The role of the C-Suite is to do what only it is uniquely capable of doing – creating and sustaining an enabling, encouraging environment for volunteering throughout the company.
Founders and early leaders in many companies have created cultures that value service to the community and that have resulted in longstanding traditions of employee volunteering.

There is a dynamic relationship between corporate culture and volunteering. They influence one another, reinforcing and strengthening what a company is, what it wants to be and what it is becoming.

CEOs and C-suite executives can set an important example through their own personal volunteering and the messages they send that validate the importance of volunteering to the community, the company and the employees themselves.

The C-suite can create and sustain a vision of a high quality, impactful volunteer program, ensuring that appropriate resources are available to achieve that vision and obstacles to it are removed from company policies and practices.

Which came first, the leader or the culture? Likely that is a question best left to the organizational development theorists. But, in this research, it was clear that, as it pertains to volunteering, there is a dynamic, reinforcing interaction between the two, complemented by worker expectations and societal pressures. These create and sustain environments that encourage community engagement and volunteering by both the institution and its people.

Founders, later-arriving executive change-makers and, in current parlance, the “C-Suite” were cited in interview after interview as critical to building and sustaining enabling environments for volunteering in their companies.

IBM can make reasonable claim to having one of the longest standing corporate commitments to community service. During celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2011, the company noted: “IBM’s tradition of volunteerism is as old as the company itself. In the 1910s, IBM President Thomas J. Watson Sr. challenged employees to share their time and talents with their communities, and IBM’s culture of community service was born.”
The company has this important message on its history webpage:

The character of a company – the stamp it puts on its products, services and the marketplace – is shaped and defined over time. It evolves. It deepens. It is expressed in an ever-changing corporate culture, in transformational strategies, and in new and compelling offerings for customers.

That reality describes the ongoing evolution of how companies have chosen to serve their communities, the world and their own employees through their commitment to volunteering. From Volunteers from the Workplace, the original research done by the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) in the U.S. in 1979 that first defined corporate volunteering as a discrete field of activity worthy of study, to the 1986 follow-up study, A New Competitive Edge, by VOLUNTEER, NCVA’s successor organization, to IAVE’s 2011 Global Companies Volunteering Globally, the central theme, a commitment to service to the community, has remained constant while the nature and scope of programs has evolved to fit our changing world.
Companies with legacies of community service and volunteering have shaped what they and their employees are doing today. Some have been around since early in the 20th century, while others are relatively newer, a few only one or two decades old. They share in common an early leader who had a vision of what the company should be, of how it should behave, of the responsibility to community and society that it bore. Here are prominent examples.

**AXA Hearts in Action** was created by the founder of the **AXA Group, Claude Bébear**, in 1991. He was convinced that CEOs have a “citizen role” to play in addition to their business role. Thanks to him, AXA was one of the first companies in France to have a volunteer program. After Bébear, AXA has had two other CEOs, **Henri De Castries** and **Thomas Buberl**, both of whom have continued the volunteering program with enthusiasm. “It’s clearly rooted in the culture of the company, in our DNA.”

Today the program stretches from Europe to the Americas, Asia to Africa in the 54 countries where AXA is present. It involves more than one third of its 120,000+ employees worldwide in three priority areas: health and disease prevention, social inequality and inclusion and climate change and environment.

Volunteering remains the “front row” of AXA’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.

**Peter Ma (Ma Mingzhe)**, founder and chairman of the **Ping An Group** in China (rated number 6 on the 2021 Forbes list of the world’s largest companies), is committed to support for education and poverty alleviation. He was personally engaged in the Shenzhen welfare center sponsored by the company to provide a “safe home” for children and participated as a volunteer teacher at the **Ping An Hope** primary school. In 2018, his advocacy led to creation of the Ping An Volunteer Association to launch the company’s **Three Village** poverty alleviation project.

Following Ma’s example, other Group executives are personally engaged in additional poverty-stricken rural areas, working with villagers to develop new alleviation strategies, creating science and literacy courses and exploring other ways to assist. The company’s expectation is that “through the attention of senior managers to public welfare, we can drive more employees to devote themselves to [participate].”
In 2016, Marc Benioff, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Salesforce wrote this in his article “Businesses Are the Greatest Platforms for Change” in the Huffpost.

At my company, Salesforce, we baked philanthropy into our business model from day one, leveraging one percent of our technology, people, and resources to help nonprofits around the world achieve their missions. So far, we've provided more than $100 million in grants, our employees have logged more than 1.1 million volunteer hours and we’ve given products to more than 27,000 organizations. Following our example, more than 550 companies have signed up for Pledge 1%, committing one percent of their equity, product, and employee time to their communities.

As businesses, we can be financially successful, and at the same time we can make the world a better place for everyone. As business leaders, we can collaborate with our customers, employees, partners, communities, governments and institutions to create cultures of trust that put the wellbeing of our people and planet first. We can engage in corporate philanthropy with the same focus and dedication as other business investments. We can rethink our educational systems to train the workforce of tomorrow. We can work together to ensure that this technology revolution serves humanity to its fullest potential and benefits all the citizens, not just a chosen few.

For all new employees at Salesforce, half of their first day on the job is spent volunteering, “So they really understand at the beginning that it is a core part of our culture.”

Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE) is only six years old. But it traces its lineage back to the creation of the original Hewlett-Packard Company in 1947 and its founders, William Hewlett and David Packard. Both founders were deeply committed to community involvement, personal and corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Their vision of what their company should and could be formed the culture in which today’s corporate volunteering is based.

The Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction initiative at Marriott International, the company’s global sustainability plan, includes goals specific to volunteering: “By 2025, contribute 15 million hours of volunteer service to support our company priorities and community engagement strategy. 50% of our volunteer hours will serve children and youth, including those at risk and disadvantaged, by developing their skills, employability and supporting their vitality. By 2025, 50% of all reported volunteer activities will be skills-based.” The roots of this commitment stem from the values instilled by its founders, J. Willard and Alice Marriott, roots that have been nurtured and grown into maturity through the dedication and leadership of the Marriott family.

Other examples include:

UPS which traces its commitment to the community back to founder Jim Casey.

Polar, the largest family-owned company in Venezuela, remains a leader in community engagement and volunteering, even in the difficult current national environment there. For more information on Polar and its insipirational CEO, Lorenzo Mendoza see the CEO Profiles section of this report.

Dell Technologies, where founder Michael Dell is known for talking about the company’s commitment to the community during onboarding sessions for new employees, ensuring it is “really ingrained and a part of the culture.”
A Great Example from the Global South

**Banco General** was founded in 1955 but it began a period of growth and success that continues until today when Federico Humbert Azcárraga joined the bank in the mid-1970s. He passed away in 2017 after over 40 years of service to the bank. In its 2017 social responsibility report, “Following a Great Trajectory,” the bank honored him with this statement from the current president, Raúl Alemán. It underscores the lasting influence that a leader can have in shaping the culture and values of a company. Today, the bank has an active volunteer program, *Vecinos en Acción* (*Neighbors in Action*), and is an active member of the Latin American Corporate Volunteer Council (CLAVE).

The success achieved by Banco General over the years has been the product of four fundamental factors: the daily practice of a corporate culture based on values, the commitment to serve customers with excellence, a strict financial discipline and our strategic long-term vision.

Within this vision, social responsibility plays a fundamental role, since doing business responsibly, always thinking of how to carry it out and how it will impact our stakeholders, has allowed us to lead the organization to success, creating value for society and contributing to the sustainable development of our country.

These pillars, the vision and the way of doing business of Banco General’s President, Mr. Federico Humbert Azcárraga, for more than 42 years, inspired all of us working under his leadership to follow his example and consolidate the culture that today is part of our daily living within the organization.
Before social responsibility or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were even mentioned, Mr. Humbert promoted the well-being of his collaborators, as well as fair labor practices; he spoke about the responsibility we have in promoting values through advertising and communication; about the responsibility we have for knowing the customer and addressing their requests promptly; and of course, he believed in the great responsibility we have with our community, especially with the more excluded and vulnerable within our society.

Thanks to his leadership, Banco General was the first Panamanian company to sign the United Nations Global Compact in 2001 and today, as always, remains committed to its 10 principles that are the guide in continuing to work on social responsibility.

As is known to our customers and the community, Mr. Federico Humbert rested in the peace of the Lord on November 2, 2017. But the culture he founded will continue to grow in order for our organization to be part of the integral development of our country through social responsibility processes, programs and projects. Keeping his values alive is our commitment.

Their 2021 report featured this quote from Mr. Humbert: “It takes many...thousands of ideas, programs and, above all, the calling to courageously face the problem of poverty. But we all must and should offer the best of each one of us in ideas and action.”
The Interplay of Culture and Volunteering

There is a dynamic relationship between corporate culture and volunteering. They influence one another, reinforcing and strengthening what a company is, what it wants to be and what it is becoming. This is true throughout the world. Here are notable examples in the words of a sample of the companies interviewed over the course of this research.

Ping An illustrates the mutual benefit of this dynamic: “Volunteer service is one of the effective ways of corporate culture construction. Through its transmission of corporate social responsibility, aspiration and mission, employees also enhance their sense of belonging and value in the process of participating in voluntary service activities. It not only conveys the love of Ping An people to the outside, but also enhances the internal cohesion. The establishment of Ping An Volunteer Association also promotes the normalization, platform and mechanism of Ping An volunteer service.”

For AB InBev, “Volunteering has given us a very beautiful way to materialize the dream we have as a company to build a better world and we are always seeing how – in the actions we do throughout the company – we are building that better world and volunteering is therefore a very important part.”

The signature program at DirecTV, “Piedra, Papel, Tijera” (Rock, Paper, Scissors), “has allowed the culture of DIRECTV to be expanded outside the company. The regional volunteers have strengthened the culture of the company, the volunteers perceive that the experiences are the same even if the country changes. It is about the same values, the same dedication, the same teamwork to fulfill a goal and finish it.”

At Accenture, “We strive to offer engaging employee experiences and empower our people to pursue what they are most passionate about. Volunteering is one of the many ways our people can fulfill a purpose, connect with
their communities and make a difference while growing their careers.”

**S&P Global**: “Our core values of excellence, relevance and integrity are reflected in the way we serve our customers, as well as in the volunteering programs we pursue to support our communities.”

There has been, at **Novo Nordisk**, a “passion for helping.” Taking responsibility in society is part of the company’s almost 100 year-old culture and its famed **Novo Nordisk Way** as well as of its strategic **Triple Bottom Line** commitment.

“We try to catch the employees as soon as they join **Discovery**. It’s really introducing them to the culture, which is that we want to impact the great people that we employ, and we want them to impact society. Our volunteer program is deeply entrenched in the culture of our business. So we receive a great deal of support from senior people which is very much integral to the program’s ongoing success.”

The core strengths of the **AIA Philam** companies are leveraged for CSR and volunteering programs. Core values of integrity, passion for excellence, care for others and giving freely in the service of others are common values shared between the group and foundation.

“We have three values at **EDP**: innovation, sustainability and humanization. Volunteering is connected with the three. It’s totally aligned with our values and with our culture and that’s why it started very organically in the organization. Before having a structured program, people at EDP were already volunteering outside company time or on company time with the support of their managers.”
What Can the C-Suite Contribute?

Our research identified four broad categories of actions by the C-Suite that can contribute to developing a vibrant, sustained volunteer effort by the company and its employees: setting an example, leading the way internally, creating expectations and motivating and recognizing.

Setting an Example

Geoff Martha became CEO of Medtronic in April 2020, bringing his “personal passion for giving back to the community” and his goal for the company to support employees in how they want to participate in that. “By employees seeing and hearing from the new CEO, there has been more comfort for people to say, ‘Oh, it’s okay for me to take an hour to volunteer, it’s okay for me to come together in teams.’” Encouragement from the top ripples throughout the company from headquarters through its operating regions. “Employees, even locally, feel comfortable knowing that my vice president or director, they encouraged us to volunteer. That’s helped with integrating that into the culture over time… The biggest cultural shift is really just opening up the conversation about social justice and racial inequality, [helping] people feel like they can use volunteering and giving as also a way to contribute to responding to those injustices.”

Michael Mussallem, chairman and CEO of Edwards Life Sciences since it was spun off from Baxter as a publicly traded company, established Edwards’ commitment to philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. He is a participant in on-site company volunteer activities such as assembling food packages for Feed the Children and leading the Wear Red initiative to inspire heart health among women. He “is an amazing sport when we do our annual Oktoberfest awareness event for United Way Orange County with employee competitions and wacky relay races.” He often speaks to and offers mentorship presentations to students of nonprofit partners on innovation and serves on several nonprofit boards.

In Russia, the Chairman of the OMK Management Board and other top-executives, including the managing director, human resources director and trade union leader participate in blood-donor campaigns, event volunteering, sports marathons and bicycle marathons, among others.¹

C-suite executives at Cognizant actively participate in volunteering initiatives where their participation is strategic or crucial – for example, in program launches, initiating dialogue with major clients or agencies and call outs in town halls and social media. “These go a long way towards achieving volunteering engagement and outcomes.” The CEO and board of directors met in person with select volunteers in 2020 to discuss their views on the program, their motivations and challenges. The Chief People Officer hosted a chat show with select volunteers which was telecast to the entire organization.

¹ Research for and preparation of this chapter was completed in 2021.
The CEO and top executives at **Asahi Poland** set an example through their involvement in community focused actions. They participate as volunteers and encourage managers to be involved.

**Cargill** expects that CEOs will be involved, because there is a "people first" principle and therefore they must be dedicated to communities and set an example for employees. There are four measures for performance at Cargill: enriched communities, profitable growth, customer satisfaction and committed employees.

**CEMEX** expects its executives to be “the first ambassadors of volunteering policies and to support a responsible business culture.” The CEO and Executive Committee members also are expected to get actively involved. “It is part of the culture.”

At **SAP**, there is strong C-Suite support for volunteering, not limited to exclusive sponsorship through one particular board member. “It is less about setting expectations – top executives want to be involved. They also care about getting involved in an authentic way, with an activity that is meaningful for them personally.”

There is an observable correlation between executives at **RBC** championing employee involvement and the level of participation in a given unit. Many RBC executives sit on nonprofit boards through the company’s board matching program.

**Leading the Way Internally**

From its beginnings, **Bank of America**, now headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, has always had a strong tradition of community service. The bank was early in the development
of employee volunteer programs, providing significant leadership for the emergence of corporate volunteering as a definable field of activity.

**Brian Moynihan**, the company’s chairman and CEO, regularly highlights and promotes volunteering with his management team and company-wide.

The strong executive-level support is critical to the work of the small global team that drives the program, creating vision, policies, strategy, framework and resources. The program is implemented throughout the company by some 150 community volunteer teams led by “ESG teammates” (Environmental, Social and Governance). The company has seen an increase in volunteer participation rate among some 200,000+ “teammates” in 41 countries from 27% in 2014 to 39% in 2019, across all lines of business, U.S. markets, and global regions. The bank’s online volunteer platform allows company leaders to promote, monitor and celebrate volunteer activity over time, across geography, line of business and other key indicators.

The company emphasizes volunteer recognition and storytelling at all levels of the company. Its #BofAVolunteers hashtag is one of the company’s most successful social media hashtags.

Bank of America’s strategic approach is “top down, bottoms up and through the middle, which is pretty exciting. There are activities at the enterprise level, the grassroots level, and everywhere in between. It all comes together across our global footprint.”

**Tim Cook**, CEO of Apple, makes it a habit to talk or Tweet about the company’s commitment to supporting the community through volunteering, corporate giving and matching employee gifts. His main concern is “ensuring that our employees are aware of the programs [and] know that this is a benefit to them that they can take advantage of.” His question: “What are we doing to increase visibility of these programs?” His message to the board, the employees and the public is consistent: “This is what we’re doing, because it’s the right thing to do.” For staff responsible for those programs, “Tim has been a really strong advocate for us. That’s awesome, because it really elevates our programs. It gives them that much more importance.”

**Bill Winters**, Group Chief Executive (CEO) of Standard Chartered is the Executive Sponsor for the company’s volunteering. Under his leadership, the bank’s management team played a key role in development and approval of Futuremakers, a new global community program, designed to empower young women through financial education, life-skills training, development of employability skills and preparation for job-seeking. The program also has a focus on developing women and young entrepreneurs through financial skills training and business plan development. Volunteering roles include mentoring, coaching and training in all of those areas.

At TELUS, CEO Darren Entwistle has been “the innovative force of focusing ‘giving back’ locally, where we work, live and serve. He’s been passionate about it and made it a priority within our corporate giving,” motivating staff to look for ways to improve and expand their programs. As a result of his setting high expectations “with TELUS Days of Giving last year, we had 100% participation from all VPs and above.” They select activities “that are close to their heart. They roll up their sleeves and get right into the activity with all the other volunteers. Those range from community clean ups (collecting trash), bike trail maintenance, gardening at various community organizations, fundraising and participating in charity walks, packing and assembling comfort and school
kits, preparing and serving meals at soup kitchens, and sorting food at food banks to donating blood.”

“At Microsoft, we say that giving is in our DNA.” As CEO Satya Nadella describes it, “It’s like having a coffee first thing in the morning. It’s habit forming.” He can count his years in the company from the number of employee giving campaigns he’s been part of.

Microsoft’s October Giving Campaigns are the only time the company’s employees in the U.S. can be solicited – or solicit one another – for financial contributions to support nonprofit organizations. The company matches employee contributions, and in 2020, this generated over $225 million, inclusive of the corporate match. October Giving also is a prime time for executives to donate their own time and talents in an on-line auction in which any employee can bid.

“Those are very, very popular items – coaching time, shadowing time, career mentoring. Usually they will offer unique experiences: ‘I am Greek. So come to my house with six of your friends and my wife and I will teach you how to cook a three-course Greek meal.’ One that’s extremely popular: Our CFO will pick you and seven of your friends up in her minivan and take you to Burger Master, an institution here because it was beside the first Microsoft office, so Bill Gates always ate there.”

Another example, “Our head of HR has done ‘Carpool Karaoke.’ She will pick you up in her car with another two members of the leadership team and you will drive to work singing karaoke, then have breakfast with her.”

Creating Expectations

Al Kelly, the Chairman and CEO of VISA, has shared in multiple employee addresses that he volunteers his personal time. He also expressed appreciation for others who believe in volunteer engagement and encouraged employees to support their personal passion. Kelly’s personal leadership sets a positive example, and many other executives commit significant time to charitable causes as well. He and the executive leadership have continued to be major champions of employee participation in social impact programs (through volunteering, matching gifts and more) and set a goal for participation in FY21, which was exceeded with 85% of employees participating through third-quarter 2021.

At FirstRand Ltd. in South Africa, the volunteer program is “...fundamentally a part of how we do business and how we encourage active corporate citizenship... From a senior top-level management perspective, the volunteer program has absolute and total support and involvement... Our CEOs come to the venue. They come to the initiative. If diarised with good lead time, they will make a plan to be there.”
When Antonio Neri became CEO at HPE, he made it clear that people and culture are among his top priorities. Building on the legacy of the founders, William Hewitt and David Packard, he set the tone to hold everyone accountable for contributing to the culture, including engagement in the community. It “made middle management pay more attention to this and to make sure they are engaging their team members in this way.”

At AIA Philam in the Philippines, CEOs or other senior executives of member companies sit on foundation boards, giving them responsibility to drive volunteer activities in their respective companies. This enables them to institutionalize the company’s core values through their advocacy and participation. “When you’re volunteering, you’re not the CEO but the same as any employee. Leaders at Philam Group set the tone from the top and help a lot in boosting morale and building synergy across the organization.”

During annual town halls with Keppel employees all over the world, volunteering and CSR activities are mentioned in the CEO’s speech and shown in videos. “Our leaders make sure that the employees know that volunteering is important to them. Without that visibility, it’s hard to rally volunteer support.”

At Sage, members of the C-Suite “have to be involved. They must do five days volunteering annually, because from our perspective it is leading from the top. As a general rule, members of our executive team – in total around 50 people – are all fully engaged in the program. They are measured on it as part of their key performance indicators (KPIs). So if they don’t do it, then they won’t reach their KPIs and won’t get their bonus.”

Responsibility to advance corporate citizenship at Accenture starts at the top, with the board, executive chairman and CEO, then “cascades through our business. Our governance structure ensures there is a clear path of responsibility to achieve our corporate citizenship goals.”

Motivating and Recognizing

At POSCO, one of the world’s largest steelmakers, based in South Korea, the overall status of employee volunteering and the improvement of the company’s volunteer system are reported to the CEO, Jeong-Woo Choi. To motivate employees and enhance their self-esteem, he holds a lunch meeting for volunteers who, over their tenure with the firm, have a cumulative 3,000 hours or more. He does this two or three times a year, directly
How “C-Suiters” Can Support Their Company’s Volunteering

- Become a “first ambassador of volunteering” (Thank you to CEMEX for this term!)
- Be an advocate – up and down, internally and externally
- Participate personally in company volunteer activities
- Tell stories of your own volunteer experiences
- Actively engage and show interest in planning and monitoring activities
- Encourage middle managers to set an example for their direct reports by actively supporting and engaging in programs
- Recognize what volunteers are doing publicly and privately
- Encourage other C-Suiters to get involved
- Endorse projects through your presence
- Respond affirmatively and energetically to company expectations
- Fulfill your own interests and values through personal volunteering
- Ensure appropriate allocation of resources for high-quality, high-impact volunteer programs
- Identify and remove obstacles to volunteering in company policies and practices

Awarding “mileage certification plaques.” The company has 77 skills-based volunteer groups across the 51 countries in which they operate. POSCO employees volunteer 27 hours per year, on average. Over 95% of employees participate in volunteer work. More than 80% of employees volunteer during their personal time.

Top executives at EDP have been actively engaged in its program since it was created. The first initiatives had the participation of the CEO and other board members beside high-level members from the EDP Foundation. Now, they have a sponsoring board member who meets with them quarterly. “Every time the sponsor appears internally or externally, it gives us a sense of importance, of being strategic. And that’s very, very important.”
Profiles of C-Suite Advocates for Corporate Volunteering
Jacques van den Broek
CEO, Randstad

Jacques van den Broek served as CEO and chair of the Executive Board of Randstad for eight years. In March 2022, he stepped down after 30-plus years with the company. In making this announcement, Supervisory Board Chair Wout Dekker noted van den Broek’s role in “strengthening our culture and values.”

Mr. Van den Broek and other CEOs and leaders in the Netherlands launched the NL 2025 movement to develop a better future for those living in the country. A survey was conducted among 100,000 residents asking what they thought about the country and what they felt was important for the future. The results helped form the basis for three themes: excellent education, sustainable growth and a vibrant society. Projects initiated and launched employ the “pay-it-forward” principle: I do something for you and then you pass it on to someone else. According to van den Broek, they are developing projects to help individuals improve their lives, such as providing financial coaches to help those burdened by personal debt.

Views on Giving Back to Society

Randstad is “a family-owned company, but one-third is still with the founder. He founded the business in 1960. He said that a company doesn’t have the right to exist if they don’t contribute to society and not just on the sidelines. Not just because it’s fashionable… but because that’s the essence of what drives you.”

The business of Randstad is work and “lifting people out of poverty, giving people chances. I’ve personally worked all my life in this business. So, I worked in bad neighborhoods, and I’ve seen the effect that work has on people. We work a lot with people with a distance to the labor market, handicapped people. So a large part of my motivation, and [that of] many of my colleagues [stems from] this purpose of contributing to society.”

Active Involvement in Volunteering

“I’ve worked a lot with startups. I’ve worked a lot with professors from schools, school managers on how to deal with running a school. I did that for eight years with my son’s school, and on the board. … Actually, my wife also does that. So on a Saturday morning, we [work] with startups or with school professors.”

In terms of volunteering abroad, “we think people come back better than they were. I mentioned my experience in tough neighborhoods. You come from a privileged background, and then you’re in this neighborhood, and you either like it, or not. I like it. It’s absolutely impressive to see my
people on projects in India…. They just land there, can’t speak the language, but still they cope. I support them, of course, in talking to them once every two to four weeks and help them if possible. So that’s been inspiring for them, but also for me. They make little clips, and we put them on our social media.”

“I can’t say I come from a privileged background, but rather from a pretty modest background. I always played football. So, you’re in the midst of society. I worked as a student to pay for my tuition. Also, I worked as a photographer in a retail store, again, in an okay neighborhood, but not a great neighborhood. I always felt at home there, so to say, and also found out increasingly that through my capabilities I could contribute.”

The Role of the CEO in Volunteering

“As I said, we’re a family business. And I see myself as the replacement of the founder; so, very much to carry the torch. That means, first and foremost, to modernize the purpose and the values of the business to keep them alive. The second one is to run the business from day to day. But last year, we lost 150,000 of our workers in a few weeks [as a result of COVID-19]. So last year, it was all hands on deck. But way more importantly, and that is very much I think the family thing, is to set the company right for the next 60 years. We are not a shareholder-interest company. We are a stakeholder-interest company. So we invest in the future. We don’t maximize profits.”

Mr. van den Broek often coaches Randstad volunteers when they are on cross-border assignments. “We’ve had a volunteer program in place for 15 years, [but in the beginning] it was a bit unsafe. That it is not good for your career to say that you’re going to go six months to Africa, right? So, by coaching these people, it’s quite clear that from the top, we believe this is valuable for society and for you as a person. I think that’s very visible. Second, we founded a platform, Randstad with Heart, where people get a day per year to work on their favorite charity, and to create a platform for people to create teams to create literature, roundup support for their favorite charity, that sort of thing.”

“The Role of the CEO in Volunteering

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Chacko Thomas is the Managing Director and CEO of Tata Coffee. Based in Bengaluru, India, it is the largest integrated coffee plantation company in the world with 12,000 employees in several Indian states and Vietnam. In 2019, Mr. Thomas was given the Tata Responsible Leader Award in recognition of his personal volunteering and his leadership in encouraging others in his company to volunteer.

**Personal Views and Involvement**

“[Volunteering] is about more than business, it’s more about getting people together, it’s about some of the passions that you have within you... It is something pretty close to me.”

It is also part of his family history. “I am fortunate to have parents who believe that if you are a bit more privileged than others, you need to give back to society. I am very fortunate that my family, especially my wife, and I share pretty much the same kind of philosophy. One of the things I really enjoy doing is to spend time with geriatric dogs. There’s a society here that cares for dogs which are old and blind and not taken care of. So we spend time there. These are the kinds of things that we’ve been fortunate in having.”

**The Role of the CEO/C-Suite in Corporate Volunteer Programs**

“I think, first and foremost, you need to get your hands dirty. So, we had this project around cleaning a certain lake. This is something we decided to do with a set of other companies. While it’s not compulsory, you’re here, and it’s okay to be digging, doing manual labor for five, six hours. It’s not something that you need to do on a weekend. The company feels you should do it during working hours. But you need to be walking the talk. Your presence there is extremely important.”

“The second bit is setting direction. I will not take the credit for the direction that we took. But I was clear that we needed to move in specific activities we needed to do, not spray our attention all over the place doing 10 or 15 different projects. That bit I do feel that a CEO would need to do.”

“There are many other things a CEO actually can do. For me, I did see that it’s an opportunity to get people together, it is an opportunity to be able to meet people when they are the most disarmed. And they actually give you absolutely forthright and very clear, no-holds-barred kind of responses to some of your queries. Some of what is happening is because, after about five or six hours of actually working with them...
physically, it’s easier to talk to people. So I thought that was one of the things a CEO can actually build in and be able to take away from volunteering.”

Speaking of the different company locations in India and Vietnam, Thomas noted that each of these locations “have different kinds of people who have different understandings of what community is about and what service is all about. I was there at the right moment when we decided that we would have a concentrated effort towards volunteering. I was able to tell people, ‘Let’s choose things which are important not just to you but to the community around you.’ First thing, it needs to be pretty close to where we are operating. The second thing I told them was, ‘Let’s do something that you truly believe in, something which finally gives you a lot of joy and happiness.’” The result was that each of the sites “chose things that impacted the people and communities around where they were based.”

Advice to other CEOs

“First, if you have the [employees’] families also involved in a volunteering activity, it becomes extremely, extremely efficient and effective. I’ve seen in our volunteering, when we had a child and somebody’s husband coming or somebody’s wife coming in, the entire happiness quotient, the entire way people actually looked at volunteering in itself was totally different.”

“Second, if you really want to make a big, big difference in any particular project that you undertake, you need to hitch your wagon to a very effective NGO, or go along with some of the government schemes that may be there. It’s a rub-off kind of thing, since some of these NGOs have done a fantastic job of getting people together, the community together, helping you in being able to effectively roll out these things.”

“Third, is celebrating your successes. It is very important for the team to see what they have been able to do. Maybe there is a video or photographs. These are reminders of the good that you have done and that it is not forgotten. Celebrate with your team.”

“It’s very easy to forget everything in the business part of your work. But you will never forget the giving back to the community because it is the center of what the Tata Group is all about.”
Lorenzo Mendoza is CEO of Empresas POLAR, owned by his family since its founding in 1941. It is Venezuela’s largest food and beverage company and one of Venezuela’s major employers. It is seen as a symbol of resilience in the country.

**Reasons for a Corporate Volunteer Program**

“I do believe that your workers become more productive. I’ve seen it. The most productive workers we have are the ones that are volunteering. It has nothing to do with time but with the state of mind. Being involved in something creates also a self, a sentiment that you’re being useful, you’re helping others. I’ve seen the shyest people blossom through the volunteering program... You can do it quietly. But you’ve got to be involved. I would tell CEOs to measure your productivity once you have a volunteering program.”

**The Role of the CEO/C-Suite in Corporate Volunteer Program**

“I find very few things are good top-down, but one of them is obviously modeling values and principles and commitment. The rest is usually bottom-up. But that one, you cannot just shy away and just give it to a group of people. You’ve got to be the example. You’ve got to really be committed.”

“I find a lot of CEOs are responsible people. They assign resources and that’s good. But that’s not enough, that’s not going to move the needle. You’ve got to be committed to the things you ask your troops to be. It starts from the top. I find it is a total turnover for employees to see a CEO that is only great in ideas, only great in innovation. You see high rotation in those companies because at the end, they’re there just for the quarterly earnings; there’s nothing else.”

“On the other hand, when you see there is a system that creates a cultural environment of being impactful to others through the privileges you have already, then you see a company that is well set and well established. I feel we have to be impactful with our people and then with our communities. Everything starts with your people. They need to feel they are well treated, well respected, well taken care of. They’re the biggest force to represent you on the frontline of your supply chain and of your community and volunteer programs.”

“So I would tell [other CEOs] to embrace it, to try it but really with commitment.”
On the Current Situation in Venezuela

Referencing the impact of the current realities in Venezuela on businesses, Mr. Mendoza says of Polar, “What has not shrunk is our volunteering and our capacity to commit to the communities we work with. That talks volumes about the commitment our people have to really keep doing volunteering work in the three areas we work on – education, the environment, and what we call *tempo libre* [free time].”

“We have had volunteering work since we were founded (in the 1940s). But, in the 12 years since our volunteer program was formalized, I have seen an organizational development that is very, very impactful. I think that’s the area in which we have grown the most; we create activities in which people jump in, and then things happen independently. I’m amazed by the thousand things that happened in the communities where we’re doing volunteering work, given the danger that exists in those places. But people don’t stop; they just follow through with their program of volunteering.”

“They just go for it. There can be a violent crime just a couple of blocks away or a problem of no access to electricity or clean water. They just keep going. That’s what I feel most proud of. We’ve been able to create a program in which we have to deal with all the chaos that exists – and yes, our people live it also in their day-to-day lives. But when they’re volunteering, they just go and help others.”

“I’m very impressed by my people. If you’re well organized, no matter the adversities we have in the country, they can be impactful. Their time is very, very valuable to others, to all the people [they’re] helping. That’s powerful, because people trust each other, they don’t stop, even in danger.”

Personal Views & Involvement

“I’m an ultimate optimist. I was raised by a great dad and my mom is my hero. She was always a volunteer. I was brought up in a way in which the country came first and others came first.

“...The family decided on a long-term view. In all of our 80 years of history, we have had what the country gave us and the respect and reputation we earned, reinforced our commitment to Venezuela. So there is a price to pay now under these difficult times. We don’t shy away from that.”

“You cannot just run away from problems. When you have responsibilities, and you’ve been blessed and privileged, you cannot look aside. That’s what keeps me going, looking at my mom’s eye every day when I see the commitment that she has and how she goes about her life. It’s something that really gives me strength and gives me gasoline. So looking at my people and knowing we have not lost one top-management person or middle-management person because of the crisis.”

Mr. Mendoza also is an active volunteer himself. “I do about two or three impactful volunteering things with my people on a quarterly basis. But if I show up at a company volunteer activity, it also can be a stopping moment for everyone, and I don’t like that. So, I have other volunteering that I’m doing myself. I cannot live without volunteering. I cannot live without being committed to something that goes beyond my responsibilities in my work environment.”

His favorite personal volunteer activity is working with children and youth, especially single mothers. “I’m trying to make sure that
they empower themselves. I love to see young girls really take control of their lives. I love to spend time trying to encourage them to be themselves, to give them strength to see how far they can go, really believing in themselves and not relying on any single male reference in their lives. Making sure they believe that they can accomplish things on equal terms.”

Advice to Other CEOs

"Your true identity and your true values and principles come through your employees. If they all jump on the bandwagon of volunteering, you're a better company, you're a better citizen in the different markets you're in, and you are more impactful. Your products are going to be beloved much more than your competition's. You are going to be recognized by clients and consumers as a committed party."
Bongiwe Nomandi Njobe  
Head, Social Investing,  
FirstRand Ltd.

Bongiwe Nomandi Njobe is Head, Social Investing at FirstRand Ltd. in South Africa and on the board of seven other companies. Previously, she served as Director General at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Director of Corporate Affairs at SABMiller South Africa Ltd. and Director, Corporate Affairs at South African Breweries (Pty) Ltd. She is a Fellow of the Inaugural Class of the Africa Leadership Initiative-South Africa and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. Across her career, she has served as a Board Member/Non-Executive Director or Trustee of various private sector, NGO and government-owned organizations.

Ms. Njobe perhaps has one of the most diverse backgrounds of any of the C-Suite executives interviewed for this research. But woven throughout her career is the ethic of service and the need for effective change management in business, government and the voluntary sector.

At its root, she says, is “where I come from – activists, teacher, parents and rural background. You’re always sitting with an image of your family in the background. My late Dad used to say: ‘We didn’t go into the liberation struggle to move into the towns. We went into the liberation struggle to change the conditions of the areas where we live...’ When I think of my siblings, I think we all took something from there. We retain an appreciation for polish, humility, modesty, but also for doing the right thing and trying to do things that change other people’s lives intentionally.”

“I enjoy engaging with the young people at FirstRand Ltd. They’re very bold, they’re very courageous. [Some are] coming to talk about their social passions and trying to navigate how they can be a hard-nosed transaction advisor and still want to solve for something in the community. I think that’s where the volunteering capability in the bank starts to help that conversation. What we’re trying to do now is to bring the foundation closer to the business [to] have those conversations at multiple levels.”

She emphasizes the need to be clear-eyed about the often-undiscussed complexities of volunteering:

“Until we get to a point where we measure the impact of volunteering on an equivalent basis, we can’t really claim it’s doing the right thing. The one thing volunteers do well is stand up. They choose a cause. They work hard, and they put in a lot of extra energy, raise funds. They go out and help somebody in a lesser position than...”
themselves. It gives most of them a ‘feel-good’ factor; they feel good about their actions and, to some extent, can see the good they’ve done.”

“What we don’t have, though, which is my critique with ‘days of service,’ [is an understanding of] the expectations of the beneficiary. Volunteers have to appreciate the needs and ambitions of a school headmaster, for example, to set expectations for success. In fact, that’s the primary objective: to say, with the beneficiary, ‘We set out to do this because this was your agenda, and we’ve achieved it. I’m so glad I was able to bring my skills, experience and discretionary energy to help solve your issue.’ Then you start getting an equivalent set of reporting.”

Ms. Njobe tells a story about one of the first volunteer events she attended at FirstRand Ltd., a reception recognizing the work of mentors in the community, featuring mentors and mentees talking about what the experience meant for them. “You could immediately see what the FirstRand Ltd. employees had come away with. They were very clear, they were emotional. They didn’t want to stop the relationship. But then you listened to the mentees – headmasters or teachers or whoever the heads of the organizations were – [express their gratitude.] I can be a little bit cynical. How easy it is for people to plead poverty and how grateful they are. But actually, they don’t engage with whether they have shifted from ‘where I was’ to ‘where I need to be’ in order to be more independent.”

“I was hearing these two levels of inputs. So, I challenged the business a bit: Did we set expectations of the beneficiaries beforehand outside the fact that they’re going to receive help from you? That becomes part of the agenda for collaboration. Equity schemes taught me about how you’ve got to understand beneficiary expectations and articulate them in such a way that they really are achievable.”

“I continue to challenge volunteers in terms of what are they really doing. How does it change people’s lives and what happens when they walk away?”

She applies that directly to her work at FirstRand Ltd.: “I would love to see a situation where banks are about financial inclusion and well-being, where people who work in the bank become agents in society, to be empowered to use banks for their own advancement. Very few people actually understand the role of banks: For individuals to be empowered to use banks for their own advancement. If we all fully understood how to work with banks, we probably would be in a much better place than we are now.”

“You can imagine if you took [an approach of] each one, teach one, everybody with their domestic workers, with gardeners, with NGOs, with small businesses, school principals, critical leadership points in society, and mentor those through volunteering. You’re very focused on bringing what you deeply understand into the world to enable others to be able to use that better. I would love to see most of the volunteering being geared towards transference of this financial savviness.”

Another example of her challenge to the corporate volunteering status quo relates to the community projects that many companies undertake on the United Nations declared International Nelson Mandela Day.

“Everybody had a Mandela project. They would literally paint and they’d fix things, then at the end the day, have a [sausage] and beer. It was fun. It was a teambuilding kind of thing. I said I have two problems with it. First, you’re not technically competent to be fixing buildings
for vulnerable groups, because you don’t have the certification. What you should be doing is contracting people to do that work, because you’re going into a place of need. It’s not fair to those people. The second challenge: You go in one year, and next year, you’re not there.

“So we then agreed that volunteers would choose a community and initiative, a project location where they would be for at least three years as a unit. They started by understanding needs. Rather than doing actual construction work, they facilitated the construction. Their compassion became the contribution. And it worked. Units picked their projects – invariably, somewhere near where they lived or worked – and went with it.”

Ms. Njobe believes it is important to see volunteering as giving “in a South African context in all of its forms” because “Asian and African families do a lot of coaching, mentoring and supporting each other... Indian families will cook large pots of biryani, and feed people, two, three times a week, but they don’t see that as volunteering. I wonder if we could build a South African definition of giving and reward the different forms of giving so people see that actually, all of this is more of the same. You’re giving of yourself and your time, and all of your efforts to improve the life of someone else. Once you’ve got that, you suddenly get a sense that we’ve actually got a nation of givers. Who knows how much more compassionate we might feel when we actually appreciate the fact that we do give in different forms?”

“I continue to challenge volunteers in terms of what are they really doing. How does it change people's lives and what happens when they walk away?”
Nicole “Nikki” Clifton
President, Social Impact and the UPS Foundation

Nicole “Nikki” Clifton leads UPS’s global philanthropy, social impact and community affairs efforts as part of the UPS Corporate Affairs, Communications and Sustainability team. She oversees company efforts to respond to the world’s most pressing social, humanitarian and environmental needs. She has been instrumental in UPS’s response to human rights and social justice issues, including spearheading and coordinating UPS’s anti-human trafficking awareness and education.

A Commitment to Service

Ms. Clifton’s commitment to service “started at home,” nurtured by her parents, both of whom were educators. “I don’t think you have more of a servant’s heart than teachers. I was taught really early that service is the rent you pay for being on this earth. They instilled that in me growing up as a child. I was taught service is what you do, whether it’s service in the church or for poor people in your community. If you’ve been given an opportunity, you owe it to return that in some way.”

She sees that same heritage in UPS. “The spirit of volunteerism and the ability to bind through a common spirit really does connect our workforce. We celebrate it, we recognize it, we have awards and competitions for people who are good community servants. I think that drives a lot of engagement. Our leaders see that servant led people make better business leaders.”

The commitment to service extends throughout the company, not only in the U.S. but worldwide. She notes that while “there are different expectations culturally, what we do best is having communications that highlight employees who represent the gold standard. We highlight them globally and regionally. [This] helps our international workforce recognize that as a global expectation. It’s something that will be rewarded, regardless of where you live.”

The Benefits of Volunteering

“It’s the business community’s responsibility to be an outstanding corporate steward; it is our responsibility to give back. Whatever their

* The quote - “Service to others is the rent you pay for the room here on earth” - was first said by Muhammad Ali and printed in the February 27, 1978 issue of Time Magazine and is considered to be one of Muhammad Ali’s greatest quotes of all time. This iconic quote has been used by millions of people across the world as a global symbol of hope, peace and philanthropy.
special assets are, the businesses should be using them to benefit communities where they live and where they work. It’s the right thing to do.”

“It’s a huge employee engagement opportunity. UPS never closed throughout this pandemic. You’ve got to keep morale up, you need opportunities to be able to connect with your employees, help them feel like they’re making a difference. Volunteering does that, it gets you out of yourself, out of your rut, maybe takes your mind off of the things that are troubling you.”

“I read a statistic yesterday about the connection between volunteerism and improving mental health and lowering depression. All workforces are struggling to keep morale high and employees engaged. The simple act of volunteering has benefits we have not fully appreciated. It should be celebrated and should be advanced because it comes back to the benefit of the company, when you’ve got highly engaged, highly motivated employees and volunteers.”

**Keys to Success**

“First, you’ve got to have top-down leadership support and buy in. It’s not going to work as effectively if you don’t have support from the top.”

“Second, I think you need to be clear about the objectives that you’re trying to serve. Who are you trying to help and why? The more clearly you can connect your volunteer programs to things that connect to your business and make sense to the business, they’re more sustainable.”

“Third, bring some structure around why [you’re] volunteering, whether it’s for humanitarian relief or to support equity and economic empowerment. You want to be able to do something that has a clear message. You must have a strong communication platform and make sure people know why you’re doing what you’re doing and understand how to volunteer. Then, you thank them for it. Everybody wants to be seen and everybody wants to be appreciated. Simple things like a T shirt or cute tchotchkes, water bottles or something that says ‘thank you for volunteering, we recognize you.’ There’s nothing that touches your heart like a letter from a child saying why it was important that you came to tutor or mentor them. That’s super important.”

“Fourth, your volunteer programs are really only as successful as you can show data to demonstrate impact. So, if you want to collect that data, you’ve got to have employees who are willing to give you that information. You’ve got to make sure that it’s easy to log into and use your systems.”

“Finally, partnerships with entities like IAVE are so helpful to be able to generate new ideas, new thought leadership, helping us advance our mission. Having a strong external partner is incredibly important.”

**Taking Volunteering to the Next Level**

“Given where the world is headed and the strategic shifts that have happened, it’s not only important, it’s vital. Customers, your stakeholders, your investors, your employees, your future employees, all want you to be able to tell them the story of impact. And the savvy ones are asking beyond counting things, they really want to be able to quantify how you moved the needle.”

“I think those companies that really plan to be in the top ranks of being socially responsible have to measure, to quantify the things that companies are being asked now in terms of how to tell your story for social investors. It’s a
requirement. The more that we’re able to really quantify what we’re doing and then be able to craft a narrative around it so that the data is supported by good stories, I think that’s the win-win.”

“Our goal is to positively impact 1 billion lives by 2040 and that’s a lot of people. So we’ve got to measure that.”

Clifton also sees the importance of qualitative analysis, of collecting stories about what volunteers are accomplishing and how they are effecting change. “I think you look at perhaps investing in nonprofits to collect those stories. If you could strategically invest in maybe your signature partners, your big-dollar grants. That could be at the local or national level. I think that’s an important part of what we are expecting and what we’re starting to see as more of a trend. I see us moving in that direction from a technology standpoint. It’s even reflected in who we want to hire, people who are able to help mine the data for those kinds of data points, because that’s a skill set.”

"The more we’re able to quantify what we’re doing and craft a narrative around it so the data is supported by good stories, that’s the win-win.”
Tim White
Corporate Executive Officer, Executive Vice President, Fujitsu Global

Tim White is Corporate Executive Officer, Executive Vice President at Fujitsu Global. *

About the Role of the Company in Society

“In Japan, we very much see ourselves as core to society. We’re not just a business, and we’re not just a company on the stock exchange. We have a huge responsibility to look after the people, to look after the culture. It’s Fujitsu’s responsibility to be there. It’s not a business opportunity. It’s about being much more visible and vocal. [For example,] our president is very passionate about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He’s really using them as a rallying point or as a focus for us as an organization to use the framework to guide our activities. It means you can be much more vocal because you are aligning yourself to a common global language.”

One of those benefits: “[If] you want to attract an employee in today’s market, they want to work for organizations that have purpose, for organizations that give back to society. Being vocal is an important thing because it can drive change.”

One of Fujitsu Delivery’s programs is “SDG communities.” “Essentially, what...we have created is an online environment for people to collaborate around the SDGs. We’ve got sponsors for each of the Goals, spread across the global delivery teams, bringing communities together from around the world to talk about a common theme – but to do so in a way that says, ‘How can I make a difference?’ or ‘How can I connect with you to make a difference on a global basis.’”

* The “Fujitsu Way” was established in 2002 as “a principle for the behavior of all of its people” and has since been revised as Fujitsu has become an increasingly global company. It has three components: a purpose statement of why Fujitsu exists in society; an articulation of the three core values of aspiration, trust and empathy; and a code of conduct. All Fujitsu executives share responsibility for safeguarding and bringing to life the Fujitsu Way.
“We are the single largest group of employees within Fujitsu. We are the youngest group of employees and the most diverse in terms of culture, gender and so forth. So, by connecting these people, it becomes contagious in terms of the spirit of giving back.”

Ongoing internal communication about community engagement is a key element of their program, “just promoting the smallest little thing that happens in a location, it resonates so well with people.”

“We say to people, don’t send us an email, don’t write a report. Send us the picture, the image of a small group of Fujitsu people working in a local community doing some work with an orphanage or feeding children in a school in India or doing an education session in the Philippines...as soon as you see that image, that connection is different from reading about it on paper, or in an email.”

The company also makes it a practice to involve their customers in their community activities. “For example, in India, if we have customers visit, we’ll organize a visit with them to one of the local schools that we support because it does give that kind of human touch to our customer engagements when they see that.”

**Role as Leader and Participant**

As White travels a great deal of the time, his own favorite way to connect with employees is to join local Fujitsu teams, whenever he can, in their volunteer projects. “It’s a great way to get to know your people. Instead of sitting in a hotel, I’d much rather be out with our teams doing something.”

He very much sees himself as a supporter, promoter and ally of Fujitsu’s employee volunteer efforts. During our interview, he was wearing a rainbow lanyard in support of the LGBTQ+ community. “I think one of the most important things I do is being an ally. Just being a voice out there is a really important thing” on issues that are priorities for employees.

His appreciation for diversity comes from his own upbringing. “I grew up in Southeast Asia. When I was very young, I lived in Malaysia. The differences in the world have been apparent throughout my life, and my love of travel means you come across all that diversity – and to a certain extent, you have an appreciation for the kind of privileged life many of us have. It accelerated as I got more and more opportunities to experience things, but then also to give back. I got a bit concerned a few years ago that I was starting to be excluded, because [some might feel I was] too senior. It was like a trigger point. You’ve got to make an effort to make sure your trajectory [of involvement] continues.”

“In our leadership meetings, I’m always vocal that the topic of responsible business is not last on the agenda. We try to make it the first. It’s not like a compliance check. In all my presentations, we always refer to responsible business in some way, generally with a picture, as opposed to words.”

The day of this interview, White and his team had conducted a global kickoff meeting for some 500 employees. “I’d say in the two hours, responsible business initiatives would have been mentioned 60 times. There was no agenda item for it. I think because people realized how important it was to me, they include it. Then it sort of took off. People are going, ‘Hang on, this is actually good. I feel good. My teams feel good. People are rallying around doing this. Let’s all get involved.'”
“I have this theory: When you create something, the more people that say, ‘I built that,’ the bigger the sign of success. For me, it’s the fact that everyone within our team feels like they built it, that they personally were part of the team that created this thing that became bigger, and bigger, and bigger.”

**Advice to Other Executives**

His advice to other executives and other companies:

- Contributions through volunteering are about long-term thinking, long-term change. It’s not just about a point in time.
- Don’t try to do everything. Focus on areas you genuinely believe in.
- Bring the power of the collective with you when you are doing it so it’s not about one or two people. Make it part of your entire organization.
- Build true Win-Win partnerships with other companies and with communities that become more than financial or contractual transactions.
- Most important, make a genuine commitment to society.

"For me, it’s the fact that everyone within our team feels like they built it, that they personally were part of the team that created this thing that became bigger, and bigger, and bigger."