

Pledge to Action

Case Study



Pledge1%

How Cruise for Good Puts Partnership at the Forefront

Cruise's Amanda Lenaghan details how the company leverages deep, long-term partnerships to design more authentic, impactful programming.

cruise

Company: Cruise
Industry: Automotive

Pledge 1% Member Since: 2021
Pledge 1% Builder Since: 2021

[Cruise](#) is an all-electric autonomous vehicle company building the world's most advanced self-driving cars. In April 2021, the organization formalized its signature social impact program, Cruise for Good, and joined the Pledge 1% community as a Builder, pledging to use its fleet to serve local communities in need.

Cruise for Good has used its all-electric vehicles to positively impact the community around issues such as food insecurity and access for people who are underserved by the limitations of transportation today.

"Social impact and the Pledge 1% ethos are part of our DNA at Cruise," says Amanda Lenaghan, Cruise's Director of Social Impact. "We believe that technological advancements can—and should—positively benefit the communities that they serve."



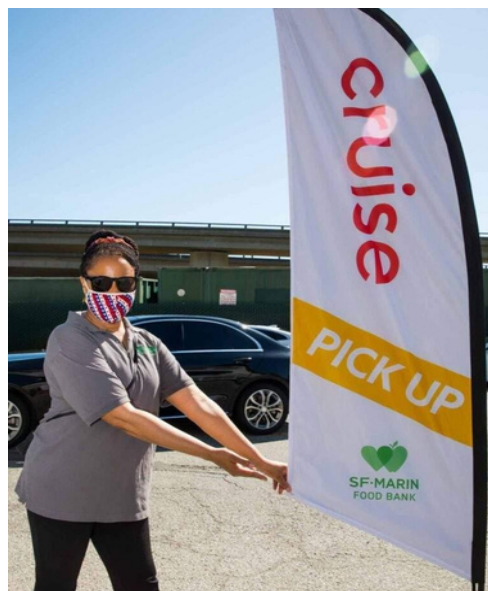
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Prioritizing Partnerships

Cruise's approach to social impact is grounded in partnering with organizations and leaders who best know the communities they seek to serve. The company has multiple long-term relationships with nonprofits such as the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank (SFMFB), SF New Deal, and Replate.

Its partnerships with SFMFB and SF New Deal, a neighborhood - strengthening nonprofit, started during COVID-19. Cruise saw food insecurity skyrocket during the pandemic and contacted the food bank to start a conversation. "We decided the most effective way to support our neighbors was to plug in with community organizations who had expertise fighting food insecurity—and ask them directly how we could be of service," Lenaghan says.



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Cruise committed part of its fleet of vehicles to scale SFMFB's Home-Delivered Groceries program. Since the partnerships' inception, Cruise has helped deliver more than 2.6 million meals to residents most in need in San Francisco.



The relationships with SFMFB and SF New Deal didn't stop once the pandemic waned. What initially started as a crisis response turned into a long-term effort by Cruise for Good to reimagine how it can help its most vulnerable neighbors and strengthen local ecosystems of nonprofits, small businesses, and volunteers helping their communities.

The Cruise for Good Advisory Board

One way Cruise continues this reimagining with partners is through the [Cruise for Good Advisory Board](#), which includes members from SFMFB, SF New Deal, Replate, and other community leaders who help inform its social impact strategy and investments. The board meets twice a year, plus additionally as needed, sometimes in smaller focus groups or one on one.

"As with many new technologies, we are building a new industry from the ground up, which brings its own set of challenges and opportunities," Lenaghan says. "We have learned that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to helping our communities. This is why we are especially appreciative to have the opportunity to listen and learn from our partners."

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The advisory board was a strategic choice since multiple successful Cruise for Good programs came about thanks to direct input from leaders who had a pulse on critical needs in the community. Beyond this expertise, Cruise looked for leaders who have experience working in cross-sector partnerships and tech-enabled solutions, two key parts of Cruise for Good's signature efforts.

"By leveraging members' local insights and expertise, the Advisory Board guides us toward impactful initiatives that resonate with the communities we serve, especially those focused on increasing access to basic essentials like transportation," Lenaghan says.

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Access to basic needs like food, medicine, and transportation to education and jobs are continued Cruise for Good focus areas because of the alignment with where Cruise can help as a company building a new form of transportation, she adds.

For example, Cruise learned from board members where transportation could remove barriers to health equity and job access and help create choice and dignity for food bank program participants. In another instance, Cruise's partner Replate, a food rescue nonprofit and advisory board member, recommended community organizations that could benefit from meal delivery and recovered food donation in key markets where Cruise operates.

Going Deep

The key to successful partnerships? Close engagement that sparks meaningful change. Lenaghan points out that you need to be dedicated to deep engagement — things like regular communication, close listening, and mutual trust.

"Partnerships are formed through relationships. Building trusting, long-term-focused relationships, based on shared values and respect, set us up for the best collaboration and success.

By deeply engaging with stakeholders and tapping their expertise, you'll gain invaluable insights into the unique needs and aspirations of the communities you serve, ensuring that your initiatives are authentic, inclusive and impactful."

