



# Bright Funds

## CASE STUDY

### Driving Engagement in Workplace Philanthropy Through An Employee Referral Program



DigitalOcean

“By using credit grants to empower employees to create and use cause-based Funds and encouraging recurring donations, [we were] able to reach an impressive 43% participation rate (4x above industry standard) in the Golden Ticket Raffle.”

Matt Hoffman, VP of People at DigitalOcean

Leading cloud services company grows employee engagement and impact by restructuring its referrals program to include giving incentives on Bright Funds.



“DigitalOcean’s constant commitment to the community is something I absolutely admire as part of the organization. I recently referred a friend of mine to join the company, and DigitalOcean gave me credits to donate to a charity of my choice and also matched any extra donation I made. It was an extremely rewarding experience, and I am really happy to work for a company that enables our employees to give back.”

— Tom Spiegelman,  
DigitalOcean, Manager  
of Platform Engineering  
(2 years at DigitalOcean)



## Overview

DigitalOcean provides a platform that developers love, and engineering teams trust, to build, deploy and scale applications in the cloud. With 60% growth year-over-year (YoY), DigitalOcean is a high-growth startup that serves a passionate community of more than one million users. From its founding, the company has placed enormous value on employee experience and engagement.

One of the best illustrations of how the company has maintained its active and engaged employee base has been to attract top talent through its employee referral program. In 2017, 40% of the company’s new hires were referrals.

## Program Vision

With no formalized corporate citizenship program prior to 2016, DigitalOcean aimed to launch a workplace giving program that would align with, as well as amplify, its company culture and talent acquisition efforts. At the core of DigitalOcean’s company culture is a stated commitment to building and supporting community. Therefore, the team sought a way to more formally engage the company’s employees in both giving and volunteering.

## Strategy

In early 2017, DigitalOcean decided to take a closer look at its employee referrals program, focusing specifically on how they incentivized and rewarded their employees. In May 2017, Olivia Melman, Recruiting Operations Program Manager, partnered with Bright Funds to launch a new employee referral incentive strategy that would highlight the company’s community commitment as well as build upon the successes of its existing employee referral strategy.



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[info@brightfunds.org](mailto:info@brightfunds.org)

## The main objectives of the program were to:

- Encourage individual philanthropy
- Increase employee engagement
- Harness the demonstrated positive outcomes of the hiring referral program for social good. with Bright Funds allowed us to automate the charitable contribution

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“Partnering with Bright Funds allowed us to automate the charitable contribution of our new Referrals payout structure. When an employee’s referral is hired, they complete a quick Google Form that funnels directly to the Bright Funds team. Bright Funds then schedules, releases, and reminds employees of their Credit Grants, keeping me informed all along the way”

— Olivia Melman,  
DigitalOcean, Recruiting  
Operations Program  
Manager

## Strategy cont.

Bright Funds worked closely with Olivia to develop creative strategies that would ensure a successful launch. The teams prioritized working together to develop and roll out the robust Personal Referral/Credit Grants plan to reward employee involvement. For Bright Funds’ partners, Credit Grants are one of the most utilized and effective features for driving participation on the platform and thus were a logical use case for the reimagination of the company’s referral program. “When a DigitalOcean employee’s referral is hired, they complete a quick Google Form that funnels directly to the Bright Funds team. Bright Funds then schedules, releases, and reminds employees of their Credit Grants, keeping me informed all along the way,” said Olivia.”

## The Program

In May 2017, DigitalOcean launched its new referrals incentive structure. Now, for each referral candidate who is hired, the referring employee receives a \$3,500 Referral Bonus in addition to a \$1,500 charitable donation paid by DigitalOcean on the employee’s behalf via Bright Funds.

If the employee chooses to contribute an additional portion of the payout to charity, the company matches that added donation. For additional donations of \$500 or more, the employee is automatically entered into the annual “Golden Ticket Raffle” – the winner of which is awarded an all-expenses paid trip to thank them for their philanthropic contributions.

“We also recognize participating employees in real time during our company all-hands meetings and in our referrals newsletter,” Olivia explained. “There’s no need to wait until year-end to acknowledge our employees’ commitment to community.”



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# The Results

By using Credit Grants to empower employees to create and use cause-based Funds and encouraging recurring donations, DigitalOcean was able to reach an impressive 43% participation rate (>4x above industry standard) in the Golden Ticket Raffle.

Matt Hoffman, VP of People at DigitalOcean, said about the success of the program, “One of our core values at DO is “our community is bigger than just us.” The partnership with Bright Funds allows us to live that value by helping our employees support a charitable organization in a community that has personal meaning to them. It’s a powerful statement about what we care about as a company, and an important reason that so many talented people choose to join DO and then refer their friends and colleagues to us as well.”



# 43%

Employee participation rate  
(4x above industry average)

## About DigitalOcean

DigitalOcean simplifies cloud computing so developers and businesses can spend more time building software that changes the world. With its mission-critical infrastructure and fully managed offerings, DigitalOcean helps developers, startups and small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) rapidly build, deploy and scale applications to accelerate innovation and increase productivity and agility. DigitalOcean combines the power of simplicity, community, open source, and customer support so customers can spend less time managing their infrastructure and more time building innovative applications that drive business growth. For more information, visit [digitalocean.com](http://digitalocean.com)

## About Bright Funds

Bright Funds helps everyone, and companies of all sizes, multiply their impact through our all-in-one corporate social responsibility platform. For nearly a decade, we have been connecting people to purpose with a delightful, trusted experience in employee giving, volunteering and grants management. By supporting companies of all sizes that are empowering their employees to give back, we are brightening the world. <http://hello.brightfunds.org>