

CAROL CONE
ON PURPOSE 

Purpose Proven

The latest chapter in a
40-year journey

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More than four decades ago, I saw a *new path for business*.

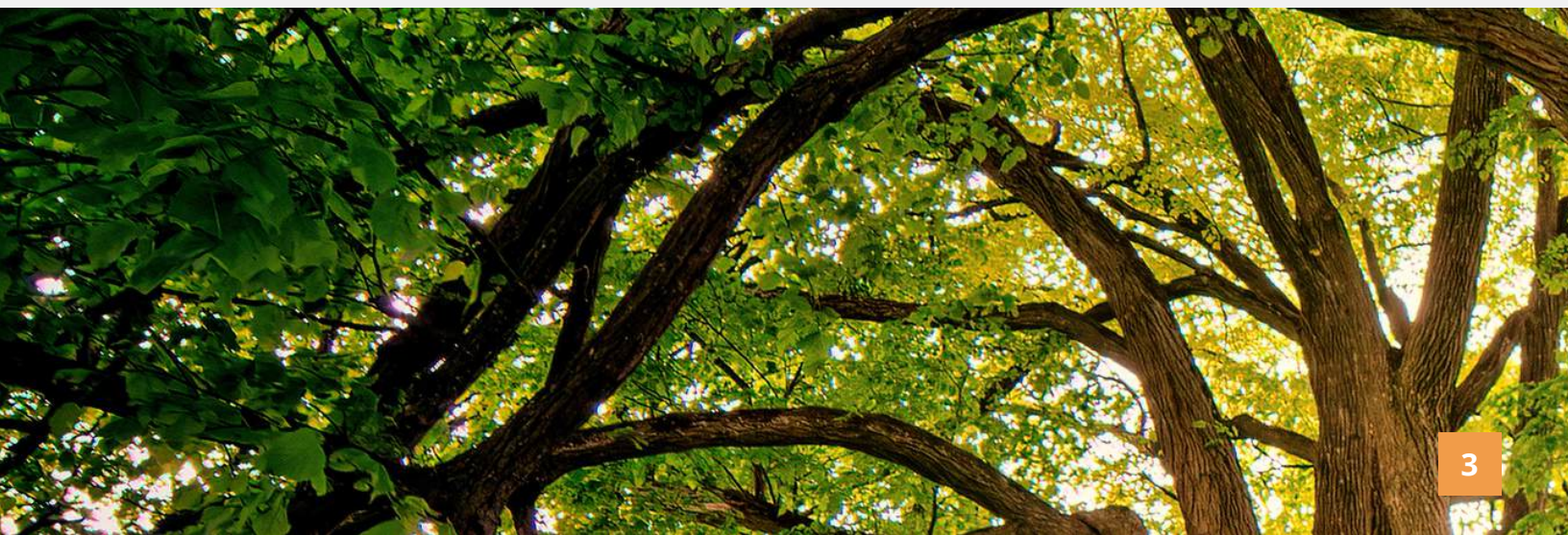
In 1983, I founded Cone, Inc., the world's first social impact firm, with a vision that companies and brands could align with social and environmental issues to create both business and societal value.

For nearly 30 years, I helped pioneer and legitimize purpose as a business-critical strategy —proving that doing good and doing well were not opposites, but accelerators. By 2015, it was time for the next evolution. I saw two powerful shifts on the horizon: purpose emerging as the next great driver of business strategy, and a new form of consultancy: one that was flat, senior-led, and deeply hands-on.

With that vision, Carol Cone ON PURPOSE (CCOP) was born. Our mission: to help organizations authentically define and activate their purpose to drive growth, trust, and lasting business and societal impact.

A decade later, that vision has become reality. When lived authentically, purpose builds powerful corporate culture, unites employees, inspires innovation, deepens stakeholder trust, and delivers meaningful social and environmental progress.

This report celebrates our first ten years of bringing that belief to life. Inside, you'll find stories of companies, foundations, and nonprofits that dared to go deeper.



Together, we have:

- Defined corporate purpose as a compass for culture and strategy.
- Built signature social and environmental programs that inspire action and impact.
- Engaged employees as powerful agents of growth and change.
- Repositioned nonprofits and strengthened fundraising.
- Advanced corporate foundations as engines of authentic commitment.
- Forged public-private partnerships that deliver lasting impact.

Beyond client work, we've also advanced the field itself: adding five more research studies to the 31 conducted over my career, hosting more than 225 episodes of Purpose 360 Podcast, and creating the Purpose Collaborative—the world's first global network of purpose experts. This "Hollywood model" enables us to augment our team with additional subject matter experts.

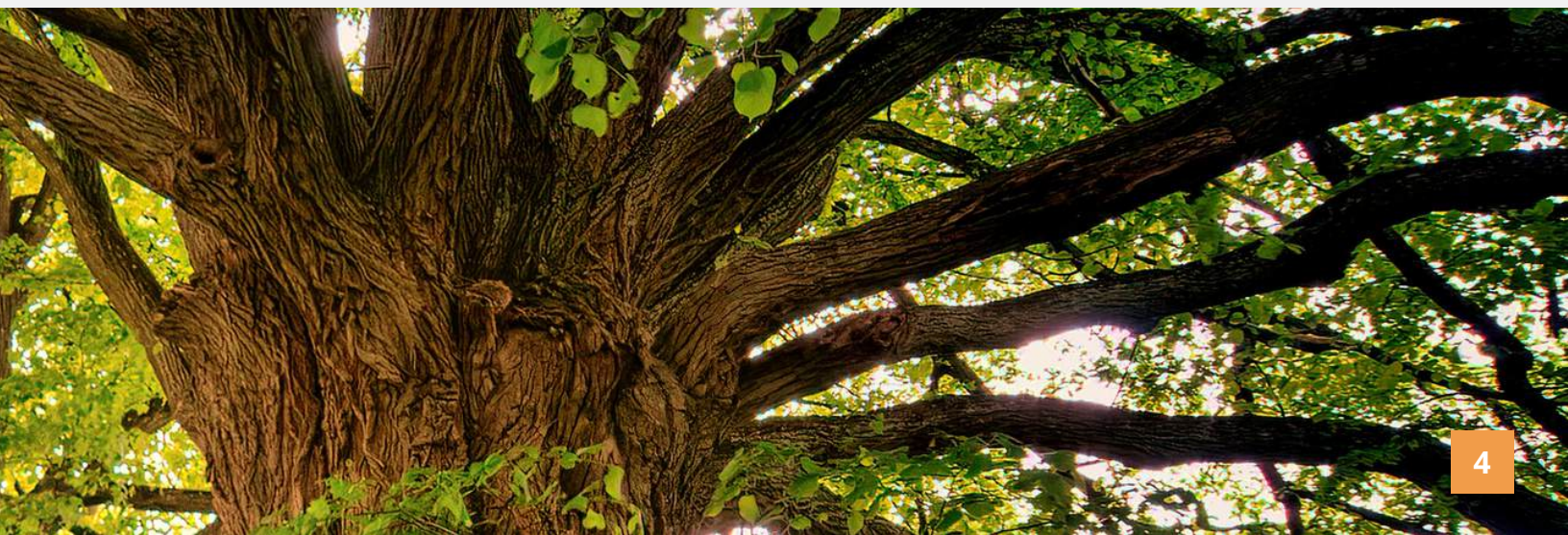
The past decade has been one of disruption and challenge. Yet it has also proven a timeless truth: organizations that authentically live their purpose are stronger, more innovative, and more trusted. As we look ahead, our belief is unwavering: purpose is the most powerful force to humanize business and mobilize it as an engine for growth and good.

Welcome to our latest chapter. May these stories inspire courage, creativity, and commitment on your own journey.



Carol Cone

CEO, Carol Cone ON PURPOSE



CASE STUDIES

Purpose Development



KERRY

Ventura Foods

THE
Campbell's
COMPANY

 **Quest Diagnostics**


Chesapeake
Employers Insurance
Your workers' compensation specialist

OUR PURPOSE AND VALUES

At Kerry, we're

INSPIRING FOOD, NOURISHING LIFE.

Our purpose – Inspiring Food, Nourishing Life – and our values show up in our everyday actions.

The Kerry logo is displayed in white, uppercase letters within a semi-circular orange shape. A thin white horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the word "KERRY".

KERRY

Inspiring Food • Nourishing Life

Kerry Group, the world's leading taste and nutrition company, had grown rapidly through more than 100 acquisitions.

With 22,000 employees across 50+ countries, the organization sought a unifying purpose to guide its next phase of growth. When Edmond Scanlon became CEO, he turned to CCOP to help define and activate an authentic purpose that could resonate across a diverse, global enterprise. Leveraging our P3 process, CCOP engaged Kerry's senior executives, Board, and leadership team in a comprehensive discovery effort. Through more than 200 interviews and 10 workshops, we explored Kerry's heritage, strategic ambitions, and customer needs. This collaborative process distilled the company's complexity into clarity, ensuring the emerging purpose would be credible, relevant, and globally resonant.

The result was "Inspiring Food • Nourishing Life"—a purpose that honors Kerry's legacy while charting its future. The new purpose was unveiled at Kerry's first global leadership meeting and brought to life through messaging platforms, video storytelling, and interactive sessions designed to align and inspire employees. "Inspiring Food • Nourishing Life" became Kerry's strategic north star, connecting its colleagues worldwide and aligning business priorities for long-term, purpose-driven growth.



[Watch the video](#)



Chesapeake
Employers Insurance™
Your workers' compensation specialist

Chesapeake

Chesapeake Employers Insurance Company, a workers' compensation provider, faced a pivotal transformation after more than a century of service.

Originally founded to protect miners and their families, Chesapeake is now a private nonprofit adapting to market changes to ensure its products remain accessible and affordable. Recognizing the need for a cultural shift, CEO Mark Isakson engaged CCOP to help define the company's purpose and inspire a new organizational culture required for the operational shift to succeed. Together, we crafted a purpose statement—"Elevating the Promise of Work and the Potential of People"—signaling Chesapeake's evolution beyond traditional workers' compensation.

CCOP guided Chesapeake through the purpose launch, producing an anthem video, internal communications, and four targeted trainings to help every employee live the new purpose daily. Building on this foundation, CCOP facilitated the co-creation of Chesapeake's new values and behaviors, again inviting input from all team members.

Our partnership has embedded a new mindset across Chesapeake, positioning the company for continued growth and adaptation in the years ahead.



Tomorrow is filled with
PROMISE & POSSIBILITY.

Through the collective power of our work, we have the potential to strengthen communities, each and every day.

But there is more work to do. Because today, business owners and workers of all kinds face barriers to fulfilling their potential.

At Chesapeake, our singular focus is on helping these individuals overcome challenges, reduce uncertainty and flourish.

So, when we ask ourselves what business we are really in, we say our mission is to advance the potential of all workers and businesses.

At Chesapeake, we believe in the value of work. We understand that our worksites, workspaces and communities, are made up of people bringing their talents, determination and craft to elevate lives and advance society. We are inspired by their vision, risk-taking and resilience.

**THAT'S WHY AT CHESAPEAKE WE SEE
RISK DIFFERENTLY & WHY WE BELIEVE
IN THE PROMISE & POSSIBILITY OF ALL WORK.**

CASE STUDIES

Signature Programs





Experience Happiness

To build deeper emotional connections with U.S. consumers and communities, LG partnered with CCOP and Purpose Collaborative partner Matchfire to evolve its brand narrative in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Through CCOP's P3 methodology, the team identified a bold, unexpected focus: sustainable happiness for youth—addressing record-high stress and suicide rates among teens.

Grounded in science, CCOP developed Experience Happiness, a platform promoting emotional wellbeing through evidence-based “happiness skills.”

CCOP also assembled a coalition of mental health experts and nonprofit partners to activate the initiative in schools and communities.

The results were meaningful: LG saw a 16% lift in positive consumer perception and a 22% increase in consumers who saw the company as making a positive societal impact. With CCOP's guidance, LG transformed “Life's Good” into more than a slogan—it became a purpose-led platform making a real difference in young lives.



[**Watch the video**](#)



Quest for Health Equity

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Quest Diagnostics processed more than 30 million tests —revealing deep health disparities in underserved communities.

To respond, Quest partnered with CCOP to launch Quest for Health Equity (Q4HE), a \$100M+ initiative aimed at reducing these gaps.

CCOP helped shape strategy and activate partners, including Choose Healthy Life (CHL), a nonprofit working through Black churches to bring testing and later vaccinations to the hardest-hit cities. Trusted messengers, including Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, helped build credibility and engagement.

The effort led to thousands of tests, 30,000+ vaccinations, and helped CHL secure a \$9.9M federal grant to expand their reach.

Q4HE demonstrates how corporate purpose and data-driven strategy can deliver real impact in moments that matter most.



[**Watch the playlist**](#)



CASE STUDIES

Signature Partnerships





Macy's

As Macy's evolved its purpose identity, the iconic company partnered with CCOP to identify a new nonprofit for its signature holiday cause marketing campaign.

In a fast paced, collaborative process, CCOP identified Big Brothers Big Sisters of America as the right fit through a focus on shared values, mission alignment, and critical capabilities for local market engagement with consumers, employees and communities.

\$16+ million

**raised for BBBSA since
2022 to support
mentorships across the
country**



BuildBetter with Whirlpool

Whirlpool Corporation worked with CCOP to develop their CSR strategy, House + Home, aimed at improving life at home for distressed communities.

This framework connects Whirlpool Corporation's business capabilities with community needs, focusing on creating comfortable, nurturing places to live and supporting thriving communities through education and development. A key part of this strategy is Whirlpool Corp's long-standing relationship with Habitat for Humanity International, starting in 1999. Over a quarter century of supporting Habitat, Whirlpool has contributed \$150+ million and donated 250,000+ appliances, impacting more than a million people across 45 countries.

Launched in 2021, BuildBetter with Whirlpool was designed to support the construction of climate-resilient, energy-efficient homes, and to scale and implement best practices across the U.S. This program has delivered 260 homes, helping families reduce operating costs and emissions. This initiative demonstrates how a long-term, purpose-led collaboration can deliver lasting, measurable impact, building affordable housing and strengthening communities worldwide.



[Watch the video](#)

CASE STUDIES

Corporate Foundations



Baxter

 **Biogen**


solventum

Whirlpool
FOUNDATION



Biogen Foundation

When Biogen’s then-new CEO introduced a refreshed strategy for the company, the Biogen Foundation had an opportunity to evolve in step with the enterprise. The company’s “New Biogen Way” emphasized a spirit of innovation, patient-centricity and an even stronger results-oriented approach.

To ensure the Foundation’s work mirrored these priorities, the Biogen Foundation turned to us to help realign its philanthropic approach with the company’s vision and values. CCOP began by taking a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Through conducting internal interviews, performing external benchmarking, analyzing processes and partners, and holding interactive workshops with Foundation leaders, the CCOP team surfaced insights into where the Foundation’s philanthropy could make an even greater impact.

The result was a redefined strategy anchored in a clearer mission: to advance better health in the community, supported through efforts to promote access to healthcare, address social determinants of health, and help build a robust healthcare workforce.

Photo: Christopher Viehbacher of Biogen and Dr. Jim O’Connell of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP), marking the first year of a multi-year partnership between the Biogen Foundation and BHCHP to improve health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.



This better reflected patient-centricity than the prior focus, which was nearly exclusively centered on STEM education. To bring the strategy to life, we helped revamp the Biogen Foundation's policies and procedures to support the new mission, embedding data-driven decision-making further into its core operations. We also helped renew the Foundation's grantee portfolio, analyzing more than 200 existing and potential partners to identify those that best aligned with the new approach and presented the greatest opportunity for catalyzing real change for patients.

Since implementing the new strategy years ago, the Biogen Foundation has pioneered or helped conceive nine new initiatives, all focused on community health, helping to serve more than 75,000 patients each year. With its transformation in tandem with the company, the Biogen Foundation has been able to create enhanced value not only for patients and communities, but also for the business, driving reputational gains and deepened relationships with employees and prospective employees.



Whirlpool
FOUNDATION

The Washing Machine Project

Globally, up to 50% of the population washes clothes by hand due to lack of access to running water and reliable electricity.

This challenging and time-consuming task disproportionately impacts women and girls. Whirlpool Corporation and The Washing Machine Project (TWMP) were individually working to address this global problem, and after discovering their shared purpose, sought a strategy to scale their collective impact. That's where CCOP stepped in.

Using our P3 methodology, CCOP aligned Whirlpool Corporation's skills and support with TWMP's off-grid innovation and mission. We facilitated co-creation sessions to build a shared vision focused on reclaiming time for women and girls.

The result: a landmark relationship launched on National Laundry Day 2024 with a goal to distribute 150,000 Divya manual washing machines over five years—aimed at freeing up significant time for education, work, and opportunity. CCOP helped create the strategy, align stakeholders, and establish the long-term impact model. This collaboration elevates Whirlpool Corp's purpose and exemplifies how cross-sector collaboration can address global challenges with scalable, human-centered solutions.



[Watch the video](#)

Reclaiming time, improving lives.



The washing machine has changed the course of history for some, but many still rely solely on hand washing clothes.



~70% of global households

depend on women and girls for water collection and laundry²



up to **20 hours** per week

spent hand washing clothes³



76%

time saved and water usage cut in half⁴



CASE STUDIES

Social Impact & Sustainability Narratives





Campbell's

Delivering on our Purpose

2023 CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY DATA UPDATE

THE
Campbell's
COMPANY

The Campbell's Company

With a new CEO and a transformation agenda, Campbell turned to CCOP to develop a new and authentic ESG narrative and framework.

With deep expertise in food industry dynamics and stakeholder trends, CCOP led a rigorous process of interviews, research, and workshops. The result was a cohesive ESG framework that unified existing efforts and set clear, forward-looking goals—helping Campbell communicate its commitments internally and externally. Building on this momentum, Campbell asked CCOP to help refresh its corporate purpose and embed it throughout the organization. The work marked a pivotal step for Campbell, turning complexity into clarity and laying the groundwork for long-term, purpose-driven growth.

“CCOP has been a valued partner on many projects. They bring the perfect combination of strategic thinking and strong execution to their work.”

Anthony Sanzio

Chief Communications Officer,
The Campbell's Company



[Watch the video](#)

CASE STUDIES

Social Impact Innovation





My Special Aflac Duck

Children facing cancer endure an average of 1,000 days of treatment—a journey no child should take alone.

Aflac partnered with CCOP and Sproutel to create My Special Aflac Duck, a social robot designed to provide emotional support during this difficult time.

Guided by CCOP's P3 methodology, the initiative was rooted in research with patients, families, and healthcare providers, aligning the program with Aflac's purpose as a caring company. Launched at CES 2018, the duck earned widespread acclaim—including Best in Show at CES, Time's Best Inventions, and two Cannes Lions—and has since been distributed free to more than 40,000 children.

The results were powerful: a 3.2% sales lift, 2.5 billion media impressions, and stronger employee pride and consumer trust. The initiative shows how purpose-led strategy can drive both social and business impact—turning compassion into measurable change.



[Watch the video](#)







KIND


KIND, a pioneer in better-for-you snacking, turned to CCOP to bolster its new “Be KIND to Yourself” platform and create limited-edition bars supporting communities that have not received their “fair share” of awareness or kindness.

In 2019, CCOP identified a rare, time-sensitive opportunity: the Equal Rights Amendment was closer to ratification than at any point in decades, with Virginia poised to become the decisive 38th state.

This created a once-in-a-generation constitutional moment that aligned powerfully with KIND’s values around fairness, wellbeing, and equality.

CCOP synthesized policy, public sentiment, and stakeholder insight, revealing that while 94% of Americans said they would support the ERA, most believed it was already law.

This gap between broad support and limited understanding pointed to a clear role for KIND: educate, mobilize, and provide people with an easy way to act.

The background of the page is a vibrant illustration of a diverse group of women. In the foreground, four women are shown from the chest up, looking towards the right. From left to right: a woman with dark hair in a purple top, a woman with dark hair and freckles in a green top, a woman with dark curly hair in a yellow top, and a woman with dark curly hair in a light blue top. In the background, two more women are visible: one with long purple hair and one with long blonde hair, both looking towards the right. The overall color palette is bright and colorful, with a soft, glowing light effect behind the women's heads.

CCOP recommended a focused coalition strategy, including the ERA Coalition and the Alice Paul Institute, to ensure that any activation was credible with movement leaders and consumers.

The result was the KIND EQUALITY program, anchored by the limited-edition Equality Bar and a simple, scalable action pathway. The bar featured suffragette-inspired colors and messaging, with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting the Alice Paul Institute, while the “Equality Bot” partnership with Resistbot enabled people to text their senators in under 2 minutes in support of the ERA. By seizing this unique historical window, KIND translated its brand promise into concrete advocacy, earning national attention and demonstrating how a wellness brand can meaningfully stand up for equality.

CASE STUDIES

Environment & Sustainability Strategy





George Barley Water Prize

To combat the devastating impact of nutrient pollution and green algae in international waterbodies, The Everglades Foundation launched the \$10 million George Barley Water Prize—the world’s largest environmental science competition to remove excess phosphorus from freshwater.

In close collaboration with the Foundation, Carol Cone and the CCOP team shaped strategy and partnership development, culminating in a title sponsorship from Scotts Miracle-Gro.

This work helped raise the Barley Prize’s profile and mobilized private sector innovation to solve a global problem.



THE
GEORGE BARLEY
WATER PRIZE

PRESENTED BY *Scotts* **Miracle-Gro**
FOUNDATION



Restore the Earth
FOUNDATION

Restore the Earth Foundation

Aiming to restore 1 million acres in the Mississippi River Basin—North America’s Amazon —Restore the Earth Foundation partnered with CCOP to tackle this bold climate goal.

CCOP closely collaborated with the Foundation’s leadership team to support organizational strategy, brand evolution, and sponsor marketing efforts to amplify Restore the Earth’s voice in critical environment restoration efforts.

Since 2008, the foundation has raised more than \$300 million and restored 150,000 acres, leveraging private investment to unlock public funds.

“Long before Carol Cone ON PURPOSE’s 10th Anniversary, always the ‘pathfinder,’ Carol’s commitment to a mission involves dedication through sustainable actions, organizational involvement, adaptability, and consistent efforts. Working with Restore the Earth Foundation, this commitment was demonstrated by CCOP helping REF evolve strategies to achieve lasting impact, while adhering to our mission and core values.”

PJ Marshall

Founder,
Restore the Earth Foundation



Clean Earth Challenge

As the global waste crisis deepened, Johnson Outdoors (JO) partnered with CCOP to launch the Clean Earth Challenge (CEC): a purpose-driven initiative to inspire environmental stewardship at scale.

CCOP guided a year-long strategy process, vetting 70+ partners and ultimately aligning JO with the National Wildlife Federation under a collective impact model. Launched during Earth Month, the campaign exceeded expectations—mobilizing 4,000+ employee volunteer hours and activating 89% of JO’s global sites. It also attracted major partners like Behr Paints and New York Life. The results were significant: more than 11.4 million pieces of trash collected by 2025, and a surge in employee pride: 93% said they felt proud to be part of JO.

Additionally, 87% of employees said the CEC made them feel more hopeful that there is something they can do to make a difference. The initiative helped earn the company a spot on Newsweek’s Most Trusted Brands list. With CCOP’s support, JO turned values into measurable action, proving that environmental purpose can unite people, build brand trust, and drive meaningful impact.



[**Watch the video**](#)

CASE STUDIES

Employee Engagement





GAF

As GAF, North America's largest roofing and waterproofing manufacturer, developed and launched a new purpose—We protect what matters most—the company partnered with CCOP to develop a social impact initiative to bring that purpose to life.

GAF sought to more deeply engage each of its plant communities and their workforce, while leveraging roofing expertise, resources, and products to help build resilient communities. Through extensive research, stakeholder interviews, employee workshops, and competitive benchmarking, the CCOP team began “connecting the dots” between GAF’s capabilities, the passion of its employees, and urgent social needs including a severe shortage of skilled workers. This became the grounding insight behind GAF Community Matters, a social impact program designed to align GAF’s purpose with local needs.

The pilot launched in Shafter, California, where CCOP and GAF partnered with Project for Public Spaces to revitalize the Shafter Learning Center & Library—identified by employees and residents as a foremost community priority.

Community Matters is now a platform for deeper employee engagement, trust-building, and social impact—turning GAF’s brand promise into change, one community at a time.

CASE STUDIES

Nonprofits





Action Against Hunger

Action Against Hunger came to us with a critical need: elevate its visibility as a global leader working to create a world where every life is well-nourished.

The organization needed a more distinctive narrative to illuminate their work to end food poverty, improve health, and save lives across 59 countries around the world. Working closely with leadership, CCOP strengthened Action Against Hunger's voice and core positioning as an innovator with impressive reach and impact.

Next, the organization asked us to create and activate an issue leadership plan that could build momentum around the cause and attract new partners to support their life-changing mission.

We developed a strategy and suite of compelling new communications materials for audiences ranging from donors to media to influencers. Capitalizing on that refreshed foundation, we generated billions of media impressions, helped land donations from major corporations, effectively positioned senior executives at premiere global events, and garnered numerous awards, from the Anthem Award to Fast Company's Most Innovative list—proof that a mission, when clearly expressed, can drive meaningful impact.



Greatest American Cleanup

In 2024, Keep America Beautiful (KAB) partnered with CCOP to launch the Greatest American Cleanup, the largest volunteer community beautification initiative in U.S. history.

With America approaching its historic 250th birthday, KAB recognized an unprecedented opportunity to unite the nation around environmental stewardship. The initiative aims to engage thousands of communities to remove billions of pieces of litter by July 4, 2026.

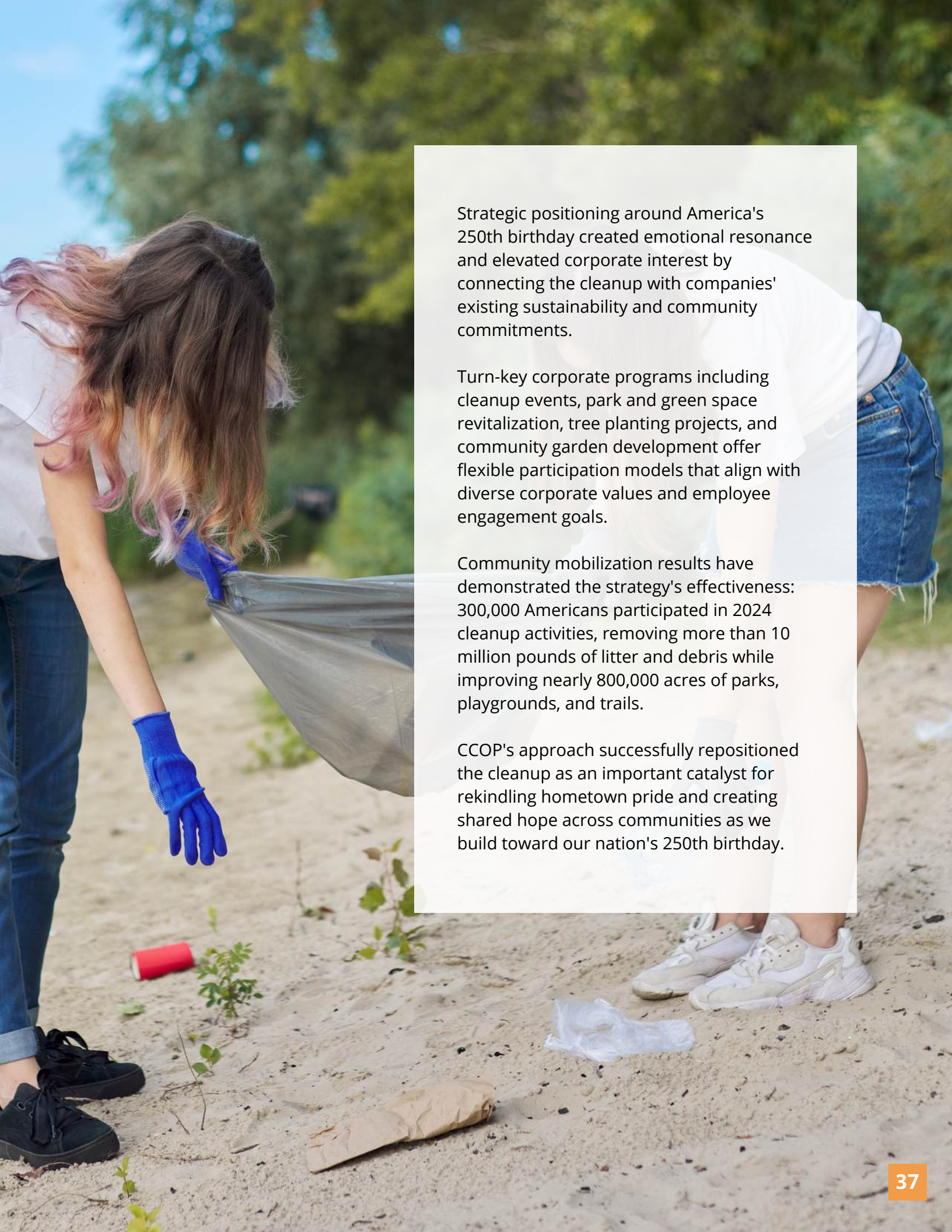
CCOP joined KAB in developing comprehensive strategies, creative engagement opportunities and partnership relations to transform a traditional cleanup program into a movement of national significance.

The partnership yielded impressive results, particularly in corporate sponsor acquisition.

With CCOP's strategic guidance, the Greatest American Cleanup successfully secured major national sponsors including The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, The J.M. Smucker Company, The Harris Poll, and others.



[**Watch the video**](#)



Strategic positioning around America's 250th birthday created emotional resonance and elevated corporate interest by connecting the cleanup with companies' existing sustainability and community commitments.

Turn-key corporate programs including cleanup events, park and green space revitalization, tree planting projects, and community garden development offer flexible participation models that align with diverse corporate values and employee engagement goals.

Community mobilization results have demonstrated the strategy's effectiveness: 300,000 Americans participated in 2024 cleanup activities, removing more than 10 million pounds of litter and debris while improving nearly 800,000 acres of parks, playgrounds, and trails.

CCOP's approach successfully repositioned the cleanup as an important catalyst for rekindling hometown pride and creating shared hope across communities as we build toward our nation's 250th birthday.

CASE STUDIES

Thought & Issue Leadership





Biogen

CCOP partnered with Biogen to develop several editions of the company's Corporate Responsibility Report.

The CCOP team collaborated closely across Biogen's enterprise to source, develop, and meticulously verify content, ensuring accuracy and relevance. A key part of our role involved developing and verifying data tables to meet various reporting standards, ensuring robust and credible data presentation.

Furthermore, we focused on bringing Biogen's initiatives to life by integrating powerful human stories, directly linking their efforts to tangible, real-world impact for all stakeholders.



[Read the report](#)



WSP

As one of the world’s leading professional services firms, WSP sought to elevate the ways it unites its engineering, advisory, and science-based expertise to help shape communities.

We worked with WSP to develop an effective leadership positioning strategy, with a focus on communications and media. One element is the WSP Pulse Report, which provides a platform for expert perspective on the U.S. energy future.



[Read the report](#)





Purpose 360 Podcast

Launched in 2018, Purpose 360 Podcast serves as a platform for discussions and insights focused on purpose, social impact, and corporate social responsibility.

The show features conversations with leaders from organizations ranging from Unilever and The New York Times to Patagonia and JetBlue.

The podcast is a resource to help educate and inspire professionals to embrace purpose as a core business strategy. To date, Purpose 360 has aired more than 225 episodes.

 [Listen and subscribe](#)



“Must-listen podcast for the stakeholder economy.”



Best Business Podcast 2025



Purposeful Connections.

Purposeful Connections

Since the very beginning of CCOP, our Purposeful Connections newsletter has been a throughline of our work and thinking.

For ten years, the newsletter has offered insights, trends, and commentary at the intersection of business and social impact—helping leaders navigate the evolving purpose and sustainability landscape. As one of our longest-running platforms, Purposeful Connections reflects our commitment to not only advising clients but also shaping the broader conversation on purpose.



[Click to subscribe](#)



CAROL CONE
ON PURPOSE 

Research & Insights

At the core of our work is a belief that research drives progress. Carol Cone pioneered the first studies on purpose and has since led more than 30 landmark reports, helping organizations understand and authentically activate purpose.

Notable studies include The B2B Purpose Paradox (2019), which exposed a major gap between stated and activated purpose and introduced the influential “Believers” employee segment. In 2022, Purpose Under Pressure revealed that 86% of employees value meaningful work and helped launch our Employee Purpose iQ (EPIQ) measurement tool. This body of research fuels thought leadership, inspires action, and helps bridge purpose with performance.

Research partners include:

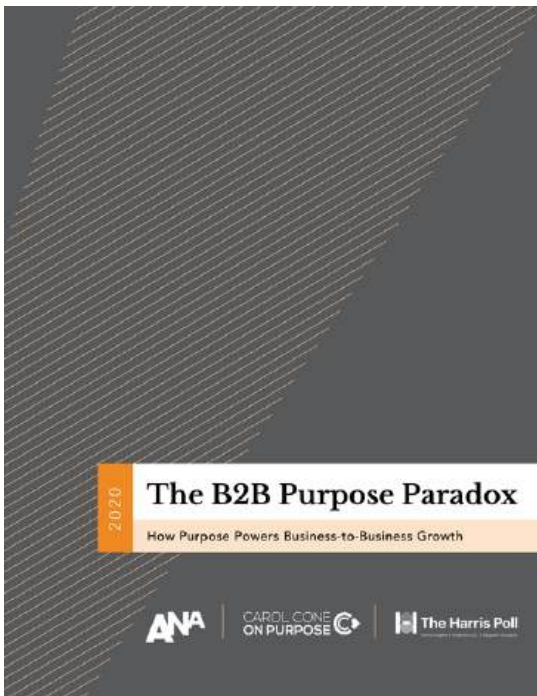
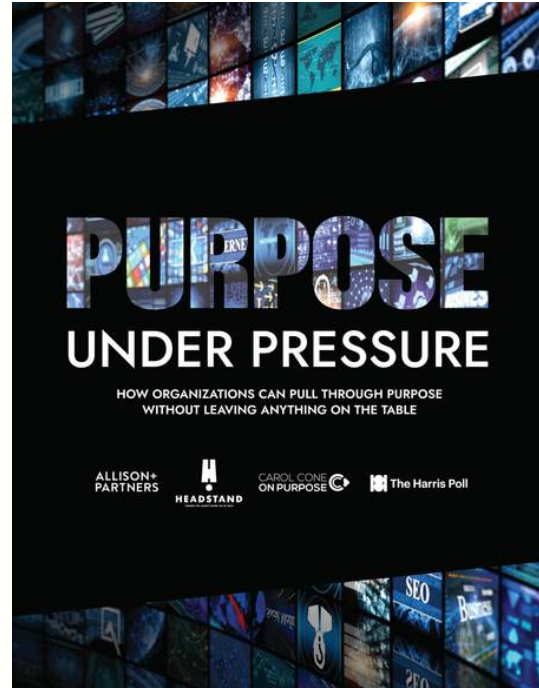


ALLISON+
PARTNERS





[Click the reports to read](#)





THE PURPOSE
COLLABORATIVE

Purpose Collaborative

Founded by CCOP in 2015, the Purpose Collaborative is a global network of 40+ social impact-focused firms and more than 500 professionals across 33 countries.

This innovative model allows us to build bespoke teams for each client, tapping into deep expertise across strategy, creative, messaging, and execution. The network's collective insights and diverse perspectives help us address complex social and environmental challenges with agility and precision. Rooted in co-creation, the Collaborative emphasizes partnership—both with peers and competitors—to drive systemic change. By uniting global experts under a shared commitment to purpose, the Purpose Collaborative powers our ability to deliver long-term business and societal impact.



[Meet our members](#)

All this work was made possible by the standout team at **CCOP**



Meet our team



"When I first shared that I wanted to build a career in corporate social responsibility, people often dismissed the idea saying no company would ever put people before profits. Carol Cone ON PURPOSE proves them wrong. Here, I have the privilege of working with the best and brightest colleagues in the field and with companies and their leaders who not only acknowledge the significance of social impact, but also understand how it can make their businesses even stronger."

Anne Hundertmark



"The length, breadth, and depth of CCOP's professionals is a rarity in a field as young as purpose. But what's really the identifier of a CCOP team member is insatiable curiosity. The marriage of experience and this constant joy in learning is the truly special thing Carol has created."

Andrea Helisek



"Purpose has defined my career, and CCOP represents its most effective expression yet. By centering expertise in a streamlined, collaborative model, we help clients achieve stronger business outcomes while contributing to broader social good. It's proof that when purpose is authentic and strategic, it reshapes what's possible."

Kristian Darigan Merenda



"I feel honored to have been with CCOP for the past 5 years. Here, there is a unique combination of camaraderie, brilliance, and purpose. Every day, I'm inspired by colleagues who are not only incredibly smart but deeply committed to making a positive impact. At the same time, CCOP has given me the flexibility to grow as both a professional and a father, encouraging me to be fully present for my kids while pursuing meaningful work."

Kevin Vacca

10-year business, social, & environmental *impact*

We're proud to have partnered with  **56** clients, collectively representing
\$928B in combined revenues and **2.3M** employees
(and **60M+** volunteers) operating across **150+** countries.

In addition, our team is committed to supporting **nonprofits**, our **communities**, and the **next generation** of purpose-driven talent.

 **\$1.7 million**
in pro bono work for nonprofits

 **13,900**
hours volunteered
by our team

 **763**
applications to our
Purpose Fellow program



A decade of purpose-driven insights (and what comes next)

For more than 40 years, our team has tracked and helped shape the evolution of purpose in business.

And over the past decade since founding Carol Cone ON PURPOSE, we conducted several landmark studies that documented one of the most consequential shifts in modern business: purpose moved from a discretionary marketing strategy to a mission-critical organizational imperative. Taken together, this research shows that purpose has become a driver of performance, resilience, and trust. The decade's story unfolds in five chapters, each told by one member of our team, from moving purpose into the center of the enterprise to the unlikely pairing of purpose and AI.

1. From stated to activated: purpose grew up, but the gap remained — *Talya Bosch, Partner*

“The first shift we observed was a movement from aspirational purpose language to the harder work of embedding purpose in business systems. In 2020, our [B2B Purpose Paradox](#) report, conducted with The Harris Poll and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), examined purpose where others rarely looked: the B2B sector. Eighty-six percent of B2B companies said purpose was important to their business, yet only 24% said it was embedded across culture, operations, and societal engagement. That 62-point gap between stating purpose and living it became one of the defining findings of the decade.

The research confirmed what practitioners had long suspected: purpose had matured beyond cause marketing and CSR philanthropy into a systemic, strategic driver of growth and impact. Ninety-three percent of B2B leaders reported being somewhere on a purpose journey, and 57% said they were more focused on purpose than three years prior. Respondents cited competitive success, talent recruitment, deeper customer relationships, and business growth as key reasons to invest in purpose. Yet activation remained elusive.

Only about one-third of respondents believed their purpose produced measurable positive societal impact, and many acknowledged that purpose still ‘lived on a wall or in a handbook’ rather than shaping decisions across the enterprise. The paradox did not stem from a lack of conviction; it stemmed from insufficient infrastructure, leadership commitment, and measurement to make purpose real.”



2. Employees became the engine and the accountability check

—*Risa Sherman, Senior Director*

“As purpose efforts matured, a second shift came into focus: employees moved from audience to engine. Across all three studies, employees emerged not as passive recipients of a company’s social purpose, but as its most powerful advocates, most credible validators, and increasingly, its most demanding critics. The B2B Purpose Paradox was the first major study to formally elevate employees as the number-one priority stakeholder for B2B purpose programs, ahead of customers, shareholders, and communities. More than half of respondents said employees were actively leading the call for purpose within their organizations. The research introduced the idea of purpose “Believers”: engaged employees who serve as internal ambassadors and consistently view purpose as central to how they show up at work.

Our Employee Purpose iQ (EPiQ) research, developed with The Harris Poll, reinforced these findings. The Harris Poll/Cone Employee Purpose Engagement Survey found that 68% of employees believed their employer had a responsibility to make a positive impact on society and the environment, yet only 50% believed their company cared about more than making a profit. That gap carries real business consequences, as external analyses show that purpose-driven companies grow faster, retain employees at higher rates, and outperform the stock market.

EpiQ provided the foundation for a tool that helps organizations track and measure how purpose initiatives perform among their workforce. It reinforced that purpose is an organizational asset that leaders can and must measure, manage, and optimize, not just communicate. Internal purpose activation is no longer a ‘soft’ HR issue; it is a business-critical function with measurable impact on recruitment, retention, performance, and growth.”



3. Corporate responsibility faced its political test —*Audrey Sylvia, Senior Director*

“As expectations for purpose-driven business grew, corporate responsibility faced an intense political test. Our [2024 Post-Election Social Impact Outlook](#), fielded with The Harris Poll in the immediate aftermath of the presidential election, captured purpose at an inflection point. Nearly half of Americans (46%) said they wanted companies to play a larger role in addressing social issues under the incoming Trump administration. That figure rose to 58% among Gen Z, 61% among Democrats, and more than 50% among Hispanic, Black, and urban respondents, while about a third of Republicans also expressed support.

The research revealed a clear mandate: lead first on issues that are employee-facing and community-grounded. Eighty-three percent of Americans said companies should support issues that matter most to their employees, and 82% said they wanted companies to prioritize national and local challenges such as healthcare, jobs, affordable housing, and local schools. Mental health and wellbeing emerged as the dominant issue category, cited by roughly 72% of respondents across party lines. Subsequent waves of research, including the [Corporate Social Action Tracker](#), showed that these expectations only intensified.

By 2025, 51% of Americans said companies should play a larger role in addressing social change, up from 46% the previous year, with particularly strong momentum among younger Americans, urban residents, and Republicans (whose support rose significantly year over year). Health and wellbeing, anchored by mental health, remained the nation's top priority, while issues like hunger relief and care for seniors surged in importance.

At the same time, the data exposed meaningful fault lines. A sizable partisan gap separated Democrats and Republicans on issues such as corporate climate action, even as they converged on topics like mental health, family stability, and local community needs. The message for corporate leaders is nuanced: public permission for corporate engagement on social issues has not eroded, but authenticity, relevance to core stakeholders, and strategic issue selection matter more than ever.”



4. Measurement and accountability moved to the center

—*Anne Hundertmark, Senior Associate*

“As expectations rose externally and pressure grew internally, measurement and accountability moved from the margins to the center of the purpose conversation. A clear thread running through all three studies was the discipline of measurement and how dramatically it matured over the decade.

The B2B Purpose Paradox identified an early gap: most companies had not yet established benchmarks or embedded KPIs for purpose into organizational strategy, leaving purpose aspirational but not accountable. By the time we launched EPiQ, that gap had become commercially costly.

EPIQ was designed specifically to address this problem by giving organizations a rigorous, data-driven methodology to understand how purpose influences employee performance, experience, and engagement, and where it falls short. The EPIQ framework measures across dimensions of credibility, talent, and activation, providing a diagnostic score and a custom roadmap for improvement. This shift from aspiration to accountability became one of the decade's most meaningful advances in the field. It created the conditions for leaders to treat purpose with the same discipline they apply to any other core business asset: with clear goals, metrics, governance, and continuous improvement."



5. AI arrived as purpose's most powerful and demanding new partner —*Casey Sherman, Senior Associate*

"The decade concluded with a final, transformative chapter: the rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence. Our [Purpose x AI guide](#) examined one of the most disruptive forces in modern business and surfaced a central insight: AI does not introduce new values into an organization; it amplifies the ones already present. For purpose-driven organizations, that represents a significant opportunity; for organizations without a clear purpose, it presents real risk.

The guide identified a growing expectation from employees, consumers, investors, and communities: AI should be deployed with transparency, ethical intentionality, and clear alignment with organizational values. It framed purpose as the human alignment layer, the organizational equivalent of the 'loss function' AI engineers use to keep a model's behavior aligned with its intended values. In this framing, purpose becomes the practical guardrail for AI decisions, shaping where and how leaders apply the technology, how they communicate about it, and how they protect people and communities affected by it."

What comes next: *Guidance for leaders*

The decade's arc concludes at a moment of profound opportunity. The organizations best positioned for what comes next are those that have done the hard work of the past ten years: articulating purpose, embedding it, measuring it, linking it to business outcomes, and now using it as the guiding framework for AI and other transformational decisions. For leaders, the path forward is clear and actionable:

- Start with employees: assess where purpose is most and least activated inside the organization, especially around mental health, wellbeing, and everyday work experience.
- Anchor in aligned issues: prioritize issues that are closest to your operations and stakeholders, such as local health, education, housing, and workforce needs.
- Build the measurement muscle: establish clear KPIs, dashboards, and governance for purpose, using tools such as EPIQ to understand what is working and where to improve.
- Treat AI as a values amplifier: use your purpose as the lens for AI decisions, from use cases and guardrails to transparency and accountability mechanisms.

The next decade will test which organizations can translate purpose into consistent decisions, trust, and long-term value. That is the work ahead, and it is the work we are already doing alongside clients and partners across sectors.



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