

How One Small Business Quickly Transformed into a Philanthropy Powerhouse

A Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors Case Study on How Small Businesses Can Make a Real Difference in Their Communities



OVERVIEW

THE CHALLENGE

- Fooji wanted to make a meaningful philanthropic impact in their community and needed a clear strategy.
- They pledged to donate \$100,000 to nonprofits over the coming year but needed guidance on maximizing their impact.
- The company wanted to inspire a culture of giving within their organization to join together and make improvements in their community.

THE SOLUTION

- Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors offered Fooji a comprehensive solution.
- Blackbird developed a strategic philanthropy plan tailored to Fooji's goals and values while setting up the Fooji Endowment for Kentucky.
- Hands-on support of strategy planning and execution as Director of Impact for Fooji, overseeing all philanthropy-related efforts.

THE RESULTS

- Fooji fulfilled their \$100,000 philanthropic pledge with a well-planned and executed strategy.
- The company has become a philanthropic powerhouse in its community, demonstrating that companies don't need to wait until they have thousands of employees to make a significant impact.
- The partnership with Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors allowed Fooji to develop a culture of giving and community involvement among employees and customers.

ABOUT FOOJI

Founded in 2015, Fooji is an innovative marketing company that transforms how brands and consumers connect, supporting industry giants such as Verizon, Disney, and HBO. Located in Lexington, Kentucky, Fooji boasts a team of 49 employees across three locations, including its headquarters and two warehouses, all focused on providing incentivized engagement solutions for renowned Fortune 50 brands.

CHALLENGE

HOW TO MAKE AN IMPACT AS A SMALL-MEDIUM SIZE COMPANY

The challenge for Fooji lay in its desire to create a meaningful impact in its community, fueled by the heartfelt commitment of its employees. According to Gregg Morton, CEO of Fooji, the employees cared deeply about supporting the community. *"You're never too small to think about culture,"* said Morton, discussing how what was important to the employees quickly became important to the organization as a whole.

Despite their enthusiasm, Fooji didn't have the resources of a corporate giant, nor did they possess an in-house impact team. They aspired to be more than just another company in the community; they wanted to be a force for positive change. However, achieving this impact remained uncertain as Fooji grappled with how best to channel their resources and efforts for maximum effectiveness. Their challenge was to find a way to make a significant difference with the means they had at their disposal.



SOLUTION

PARTNER WITH BLACKBIRD ADVISORS

"We had reached a financial milestone in the company where we could start to be very intentional about philanthropy. I wanted to make sure that if we did it, we did it right and our efforts were strategic and thoughtful."

- Gregg Morton, CEO of Fooji

In their quest to transform their philanthropic aspirations into a concrete reality, Fooji turned to Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors for expert guidance. Blackbird is a team of specialists dedicated to assisting multimillion-dollar businesses in maximizing the value of their community investment. The team provided Fooji with an all-inclusive package of services, which included assessment, strategy, and execution. Gregg Morton, Fooji's CEO, approached Blackbird with a huge goal: pledging to donate \$100,000 in the coming year and wanting to ensure it was done in a way that would yield the greatest impact and align with the company's values.

Despite having dedicated volunteer employees, Fooji recognized the need for a well-defined strategy for this substantial pledge, one that would surpass their in-house capacity. Thus, the search began to find a capable impact advisor to help the company channel its efforts. While Morton did find plenty of donation-based software for philanthropic efforts, he wanted to ensure they worked with an experienced team.

"The tracking software seemed like a half-hearted effort." said Morton. "We needed that human touch... philanthropy, in general, needs that human touch to create an impact. It's something that can't be automated."

The collaborative process with Blackbird was comprehensive and meticulously executed from the start. To maximize their impact, Fooji chose **Blackbird's all-in-one philanthropy package** that includes planning, research, strategy, and execution. Blackbird initiated by conducting interviews with community partners and employees, conducting market research, and performing a thorough philanthropy audit. Armed with this valuable insight, Blackbird devised a strategic philanthropy plan tailored to Fooji's goals.

Over the course of a year, this plan was implemented, and Blackbird also played a pivotal role in establishing a corporate foundation and endowment fund for Fooji, in partnership with the Blue Grass Community Foundation. This partnership extended beyond the planning phase, with Blackbird as the Director of Impact for Fooji. Blackbird continues to lead all philanthropy-related efforts, including managing sponsorships, donations, volunteer projects, and creating cause marketing content, such as Fooji's annual impact report and social media posts focused on giving.



Through this partnership, Blackbird Advisors helped Fooji meet and exceed their philanthropic goals, ensuring that their commitment to making a difference in the community was realized in the most impactful and strategic way possible.

RESULTS

CREATING A CULTURE OF GIVING BACK

Community Impact

Fooji is a great example of a small company with a bold vision, showing no limit to what can be accomplished when people come together. The company's commitment to improving the lives of its neighbors in Lexington, Kentucky, has had a profound and immediate impact on the community. Through sponsorships, donations, workplace campaigns, and coordinated group volunteer projects, Fooji has demonstrated its unwavering dedication. Notably, **100% of Fooji's donations are directed towards Lexington-based organizations**, ensuring that the community directly benefits from their philanthropic efforts. These contributions have made a significant difference in the lives of countless individuals and organizations in Lexington.



Employee Engagement

Beyond financial contributions, Fooji's employees are actively engaged in their philanthropic efforts. The company's culture of giving has spurred remarkable levels of employee involvement. An impressive **88% of Fooji's employees make private contributions** to nonprofits, demonstrating a deeply ingrained commitment to social responsibility. Moreover, **Fooji employees are 28% more likely to volunteer** than the U.S. population, on average. Over half of the Fooji workforce dedicates **anywhere from 5 to 100 hours each year to volunteer work**, further solidifying their role as dedicated community advocates.

"We don't give back to acquire customers. None of our customers are in Lexington. We do it to build a connection with our employees and community. It makes us feel like we're part of a bigger picture, and it's amazing to see the sense of pride in our employees and customers."

- Gregg Morton, CEO of Fooji



Widespread Help

Fooji's commitment to supporting causes close to their team's hearts is evident in their extensive contributions to various organizations. **Girls on the Run Central Kentucky, Revive Life House, Lighthouse Ministries, and CRCKY** are just some nonprofits that have received Fooji's support in contributions or volunteer hours. This diverse range of beneficiaries reflects Fooji's holistic approach to philanthropy, ensuring their impact touches different aspects of the community.

Learn more about how Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors can help you maximize your impact at www.blackbirdadvisors.org.

Partner with Blackbird Philanthropy advisors to forge your strategic path toward changing the world.

Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors helps successful businesses maximize value from their community investments.

We are a team of specialists dedicated to enhancing employee engagement, bolstering market positioning, and creating a positive societal impact through strategic philanthropic investments.

We measure ROI through social impact studies based on client giving priorities, goals, and growth projections for businesses and family philanthropists. We work closely with corporate leaders to develop a clear philanthropy path to ensure they're stretching their dollars and making the biggest impact possible.

Many philanthropists wonder if their donations work, Blackbird is here to make sure of it.



Social Impact Services Provided by Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors

- Philanthropy Planning
- Employee Engagement
- Philanthropy Audits
- Market Impact Research
- Cause Marketing
- Social Impact Storytelling Content
- Philanthropy Management
- Impact Assessments
- Nonprofit Relationship Management
- Impact Reports and Annual Reports

Contact Us to Get Started!

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Team: 2 Employees; 5 Consultants

Service Area: Services Provided Globally



"I started Blackbird Philanthropy Advisors in 2017 after hearing so many generous people feeling unsure if their donations were truly making a difference. I set out to make sure of it. Most businesses don't have the expert staff to manage their community investments professionally, we're here to do it for them."

-Caitlin Smith, Founder and Managing Director of Blackbird