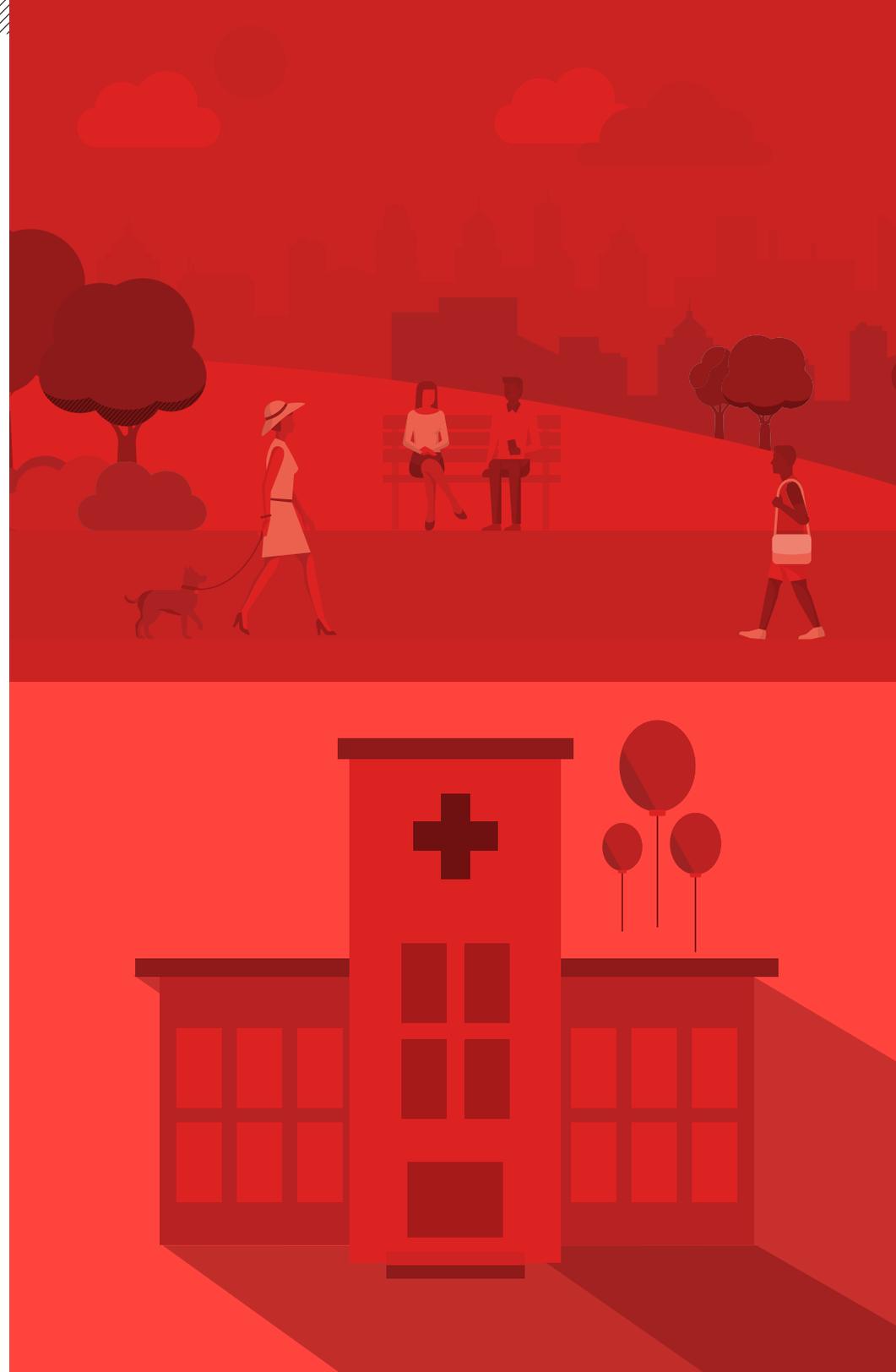
“Across all our clients, participating in team-building activities on a quarterly basis is pretty much de rigueur,” says Myles Nye, a team-building game master at Wise Guys Events, whose clients include Disney, Nike, Google, and Toyota. “What’s changed is the expectations for what the event can deliver. In 2016, a session of bowling doesn’t really cut it anymore. Our biggest clients understand that they can make their dollars go further with something that has a longer-lasting impact, and that’s where incorporating good corporate citizenship really makes sense. Using the team-building day to give back to the community serves two beneficial purposes: You get the employees invested in one another, building bonds of camaraderie and esteem, and you get them engaged in the company’s culture of philanthropy.”



## Disney

In order to build a sense of community among its employees, Disney also uses team-building services such as Wise Guys Events. Recently, it launched a Superhero Academy program where players play games in a park while preparing video care packages and other gifts to deliver to Children's Hospital Los Angeles, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, or the charity of their choice.

Using a paid service dedicated to team building can be a worthwhile investment if you don't have the internal resources for a CSR initiative. The key is to get everyone involved. "We recently ran a really successful event for a group of 200 people, but one sour note was when the participants noticed that upper management didn't participate," Nye says. "Unfortunately, the notion that team building is for the 'worker bees' can make the silos that divide companies worse, not better. Where we see these high-level clients leading is when they understand that, when it comes to good corporate citizenship, everyone is equal. And isn't that what citizenship is all about?"





Redshift is an Autodesk publication dedicated to telling stories about the future of making things in the architecture, infrastructure, construction, and manufacturing industries. With technological advancements in machine learning, generative design, and robotics, the very nature of design is shifting. Designers, engineers, builders, and makers are no longer confined to traditional ideas of design and engineering. The landscape has redshifted. And so our quest continues: to explore the future of making things and reveal how products, buildings, and cities will be built tomorrow—and even 100 years from now.



Autodesk makes software for people who make things. If you've ever driven a high-performance car, admired a towering skyscraper, used a smartphone, or watched a great film, chances are you've experienced what millions of Autodesk customers are doing with the company's software.

