



Advancing Collaboration with America's Charities

Approach to Collaboration

America's Charities is a membership nonprofit that partners with its nonprofit members. According to Jim, America's Charities is successful in large part due to that collaboration. Members provide America's Charities with information about their mission and services. America's Charities, in turn, provides members with access to workplace giving campaigns, making it possible to achieve common goals.

Nonprofit members pay a membership fee that grants access to the services provided by America's Charities. Their members find their services valuable; 94% of their nonprofit members reported satisfaction with America's Charities in their latest membership satisfaction survey.

America's Charities sets-up and manages workplace giving campaigns, both in the private and public sector. Previously, the organization used its own tech solution to facilitate campaigns, but it has since moved away from that, embracing a partnership-based model. Today, America's Charities collaborates with a variety of companies

that provide campaign technology support, which America's Charities couples with a dedicated and best-in-class support.¹ Their giving and engagement portfolio includes:

- An all-in-one giving solution powered by Causecast, which provides businesses with an integrated employee giving and engagement solution all under one roof
- Modern Giving, powered by Pinkaloo, which puts employees in the driver's seat while growing corporate philanthropy
- A Simply Giving solution powered by StratusLive—a straight-forward, economical solution for giving-only campaigns²

America's Charities also leverages its own technology to offer a packaged Quick Start solution for companies that want to launch a campaign quickly.

America's Charities's approach to collaboration is to seek partners that can help fill gaps in the areas of need. For services that America's Charities is not interested in having in-house, they look to their partners to provide to succeed in its mission.



Jim Starr President and CEO, America's Charities

America's Charities inspires employees and organizations to support causes they care about. Its mission is to "help the nation's most trusted charities thrive by generating sustainable income through workplace giving and additional paths. It inspires employers and individuals to reach their philanthropic goals and support the charities of their choice."³ Its model is to help nonprofits fundraise unrestricted, sustainable dollars through the workplace, and help employers achieve their giving, engagement, and social impact goals.

Application of the 9 Considerations for Collaboration

Build Trust

Building trust begins at a very high level. With its partners, both non- and for-profit, America's Charities looks for alignment in their respective missions and around what they seek to accomplish in their collaboration. Potential partners may have different objectives, but at the highest level, they should have a shared social purpose goal. This helps build trust.

It's important for America's Charities to find common objectives with non- and for-profit partners beyond just financial objectives. For example, common goals with its for-profit tech partners are to help nonprofits effectively fundraise year-round, inspire employees to give, and help businesses increase their social impact. However, what's most important is that the for-profit collaborator and America's Charities mutually support each other and help their clients meet their fundraising and engagement objectives. Ultimately, America's Charities' goal is to bring more resources to the nonprofits that are changing our world.

Have a Vision

America's Charities' vision is to be "a major force in transforming and growing philanthropy." This vision has been informed by past results and realistic expectations about the organization's future. If America's Charities succeeds, it will raise \$1 billion by 2026. As of January 2019, it has raised \$700 million for more than 20,000 nonprofits addressing a range of causes. America's Charities looks for collaborators to help reach that goal.

Take Stock

America's Charities focuses on what it does well to determine its capacity and strengths. America's Charities seeks partners that can help it in the areas where it has limited expertise and capacity. Its collaborations with tech companies are an example of that.

Seek to Assure the Success of Collaborators

America's Charities tries to identify and reach a shared vision and definition of success with its collaborators. America's Charities approaches its collaborators with as much transparency as possible, with the hope that this approach is reciprocal. The intent is to set expectations allowing both parties to know with full disclosure what each requires from one another. Being open helps to build a roadmap for how the organizations will work together.

Start Small

America's Charities' members have a range of services from which they can choose.⁴ America's Charities increases and diversifies unrestricted revenue for its members through access to workplace giving campaigns. Members can choose what campaigns they want to participate in:

- Combined Federal Campaign, one of the world's largest workplace giving campaigns, reaching the US Federal Government's workforce
- America's Charities' State & Local program, which gives nonprofits access to state and local employee donors in approximately 100 campaigns
- America's Charities' Private Sector program, which helps their members connect with private-sector employees around the world

Members may choose one or more of these programs – often members start with one program and then expand their scope of the services once they prove successful.

America's Charities partners with several businesses that offer its members key discounts and resources tailored to improve the members' fundraising effectiveness and efficiency. America's Charities is selective in its member-benefits partnerships and ensures all collaborations maximize members' ROI.

Fail Fast, and Build Rigorous Feedback Loops

America's Charities accepts the possibility that not all collaborations may succeed and takes the time to identify those that aren't proceeding as planned. America's Charities ends or adjusts these partnerships where appropriate. Above all, America's Charities seeks to learn from failures and apply those lessons in future initiatives.

Take a Portfolio Approach

According to Jim, America's Charities is a relatively flat organization, which is the only way to get good results. Jim encourages the team to look for potential opportunities, which requires a clarity of purpose. Partnerships must fit the organization's core mission. So, having a clear sense of the organization's mission is essential for finding strong collaboration opportunities.

Consider Non-traditional Partners

America's Charities looks for partners that fill certain gaps to ensure continuity in its workplace giving support for nonprofits and employers. Whether that partner is a nonprofit, for-profit, B-Corp, social purpose entity, consultant, etc., is of no consequence. What matters is the partner's ability to meet specific needs for an audience.

Keep Your Donors Apprised of Your Collaborations

America's Charities is not a traditional fundraising organization. However, Jim is aware that there is great interest among grant-making foundations to fund collaborations. Funders are looking for ways to make the sector more efficient, reducing redundancies. However, since many organizations are reluctant to share their relationships with major donors, it can sometimes prevent more collaborations from happening in the nonprofit sector.

Future Collaborations

America's Charities has conducted original research for the past decade;⁵ however, it seeks to expand its reach. It is currently looking for partners to collaborate on more research projects. They need partners to fund its research, expand its visibility among key audiences, and lead the research and data analysis.

Additionally, collaborators are needed to promote the benefits and values of employee giving and volunteering to increase the recognition of this practice among employers and employees. America's Charities recently launched a campaign called "Saving the World, One Paycheck at a Time," to promote workplace giving's benefits for nonprofits, employee donors, and businesses alike.⁶

America's Charities also wants to partner with other organizations on public policy matters that promote charitable giving and its necessity for building a better world. For example, America's Charities is currently supporting the Everyday Philanthropist Act.⁷

¹ <https://www.charities.org/employee-workplace-giving-technology-funds-services>

² <https://www.charities.org/partners>

³ <https://www.charities.org/about>

⁴ <https://www.charities.org/become-member>

⁵ <https://www.charities.org/charitable-giving-trends>

⁶ <https://www.charities.org/saving-world-one-paycheck-time>

⁷ <https://www.charities.org/partners>

Interested in reading more about other collaboration stories?

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