

# Skills-Based Volunteering in Action: Pitch Competitions

Fast-paced, generative, energizing, and high-impact, whether virtual or in-person.

Pitch competitions are all that and more. These skills-based volunteer events connect corporate volunteers with one or more nonprofits to tackle operations challenges in need of fresh thinking.

In just 3-4 hours, volunteers hear from the nonprofit about their challenge and then work in teams to generate solutions. Then, everyone reconvenes to “pitch” their ideas to the nonprofit leaders, giving volunteers a chance to flex their presentation skills.



Nonprofits are the real winners of these competitions. They gain solutions to business challenges, new tools and resources, and fresh outside perspective to help them move forward and deliver on their mission.



## Case Study

In Fall 2020, Eigen Technologies reached out to Common Impact with a request to engage the UK-based company's entire workforce (including some NYC team members) during their annual off-site event. Eigen was looking for an energizing but brief team-building opportunity that also delivered meaningful community impact, all in a virtual environment due to pandemic limitations.



A pitch competition was the perfect solution.



The Common Impact team planned a virtual pitch competition that engaged organizations in both the US and the UK and matched the Eigen team members with operational challenges that stretched their professional skills.

For Custom Collaborative, a New York-based workforce development nonprofit, the Eigen volunteers developed strategies to address audience engagement and website experience & optimization challenges. Volunteerism organization Hands on London requested pitches for its product marketing and volunteer recognition needs. Inspiring Scotland, a venture philanthropy organization working to eradicate poverty and disadvantage, sought data visualization and storytelling support.

## Impact

In just over 2 hours, 153 Eigen volunteers worked in teams and leveraged their professional expertise to generate recommendations and fresh ideas for Custom Collaborative, Hands on London, and Inspiring Scotland.

All three organizations reported that the results of the pitch competition made a real difference for their organization.

Many of the Eigen employees hadn't met before, so the team structure and cross-country approach of the pitch competition provided a real opportunity to come together and exercise their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Beyond the team benefits, 85% of the volunteers reported that the event was a useful professional development opportunity and 100% said they would recommend it to a peer.

"This was a genuinely unique and absolutely exhilarating experience. I'm completely in awe of what people were able to produce."

– Inspiring Scotland

"It was so nice as a team - with people in my company I hadn't had a chance to connect with - to take our minds off the day to day and put our creativity to good use."

– Eigen volunteer



153

Volunteers



3

Nonprofits



6

Challenges



2.5

Hours



salesforce

When 700 Salesforce employees put their heads together, big things are possible! During the in-person "Salesforce Power Hour," skilled volunteers tackled client relations, marketing & communications, growth planning, and more for 9 nonprofit partners.

"This was like nothing I have ever experienced before! The amount of brain power in that room was incredible."

– Salesforce volunteer

Leveraging our pitch competition model, Common Impact was able to create a large-scale but short duration event that hit all of the Salesforce's goals: professional development, team building, and community impact. 100% of the nonprofits reported satisfaction with the Power Hour results and felt that the solutions their teams brought forward would be immensely valuable for the futures of their organizations.

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## blackbaud®

As a leading cloud software company whose mission is to power social good, Blackbaud is continually seeking innovative ways to better serve the nonprofit community. Common Impact developed a Pro Bono Pitch Competition where nearly 30 volunteers across 17 departments and 3 countries worked together virtually to solve business challenges faced by two of their nonprofit partners.

In just 4 hours, the event made an impact on the nonprofits and volunteers alike: "This has been a really inspiring and re-energizing experience. I'm excited to get back to my Blackbaud work to help [our nonprofit partners] succeed!" Another volunteer shared, "My role is relatively solo, so working on a project like this with a team from other departments was a great experience."

