



CASE STUDY

BEYOND BUSINESS: HOW HORMEL IS STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

+150

Hormel Foods employees engaged

24,000

MATTERbox Snack Packs distributed into the Austin community.

1,600

Austin, MN students engaged

Hormel Foods, a global leader in food manufacturing, has long prioritized investing in its people and community. In September 2024, Hormel partnered with MATTER to host the “Nourishing Champions” food packing event at Austin High School, bringing together more than 1,600 students and more than 150 Hormel employees to pack 24,000 meals for the local school pantry and community organizations. The event reinforced Hormel’s commitment to corporate responsibility, employee engagement, and community support. By creating meaningful volunteer opportunities, Hormel not only boosted employee morale and teamwork but also made a tangible impact on food insecurity in the region — strengthening the connection between the company, its employees, and the community.

Hormel Foods is one of the most successful food manufacturers in the world. Most often associated with their wide variety of meat products, Hormel also owns over 40 brands of other popular products found on today’s grocery store shelves. Despite more than 20,000 employees worldwide, Hormel has remained surprisingly close to its hometown roots.

Since its founding in 1891, Hormel has been headquartered in Austin, Minnesota, and remains the largest employer in this small southern Minnesota town. Perhaps this is why Hormel invests so much in its employees and in the community it’s called home for more than 130 years.

“Our belief is that good business and good stewardship go hand in hand. We Invest in our

people and partners, we aim to improve communities and the world, and we create products that improve the lives of our consumers.” – Hormelfoods.com

Hormel’s belief in the importance of investing in their people is evident in their focus on providing volunteer opportunities for their employees to serve the Austin community.

In September of 2024, Hormel partnered with MATTER to engage its employees in a food packing event at Austin High School called ‘Nourishing Champions’. Held during the school’s homecoming week, the event brought together Hormel employees with more than 1,600 students to pack 24,000 beneficial meals for their school’s food pantry as well as other community organizations.

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A way for our employees to come together, feel good about the work they're doing, feel good about the work their company is doing and make a difference in the community.

“We hear it a lot, ‘I want to get engaged. I want to get involved, but I’m not sure where to go or how to do it,’ said Hormel CEO, Jim Snee. “With an opportunity like the Nourishing Champions food packing event, it gave us a very specific opportunity. A way for our employees to come together, feel good about the work they’re doing, feel good about the work their company is doing and make a difference in the community.”

Hormel is not alone in recognizing the benefits of providing corporate-sponsored volunteer opportunities to its employees. Recent surveys indicate that employers across the nation understand the benefits that come from employee engagement opportunities.

- 88% of employers believe effective employee engagement programs help attract and retain employees. (Source: America’s Charities Snapshot Employer Research)
- 77% of employers believe that offering employee engagement opportunities is an important recruitment strategy to attract millennials. (Source: America’s Charities Snapshot Employer Research)

Employee engagement programs impact the companies, their employees, and the communities in many vital ways, including:

- **Increased employee morale and engagement.**

Volunteering can improve employee morale, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Through corporate volunteer initiatives, employees are gaining the opportunity to give back in meaningful ways and positively impact their community.

- **Development of new skills.** Corporate volunteering can provide opportunities for employees to foster new skill sets, including in the areas of project management, teamwork, leadership, and communication. These can be beneficial for both professional and personal growth.
- **Enhanced company reputation within the community.** Companies that value giving back to their communities help to foster an image of social responsibility, often attractive to investors, customers, and talent.
- **Opportunities for team building.** Employees’ relationships can be strengthened, and teamwork and camaraderie can develop as they work together toward shared goals outside of work.
- **Appeals to jobseekers prioritizing employment at a socially responsible company.** Corporate volunteer programs can boost recruitment and retention efforts and help employees feel connected to their work and company values.
- **Creates positive impact on communities.** Employee volunteerism helps to meet crucial needs within the community while also helping to foster the development of relationships between companies and community organizations.



Despite the high percentage of employers who recognize the positive impact of employee engagement, a recent Gallop poll reported that employee engagement in the U.S. fell to its lowest level in a decade in 2024, with only 31% of employees engaged. In Gallup’s trend dating back to 2000, employee engagement peaked in 2020, at 36%, following a decade of steady growth, but it has generally trended downward since then.

Gen Z employees, in particular, have fallen five percentage points in recent years. Each point change in engagement represents approximately 1.6 million full- or part-time employees in the U.S. The declines since 2020 equate to about 8 million fewer engaged employees, including 3.2 million fewer compared to 2023. (Source: U.S. Employee Engagement Sinks to a 10-Year Low)

Partnering with MATTER to create an exciting volunteer event for their employees was a significant way for Hormel to keep their employees engaged and impact their community in 2024.

“Hormel Foods team members relish opportunities to get involved in the communities where they live and work,” said Katie Clark, Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer at Hormel Foods. “Rolling up our sleeves and pitching in to support

our neighbors is just what we do – it’s who we are. There’s a strong sense of shared values that makes volunteerism feel natural to us. Company sponsored volunteer events like Nourishing Champions are full of camaraderie and enthusiastic teamwork which is so rewarding. More than 150 team members signed up to volunteer within hours of posting the opportunity because we know that together, we can make a real difference.”

MATTER makes it easy for large companies like Hormel to create employee volunteer events that are both meaningful and fun. Though the Hormel event was done in-person with over 2,000 volunteers, packing events can also be created for remote workers. The MATTERbox Volunteer Kit, which comes complete with all the supplies needed to assemble 40 snack packs, including the beneficial food, you matter notes, bags, stickers, pens, and instructions, can be sent to employees across the U.S. for multi-office shared events. Assembled packs can then be donated to multiple communities for increased impact.

Feedback received through surveys from companies that partner with MATTER for food packing events found highly positive results on employee engagement measures.

MATTERbox Event Feedback

99%
AGREE

I feel that my company, by participating in volunteer events like this one, makes the community stronger.

98%
AGREE

I am proud to work for a company that allows me to volunteer at events like this during working hours.

95%
AGREE

I am more satisfied working at my company because they offer volunteer opportunities like today’s event.

92%
AGREE

I feel more loyal to my company because they offer volunteer opportunities like today’s event.



Katie Clark explained how their partnership with MATTER helps Hormel achieve certain goals within the company, “One of the company’s global impact goals is to bolster food security by delivering 70 million meals through cash and product donations by the year 2030. MATTER is a key partner in helping us deliver on that promise by offering strong programs that we can invest in that deliver food and resources that lift up communities around the world.”

The 24,000 beneficial meals packed during the Nourishing Champions event, (which totaled a whopping 9,000 pounds), made significant impact on hunger in the community. The food went to several schools in area including the high school’s food pantry, as well as other community organizations working to relieve hunger in the county. “The experience was incredibly rewarding for our team members - and the community members - who participated,” Katie Clark stated. “It’s a great reminder of why it’s so important to keep celebrating and supporting our community.”

The impact of the event itself was felt among the 1,600 students who participated. Nearly 93% of those surveyed said the event made them feel more connected to their school community. 73% said they gained more knowledge about the issue of food insecurity.

Feedback from the students included:

- “It was a great team building and work experience.”
- “It feels good to connect with others and do something positive for the community.”
- “I learned that there are far more people in our community without food security than I realized.”
- “Doing something impactful and having fun while doing it can make a difference in someone’s life.”

After more than 130 years, Hormel continues to invest in its community, addressing vital needs and inspiring younger generations in the value of helping others. MATTER is proud to partner with Hormel to ensure their impact goals are realized, creating meaningful change and fostering a stronger, more connected community.



About Hormel Foods Corporation

Hormel Foods Corporation, based in Austin, Minnesota, is a global branded food company with approximately \$12 billion in annual revenue across more than 80 countries worldwide. Its brands include PLANTERS®, SKIPPY®, SPAM®, HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE®, APPLGATE®, JUSTIN’S®, WHOLLY®, HORMEL® BLACK LABEL®, COLUMBUS®, JENNIE-O® and more than 30 other beloved brands. The company is a member of the S&P 500 Index and the S&P 500 Dividend Aristocrats, was named one of the best companies to work for by U.S. News & World Report, one of America’s most responsible companies by Newsweek, recognized by TIME magazine as one of the World’s Best Companies and has received numerous other awards and accolades for its corporate responsibility and community service efforts. The company lives by its purpose statement — Inspired People. Inspired Food.™ — to bring some of the world’s most trusted and iconic brands to tables across the globe. For more information, visit hormelfoods.com.

About MATTER

MATTER, a Minnesota-based global NGO, brings together the best companies, experts, problem solvers and above all, doers, to launch projects that improve communities. This collaborative movement has inspired solutions in access to health, activating healthy eating for children and families, regenerative agriculture, and student-centered education, collectively impacting more than 54 million lives. MATTER’s guiding belief is encapsulated in the simple yet powerful expression, YOU MATTER.

MATTER 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

We help people launch projects that improve communities.

Founded

2000

Headquarters

Minneapolis

Employees

34

Volunteers Activated

11,566

People Impacted Globally

3M

States with Volunteer Events

48

Healthy Meals

277,896