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Five Ways Blink Inspires Me: Corporate Social Responsibility In the Workplace

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By [Kristina Knaus](#)

As a Millennial I am constantly being defined by others. Many opinions exist about our generation. [An NPR campaign](#) asked Millennials to define themselves using single words — words like adventurer, optimist, eco-conscious, and activist were among the most popular ways we describe ourselves. These really resonate with me, and I can say without a doubt there is one thing Millennials care a lot about: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Millennials want to know that the companies they are loyal to are, in turn, loyal to the causes they support. [Another study](#) done by the Reputation Institute discovered that people's willingness to buy, recommend, work for, and invest in a company is driven 60% by their perceptions of the company, and only 40% by their perceptions of the products. I think it is becoming very obvious that the brands that are going to survive in this new environment where brand expectations are high will be the ones that make our world a better place; this is the core of CSR.

Microsoft was just voted the most highly regarded company *in the world* for the second year in a row. Programs like [YouthSpark](#) and the [Employee Giving Campaign](#) show the world that Microsoft has CSR embedded in the DNA of the company. [Patagonia](#) is another amazing example of a company that puts ethics before the bottom line. Not only are its employees committed to making fair trade clothing that lasts as long as you do in order to reduce waste, but Patagonia also donates 1% of the company's profits every year to domestic and international grassroots environmental non-profits. So far donations have exceeded \$46 million in cash and in-kind donations.

At Blink UX we are fortunate enough to have our day-to-day work be something that is meaningful for our clients and their customers. We have the opportunity to work with incredible and inspiring companies. We are also privileged to be a part of a working culture that helps us give back to our community and our environment.

At Blink we do a multitude of things to give back to a community that has been so giving to us, and we work to ensure we take care of our environment. I won't list all initiatives here, but I will list my favorite five:

1. **Community Day:** One day a year we get to take a day away from the office and volunteer for the organization of our choice. This is not only fun and good for employee morale, it is a good way to learn about a local charity you might not have known about before.
2. **Bus Passes:** It rains a lot here and I am a transplant from the Midwest (Go MIZZOU!) I do not enjoy walking in the rain. Blink encourages everyone to take advantage of a free bus pass, which I do. My carbon footprint is reduced and I don't ever need to pay for parking.
3. **Blink Blood Drive:** I used to donate blood on a regular basis in college because my university made it convenient. Since then I have had trouble keeping up with it. I expressed this to a coworker and she immediately encouraged me to look into Blink hosting a drive. Within the day I had a green light and had scheduled a meeting with someone at the Puget Sound Blood Center. Now, thanks to the support of Blink, twice a year I get to walk downstairs in my building and donate blood. I get to donate on a regular basis and feel good about doing so (and let's not forget the free cookies involved).
4. **Thanksgiving Potluck and Donation Drive:** Every Thanksgiving Blink has a Thanksgiving Potluck. All the employees bring a dish and we gorge ourselves on turkey and good conversation. But there aren't just piles of food, there are also piles of new and gently used toys and clothes for the kids at [Treehouse](#), a local nonprofit that supports foster children in Seattle.
5. **We're Green:** It isn't just the color of our logo; it's the way we do business. Very little paper is used at Blink. We drink from mugs and glasses and avoid buying products that are not environmentally conscious. We reduce, reuse, and recycle and think twice before purchasing things for the office that will have a negative impact on the environment.

These programs all contribute to my happiness at Blink. I want to have a balanced life and I need my place of work to help me succeed. If I had to describe myself in one word, can you guess what I would say? **Inspired.**



Kristina is the Research Host at Blink UX. In her off time she can be found with her nose in a book, volunteering at the Seattle Animal Shelter, or sampling PNW microbrews.