Navigating Solicitation: FAQs

Empowering your employees to support causes they care about is a powerful way to foster connection, build your company culture and engage your people. And companies that enable their employees to create their own giving initiatives see 27% higher participation than those with just company-driven initiatives.

So, what does this mean for your solicitation policies that may restrict employee-driven fundraising efforts? While every company approaches solicitation differently, there are many ways to help champion Goodness in your program while also respecting your company policies.

To help you navigate this in your company, we have put together some commonly asked questions.

What's the purpose of a solicitation policy?

Solicitation typically involves one person asking another person for something — whether it's asking for funds or donations, selling a good or service, or getting coworkers to sign a petition. For example, it may be considered solicitation when a colleague fundraises for their kids' school cookie drive or promotes a friend's dog walking service. Some companies have solicitation policies in place to help minimize workplace disruptions and ensure people don't feel pressured to participate in these activities. Typically, these initiatives fall outside the realm of workplace programs, and can be challenging to manage at scale when they are promoted through company communication channels.

How is my employee engagement program different?

Spark was designed to provide a single place for employees to connect, share their passions and do good. Unlike an employee selling cookies or promoting a friend's business, your employee engagement platform is entirely managed by your company. Having a company-endorsed program can actually help you avoid solicitation by giving your employees access to a single place to engage in giving, volunteering and action. And the best part is that you can fully control and manage all activity on the platform so there are no surprises!

Is it solicitation when an employee creates a giving opportunity?

By creating a giving opportunity in Spark, an employee does not automatically solicit donations from their colleagues. They simply create a space for people with similar passions to support a cause through your company's program. As an administrator, you can approve which opportunities you want to make available to employees making it easy to monitor this activity in one place.

Is it solicitation when an employee creates a Peer Match or joins a Peer Matching pool?

Peer Matching is a powerful new feature that allows employees to match donations made by their peers. When an employee or program leader creates a Peer Match or joins a pool, this simply means that they are choosing to make a donation in a different way. Instead of donating $20 directly to the cause, they are adding their $20 to a matching pool and pledging to make that donation once other employees support that cause. This is similar to how company matching works, but the match comes from a pool of employee donations rather than your corporate budget.

Are there any controls that I can put in place to help ensure I am compliant with anti-solicitation policies in my company?

Yes! We have a number of different ways to help you manage any giving initiatives created by your employees:

1. Set up approval queues for all giving opportunities. If you allow users to create their own giving opportunities, administrators can require that these giving opportunities enter an approval queue. This means that no giving opportunity is published and viewable without the administrator first approving it.
2. Use permissions to control who can create giving opportunities. You can require that only users with the Campaign Manager role can do set up giving opportunities. Plus, rather than allowing all employees to create giving opportunities, you can assign permissions to executives or administrators to help champion giving initiatives in your company.
3. Provide a direct link to users to create a giving opportunity. If you do not want to give users the Campaign Manager role, there is also a setting that will allow users to create a giving opportunity only if an administrator has provided them with the link below. Then once again, the giving opportunity still must be approved by the administrator. https://<Spark site domain>/campaigns/giving_opportunity/create?peer_match=1

What are other companies doing to address solicitation concerns in their companies?

Each company is different depending on its policy and company culture. Here are some ways that our client community has addressed solicitation:

- Revise or remove their solicitation policy to allow for activities related to their employee giving or volunteer program.
- Allow employees to create giving opportunities and Peer Matches during a defined campaign period. This enables you to manage employee-driven initiatives easily and efficiently.
- Update their program guidelines to create parameters around what types of giving opportunities are allowed through their program.

Will employees see who has donated to their giving opportunity or Peer Match?

Donations made by employees are always entirely anonymous in Spark, so employees do not have access to details of who donated or what amount they contributed. This can help your company avoid solicitation concerns around employees feeling obligated to contribute to a coworker’s initiative. If an employee does want to show their support in a more visible way, they can choose to join as a Peer Matcher and their name and photo will be displayed. The choice is entirely theirs.

My company is not quite ready to enable users to create giving or volunteer opportunities yet. Can I still use Peer Matching?

Absolutely! Peer Matching can still be used even without employee-created content enabled. Any administrator or those with the Campaign Manager role in Spark are able to create a Peer Match and add additional matching funds to help support your campaigns and giving initiatives. This is a great way to engage an executive who is looking to rally employees behind a cause!

If you have any questions, reach out to your Benevity Client Success Manager! We are always happy to help.