Emerging Corporate Social Responsibility:  
Strategic Giving in the Motor City  
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“For the second time in history, Detroit is defining how the world moves. A definition built upon legacy but fueled by advanced manufacturing, invention, and culture” -Jessica Moore, Detroit Moves HQ

Abstract

The complex social problems facing cities in the United States today will require more accountability and collaboration from the public and private sectors. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be a key driver in community development and economic prosperity. Existing literature suggests that initiatives are most impactful when businesses and nonprofits align their missions, build relationships, generate shared value, and enforce mutual expectations. The case study of Detroit exemplifies how an American city struggling with economic and racial disparity responds to this cross sector collaboration. How have the CSR strategies of General Motors and Quicken Loans evolved in contributing to the economic growth of Detroit? Through interviews and nonprofit-business partnership case studies, this research assesses how the two companies transition from a more charitable giving model to an integrative system prioritizing the city’s needs. I argue that the CSR initiatives in Detroit are evolving towards a more strategic approach with significant effects on the current revitalization of the city. The rising demand for corporate accountability pressures companies to be thoughtful and targeted with their approaches to community development and urban revitalization.
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Introduction

Large corporations are increasingly expected by their customers, community, and investors to contribute to a social cause. Pressure continues to grow for corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, with a vast array of approaches a company can take to give back to its community. While the baseline expectation includes only legal compliance responsibility and maximal return to financial stakeholders, the idea of the triple bottom line encompasses social and environmental impact in overall business value. Extensive philanthropic budgets often contribute to targeted giving areas, with initiatives that promote global business principles, respond to stakeholder demands, grant money, and partner with governments and NGOs.

The collaboration of corporations and nonprofits can produce very powerful results. CSR combines the influence and resources of firms with the mission and network of nonprofits. Whether with money, resources, or time, large corporations have the ability to support causes their investors, customers or employees care about. Many businesses focus their community outreach on the city or state in which they are headquartered, in order to centralize and strengthen their giving. As businesses make investments into the targeted region, it can promote prosperity and wellbeing. In 2015, the National Philanthropic Trust estimated total corporate giving in the United States at $18.46 billion. In addition, U.S. corporations’ assistance overseas reached about $11.41 billion. Fortune 500 companies give away a median of 1% of pre-tax profits to philanthropic efforts.

Some companies incorporate a social mission directly into their business model. A classic example is TOMS, which donates a pair of shoes to a child in need for each pair of shoes consumers purchase. Proponents laud this method of combining business and social investment for its sustainability and efficiency, with the criticism that the nonprofit giving model relies too heavily on the generosity of donors. Clif Bar & Co. expands past the triple bottom line to serve five key stakeholders: business, brands, people, community, and planet. While these examples may fall at the more extreme end of social impact strategies, many companies find a balance between business functions and community service. Larger corporations budget thousands to millions of dollars annually towards development, nonprofits, government services, research, and other philanthropic initiatives. The company’s incentives are a strong driver behind stakeholder perceptions and community impact.

The rise in literature and media focus on CSR over the last two decades reflects its increasing significance. The existing literature is essential for providing the definition of CSR and the different approaches it can encompass. One example defines CSR as offering “a set of

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principles and values on which is possible to build a more cohesive society and to establish the transition to a sustainable economic system.”\textsuperscript{5} While there are extensive studies on the motivation behind corporations’ initiatives and its moral implications, there are far fewer studies on the direct economic impact of their philanthropy and investments. The majority of CSR research has been done on the idea of social, political, and environmental responsibility as a corporate strategy. To date, there are no available CSR studies conducted on an individual city level.

The following research seeks to understand how the CSR strategies of different types of companies can vary in a single city, using Detroit as a case study. It will also shed light on the best corporate strategies companies are using to contribute to a city, evaluated through successful partnerships with the nonprofit sector. This study will contribute to existing literature by specifically analyzing the relationship between the corporations and nonprofit organizations. The important implication of this work is then testing if different types of corporate giving lead to economic growth in a city through nonprofits and downtown development. This study will not attempt to prove direct causation, but will demonstrate how economic trends in one city can indicate positive correlation for future research and application for other revitalizing cities.

Literature Review

Public Private Collaboration: Social Contract Theory

It is first important to understand the definitions of CSR that existing research uses. A Harvard Business School professor, James Austin, provides a very comprehensive and progressive explanation of CSR in the Indian Journal of Industrial Relations:

Corporate social responsibility acknowledges the debt that the corporation owes to the community within which it operates, as a stakeholder in corporate activity. It also defines the business corporation's partnership with social action groups in providing financial and other resources to support development plans, especially among disadvantaged communities. The emerging perspective on corporate social responsibility focuses on stakeholders (shareholders, employees, management, consumers and community) rather than on maximization of profit for shareholders. There is also more stress on long-term sustainability of business and environment and the distribution of well-being.

This definition emphasizes the community as a key stakeholder in relationships between businesses and social action groups, which promote sustainable business practices and economic development in disadvantaged areas. Further definitions encompass efforts towards “environmental responsibility, the number of women and minority executives, and corporate support of community activities.” The main stakeholders involved in CSR are the consumers, employees and trade unions, business partners, shareholders and creditors, communities, governments and NGOs, and the environment. In the Journal of Business Ethics, Francis Weyzig suggests an implicit social contract theory, where the private and public sectors have a responsibility to come together in working towards community wellbeing.

Corporate Strategy

Corporations certainly have a strong incentive to uphold Weyzig’s social contract. There is a large focus among U.S. companies on generating corporate value through CSR, with growing pressure from consumers to produce greater social benefit with new technologies and global networking abilities. Firms recognize that their social image can play a key role in driving consumers’ purchasing behavior and financial stakeholders’ investment decisions. They place importance on reporting CSR initiatives as a way to demonstrate to stakeholders the community work they are doing and how it translates to both profits and social impact. With the rise of media and technological advancements, the public has “virtually unlimited access to

information regarding a broad range of CSR behaviors."\(^{10}\) This means that a firm can carefully shape a report highlighting their social practices to attract positive perceptions.

David Kamens points to corporate giving as a “rational strategy of increasing corporate legitimacy.”\(^{11}\) He argues, contrary to the Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, that CSR is a means of pursuing prestige, so firms choose philanthropic options that involve direct contact and identification for full recognition among the business community. Unfortunately, because CSR intertwines so extensively with the overall profit maximizing strategy of the firm, Kamens argues that companies do not always allocate resources in the most efficient manner with the most sustainable impact in mind. Mark D. Groza, Mya R. Pronschinske, and Matthew Walker also discuss reactive CSR, where a firm quickly tries to make some social impact in response to a public announcement of its negative or irresponsible behavior.\(^{12}\) This can lead to public suspicion of corporate intentions that are less altruistic and more shareholder-driven as the firms seek to right their wrongdoings.

A company’s industry and headquarter location heavily influence its philanthropy decision-making.\(^{13}\) Firms often look to their peers for cues on appropriate giving behavior, thus the CSR trends of a given industry strongly affect an individual firm’s decision. Better performing firms typically have the resources to contribute more to their communities, and furthermore have the capacity to branch off from industry giving patterns. When firms are spread globally, they have multiple reference points for giving, as opposed to a smaller company that may focus community outreach on just one area. Finally, Marquis and Tilcsik suggest future work in the decision-making behind corporate giving, as it is very individualized by firm and not typically generalized on an aggregate level.

**Financial Stakeholders**

One prominent argument in response to CSR is that the sole responsibility of a business is to its financial stakeholders. Francis Weyzig explores the neo-liberal perspective that corporate executives only are responsible for maximizing shareholder value. As corporations have grown and gained more power, the influence of their stakeholders has become even more prominent. A key question Steven McMillan asks in “Corporate Social Investments: Do They Pay?” is what economic value social investment can create for a company. He assesses this impact by identifying a company’s CSR initiatives and then analyzing the reaction of the stakeholder. One important conclusion he suggests is that investors may become concerned by the costs of CSR compliance. He notes that the stock market generally does not reflect a social conscience, but

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\(^{12}\) Groza et al., “Perceived Organizational Motives.”

positive stock reaction demonstrates that some investors may expect improved sales by customers who support socially responsible business initiatives.

**Corporate Political Responsibility**

Finally, political initiatives remain a very contested aspect of CSR. When a company supports governments or nonprofits, the stakeholders may perceive them to be representing certain societal or political interests. They must uphold responsible legal conduct in ensuring no tax avoidance, no undue political influence, and no bribery of government officials. Globalization has started to introduce overlaps between private business, nonprofits, and governments, where firms fill in political and social gaps in society in conjunction with nonprofits. Scherer and Palazzo introduce a new “politcized concept of corporate social responsibility,” where businesses advocate for public health, education, social security, human rights, and/or societal peace. Governments can strongly benefit from the knowledge and resources provided by firms, yet some economists oppose this and insist firms must remain in the economic domain in order to reach market efficiency.

There are widespread views on how firms should contribute to society, as they have many stakeholders to keep in mind while shaping their corporate strategy. A combination of economic, moral, and political incentives drives CSR and the existing literature fully spans these different motivations. The largest gap in research is on the long term, sustainable impact that corporations make in a community through their CSR initiatives. One way stakeholders can assess a company’s impact is through the outcomes of its partnerships with nonprofits.

**CSR Nonprofit Giving Approaches**

In a comparison between highly reputed European and North American firms, Sotorrio and Sanchez find that U.S. companies are more likely to have the following CSR elements: “having a foundation, grants, donations or sponsorships, volunteering and social support of employees’ activities, initiatives or impacts on marginal groups of society and information on problems or fiscal/commercial conflicts.” In addition, and not surprisingly, they find that the larger the firm, the greater the social initiative efforts. A firm with CSR practices typically outlines focus areas publically and aligns its giving towards nonprofits servings those targets. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations allow a company to implement their CSR goals more efficiently through combined resources and multisector solutions. As social and economic

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14 Weyzig, "Political and Economic Arguments."
17 Arenas et al., "Different Paths to Collaboration."
problems continue to spread, nonprofits abound in response and businesses reexamine their typical community engagement for further corporate strategy and greater social impact.  

The relationship between a corporation and nonprofit organization is a powerful indicator of the firm’s impact. Nonprofits often rely on grants and donations in order to cover their administrative and programming costs. Private funding gives nonprofits expanded access to resources and increased programming options to reach more people. The intersection of the nonprofit and private sectors can lead to innovative solutions for serving disadvantaged groups in a community. Firms vary in how they interact with the nonprofits they are trying to serve. Harvard Business School Professor James Austin poses a collaboration continuum for nonprofits and corporations with three distinct stages: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative. A philanthropic relationship is the most common, referring to a charitable donation. The transactional stage carries this partnership further with resource exchanges like marketing causes, sponsoring events, and arranging employee service contracts. Finally, when collaborations integrate the two partners’ missions, people, and activities, they have reached the highest strategic level. Austin further breaks down the nature of possible relationships, including level of engagement, importance to mission, magnitude of resources, scope of activities, interaction level, managerial complexity, and strategic value. Austin’s theoretical framework will be later expanded upon as the basis of this research.

Contrary to Austin’s analysis of nonprofit relationships, David Suarez and Hokyu Hwang point to a potential negative impact of corporate philanthropy and investment towards the nonprofit sector. They analyze an effect on managerialism, where nonprofits adopt organizational practices like strategic planning and performance measurement to conform to a firm’s grant requirements. While this could positively lead a nonprofit towards higher efficiency, it may distract the nonprofit from its programming services. A study by Hee Soun Jang and Richard C. Feiock concurs that when nonprofits rely on private funding, they often must change their governance structure. Surprisingly, they also found that this private funding leads to less interorganizational collaboration and networking, because they risk losing part of their management autonomy when they receive private funding. For others, resource dependence leads to financial instability.

Powerful CSR Examples

In 2015, 20 of the most generous Fortune 500 companies contributed a total of $3.5 billion in cash, accounting for almost 20% of all U.S. corporate giving that year. Their approaches to giving are representative of the various ways companies can enact CSR initiatives, such as through nonprofit grants, volunteer time, strategic partnerships, or direct investment. The industries represented by these 20 philanthropic companies include seven financial services, five consumer products, three pharmaceuticals, three technology, and two oil and gas. *Fortune* magazine breaks down the key giving strategies each company employs.

Among the financial sector firms, Wells Fargo donates between 1.2% and 1.5% of its earnings each year, split between local philanthropy and a national portfolio that is tied to the firm’s expertise (e.g. financial education). In addition to direct philanthropy, the firm gives each employee two paid volunteer days and the opportunity to work with a nonprofit for six weeks. Goldman Sachs gives some of its nonprofit grants based on employee recommendations, but its two primary philanthropic initiatives focus on financial education and loan facility for women entrepreneurs and small businesses. JPMorgan Chase launched a Global Cities Initiative for inclusive economic growth that pledged $100 million to the city of Detroit with a focus on data-driven strategies. Bank of America gives its employees two hours off every week to volunteer, as well as focusing its giving on workforce education and community development. Citigroup funds the AmeriCorps program in 10 cities, focusing their social investment on expanding career opportunities and mentorship for youth. PNC Financial created a signature giving program dedicated to childhood education through nonprofit initiatives and paid employee volunteer hours. Following a similar theme to the previous six financial services firms on the list, Morgan Stanley’s giving strategy uses employee expertise to solve social problems like hunger by providing volunteer consulting hours and grants to nonprofits.

The consumer products companies in the top 20 CSR leaders for 2015 largely focus on nonprofit grants and then a signature giving partnership. Walmart contributed $301 million through various avenues, such as granting money to economic mobility nonprofits and career services, raising employees’ starting wages, and partnering with an anti-hunger charity. Coca Cola focuses its social contributions on access to education, water, and healthy living through grants to foundations and employee donation matching programs. Target has recently revamped its philanthropy efforts to support wellness programs in collaboration with UNICEF and U.S. education programs. General Mills supports community needs by partnering with food solutions nonprofits and providing grants to United Way, youth nutrition foundations, and other humanitarian groups. Finally, Kroger donates substantial amounts of produce and employee volunteer time to food banks and rewards loyal customers by donating to charities of their choice.

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Pharmaceutical companies shared a common giving theme towards health systems both domestically and internationally. Gilead Science was ranked first overall in the country, with $446.7 million primarily directed towards nonprofit groups that focus on HIV/AIDS and liver disease. Merck’s initiative to reduce maternal mortality includes an integrative partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Senegal government to supply rural health clinics with contraceptives. The final pharmaceutical on the list, Pfizer, reported a $3 billion donation of medicines in 2015, in addition to grants towards increasing immunization access and reducing an eye infection that causes blindness.

The technology firms with top CSR practices tend to employ more innovation by using their employees’ high-tech skills in collaboration with cash donations. Google’s philanthropy is directed towards organizations with bold and risky tactics towards solving social problems, including a grant for a direct cash transfer nonprofit, engineering assistance to a micronavigation app for the blind, and Wi-Fi installation for European refugee routes. Microsoft has been working to improve its relationship with nonprofits, maximizing social benefit by using employee tech skills. One example is a hackathon, where nonprofit leaders pitch ideas and Microsoft engineers work together to help them solve data and tech issues. AT&T is dedicated to building a skilled workforce by reducing high school dropout rates and partnering with an online education provider to subsidize IT degrees.

Within the oil and gas industry, ExxonMobil gave grants focused on STEM education, malaria prevention, and economic opportunity for women. The other oil and gas company on the top 20 list, Chevron, also supports economic development through nonprofit grants and funds HIV/AIDS treatment in the oil-rich African countries where it operates. Both companies gave to the Clinton Foundation in 2015.

These 20 examples of some of the most powerful companies in the United States and the world provide a better understanding of how widely CSR approaches can vary across firms. In particular, the separation of these companies into industry demonstrates apparent discrepancies across types of firms. A common theme across all 20 of the most generous Fortune 500 companies, no matter the industry, is nonprofit partnerships. While some primarily worked with nonprofits through grants, others sent employee volunteers or directly invested in a solution in partnership with a nonprofit. The examples align well with the literature available on CSR, highlighting the different ways corporations can tackle social problems.
Background of Detroit

Cities across the United States and the world rely on corporate giving and public-private partnerships to stimulate economic growth. There are numerous cities with backgrounds of strong business cores and otherwise declining economic activity that could serve as the basis for conducting research on corporate investment into nonprofits, including Atlanta, Philadelphia, San Diego, Indianapolis, Chicago, Detroit, or Cleveland. A common theme across these cities is substantial white flight to the suburbs in the 1960s and a subsequent struggle to overcome racial barriers and economic decline.23

In order to understand how corporations interact with their surrounding communities, Detroit is a powerful case study. Detroit experienced a significant economic rise in the early to mid-20th century followed by a disastrous fall. In both the rise and the fall, the presence or absence of corporate philanthropy was significant. Detroit is best known for its booming automobile industry, marked by Ford, Dodge, General Motors, Durant, Packard, and Chrysler. The economic prosperity of the city during the 1920s attracted industrial workers from the South, both Black and White, which provided immense city growth, but soon led to severe racial discrimination. Detroit hit its peak population of approximately 1.85 million in 1950, and the population has only declined since.24

When the auto industry began to decline in the 1950-60s period and automation began replacing assembly-line jobs, job loss in the city was unprecedented. After General Motors (GM) and Chrysler collectively closed three factories in the 1980s due to competition from overseas manufacturers, thousands more were left without work. The consequences of the downturn in the auto industry still persist today, as Detroit experiences poverty rates today of up to 40% and a deteriorating or stagnant population. The automobile companies and their suppliers once employed over 300,000 in the city at its peak, but this is now less than 30,000.25 GM and Chrysler had to turn to the federal government in December 2009 for bailout. The city then declared bankruptcy on July 17, 2013, a product of “decades of disinvestment, depopulation, political marginalization, and financial mismanagement from the City-County Building to Lansing to Wall Street.”26 Figure 1 shows the 2016 racial makeup of the neighborhoods of Detroit in comparison to the suburbs, with the Downtown area highlighted.

Despite the economic, political, and social instability the city endured for decades, Detroit began to experience an entrepreneurship boom and apparent revitalization in the last five to ten years. The years of 2010-2012 stand out as a pivotal moment in the city’s economic path, based on numerical and observational study. While overall income and employment rates are lagging behind direct investments, the downtown and midtown areas reflect progress in the common goal of reestablishing Detroit’s potential. More restaurants and shops are starting to line the streets, and businesses are relocating to the city center. A younger, more college-educated group is moving into the downtown area. Innovation and entrepreneurship are growing rapidly. The city is growing at a very quick pace, and one could attribute its rapid development to many factors.

One critical change has been corporate relocations and financial repopulation incentives, supporting public-private partnership in Detroit and subsequent economic development: “If the repopulation incentives generate sufficient density, visions of downtown and certain other areas as the lively core of a revitalized city may come to fruition.” GW law professor and author Lewis Solomon describes these talent acquisition incentives as an important responsibility of the private sector in Detroit. He points to Quicken Loans’, the massive online mortgage lender company, recent move to Detroit as an example of a company hoping to attract future employers and a technology district by partnering with the public sector to improve the eating, working, and

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29 Solomon, Detroit: Three Pathways to Revitalization.
living experience downtown. CEO Dan Gilbert hoped the move would create momentum for a technology district with a new innovative economy. Other high-tech firms relocated to Detroit surrounding the arrival of Quicken Loans, including Compuware Corp. and GalaxE. Solutions. Additionally, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and DTE Energy followed soon afterwards. Solomon cites a huge influx of 9,700 workers during this 2010-2012 period of successive corporate relocations: about 6,000 for Quicken Loans and its sister companies, 3,400 for BCBSM, and 300 for DTE. The growth and success of downtown lies in contrast to the continued struggle of the surrounding neighborhoods, as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Downtown vs. Non-Downtown 2011-2015 Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>-6.62%</td>
<td>7.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>39.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>-5.51%</td>
<td>6.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Housing Value</td>
<td>-36.19%</td>
<td>-7.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey

Detroit has a unique story due to its prior reliance on the automobile industry for economic prosperity. Because the automakers no longer expect to create new manufacturing jobs, they face an unusual role in the city. The formidable presence of the General Motors Renaissance Center looms over downtown Detroit as a reminder of the city’s history in stark contrast to the vacancy and decline closeby plaguing a predominantly Black population. Because the government is still struggling to recover from its 2013 bankruptcy, companies--old and new--largely drive change. The vibrant new central business district offers hope for perseverance and renewal. As the new and the traditional economies of the city begin to merge, there is potential for dynamic change.

How have the corporate social responsibility strategies of General Motors and Quicken Loans evolved in contributing to the economic growth of Detroit?

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30 Gaston, “The Effects of Detroit Business Revitalization on Repopulation.”
Hypotheses

Based on the literature about CSR, it is clear that different types of companies and industries across the United States accomplish CSR with varied approaches. When combining this literature with Detroit’s background, I hypothesize that General Motors and Quicken Loans employ distinct giving strategies—with recent overlap—in their headquartered city from 2010-2017.

**H1.** General Motors follows the typical giving strategies of a traditional company foundational on good community relations, due to its hundred year history and longtime presence in Detroit. Their CSR strategies align with many of the top Fortune 500 consumer product firms. This involves extensive nonprofit giving, with abundant employee volunteer involvement.

**H2.** Quicken Loans typically follows the giving strategies of a Fortune 500 financial services firm, with a mix of the newer, innovative strategies employed by tech-based companies. While this certainly includes nonprofit grants and employee volunteer time, the focus on a fast paced economy means more direct, long term investment as their emerging CSR approach.

**H3.** As a result of H1 and H2, I hypothesize that the approach taken by Quicken Loans has contributed greatly to the recent revitalization efforts in Detroit, with the help of the framework laid by General Motors.
Methodology and Data Sources

The purpose of this study is to investigate how corporate social responsibility strategies employed by two different types of companies impact the economic growth of a major U.S. city. I used Detroit as a case study, evaluating economic impact through the channel of nonprofit community development work. Detroit is an ideal case study due to the decades of economic and political turmoil plaguing by the city and the many prominent companies now acting as powerful stakeholders in its recent revival.

The largest companies headquartered in Detroit include General Motors Co. (GM), Henry Ford Health System, Illitch Companies, DTE Energy Co., Quicken Loans and its parent company Rock Ventures. This study will focus specifically on a comparative analysis between GM and the Quicken Loans Family of Companies, chosen due to their physical prominence in the downtown area and significant redevelopment efforts. While GM has been headquartered in Detroit since 1929 and in downtown since 1996, Quicken Loans just moved to Detroit in 2010. This means a vastly different relationship with the community, as GM has experienced Detroit’s tumultuous decades and Quicken Loans arrived in the lead up to the 2013 bankruptcy. GM represents the historical association of Detroit’s economy with the automobile industry. In contrast, the relocation of Quicken Loans’ headquarters to the city signified momentum for a new Detroit economy centered around a thriving technology district. The parent company of the family of companies, Rock Ventures, oversees most of the CSR initiatives. I chose nonprofit interview targets by comparing where the two companies overlapped in nonprofit grants and partnerships (See Appendix A4). This study primarily focuses on the shorter timeline of 2010-2017 to provide a specific analysis of Detroit’s current resurgence since the economic recession.

I primarily used qualitative interviews to evaluate the breakdown of giving and CSR strategies by General Motors and Quicken Loans, looking for trends and changes in the way the companies invest money, resources, and time. I conducted a majority of my interviews in person in Detroit, with research funding provided by the Sanford School of Public Policy Eads Grant (See Appendix A1 for interview details). The qualitative approach was essential to understanding the decision-making behind corporations in their community outreach. I sought out interviews with community outreach and marketing teams at the companies and with development directors at the nonprofits in order to ask questions about strategic planning and target areas/populations (See Appendix A2 for interview questions):

- General Motors:
  - Community Team: Director, Former Marketing, Strategy (Phone)
  - GM Foundation: Community Corporate Giving (Phone)
- Quicken Loans:
  - Bedrock: Marketing (In person)
○ Rock Ventures: Business Development (In person)
○ Rock Venture: Community Investments (Phone)

● Nonprofits:
  ○ Build Institute (In person)
  ○ Big Brothers Big Sisters (In person)
  ○ Forgotten Harvest (In person)
  ○ Habitat for Humanity (Phone)
  ○ United Way (In person)
  ○ Assemble Sound (Phone)

I analyzed the company interviews by coding for sections that indicated giving themes, nonprofit focuses, long-term strategy, direct investment, feelings of responsibility, sustainability intentions, employee participation, visibility, challenges, partnerships, and marketing/advertising. Comparison of frequent themes supplied a basis for discussion about the way the overall strategies differ between GM and Quicken Loans, as well as how the outcomes meet Detroit’s nonprofit needs. The Results Framework section below outlines how the interviews were further analyzed according to a theoretical framework pre-existing in the literature (See Appendix A5).

Next, I used nonprofit partnerships to analyze how the relationships between firms and nonprofits have positively affected economic growth in Detroit. I measured the corporate impact on nonprofits by specifically analyzing the nonprofit interviews for themes surrounding how they request grants, the types of support the companies offer (time/money), personal relationships with the two companies, collaborative efforts, and difficulties in forming partnerships (See Appendix A3). The interviews with Habitat for Humanity and Assemble Sound were used for discussion purposes, while Build Institute, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Forgotten Harvest, and United Way were used as case studies for the Results section.

I supplemented qualitative interviews with quantitative information about grants. I gathered information from company websites, financial statements, and annual reports. The Foundation Directory provided an extremely detailed database of General Motors Foundation grants. The Directory breaks down giving into recipients, topics, years, and location, which are all pertinent indicators of a company’s priorities and decision-making processes. The Quicken Loans Community Giving website and Detroit Free Press articles provided breakdowns on nonprofit giving and new CSR initiatives.
Results Framework

The following results derive from interviews at General Motors and Quicken Loans/Rock Ventures and establish the success of the two central companies in integrating with the needs of the city of Detroit through the channel of nonprofits. I use the analytical framework established by James E. Austin in the *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* to assign nonprofit relationships within each company to one of the three collaboration stages displayed in Figure 2: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative.

**Figure 2. Austin’s 3 Collaboration Continuum Stages for Nonprofit-Business Partnerships**

- **Philanthropic**
  - Charitable donation
- **Transactional**
  - Mutual benefits
- **Integrative**
  - Mutual mission

He uses the collaboration continuum to further break down cross sector relationships into Alliance Drivers and Enablers, which measure the success in starting relationships between corporations and nonprofits and emphasize contributing factors to viability (See Appendix A5). While Austin’s framework analyzes the drivers and enablers separately, the following results will assess each company by pairing one of each driver and enabler thematically as indicated in Table 2. The results will therefore analyze four segments of a nonprofit-company relationship: Mission, Relationships, Value, and Sustainability. Each pair of driver and enabler guides collaboration from philanthropic strategies in a partnership to more integrative ones. The interview analysis will separate each company into the four driver/enabler pairs and assess how the corporation is aligning to the needs of nonprofits and the city of Detroit, starting with General Motors and followed by Quicken Loans. The same Driver and Enabler framework will subsequently analyzed the four nonprofit case studies in how they respond to corporate needs.
Comparing all the sources of data according to Austin’s collaboration continuum reveals two important results. First, it highlights the differences in corporate giving strategies between GM and Quicken Loans in their partnerships with Detroit nonprofits. The different personal perspectives, public data, and collected data will be assembled for a holistic picture of their nonprofit collaboration approaches. Next, the results show if there is a relationship between effective strategies and positive impact on the community services of nonprofit organizations. The overall implications for further study are that best practices in corporate giving contribute to nonprofit services, which in turn leads to more significant redevelopment efforts in Detroit. The nonprofit case studies are outlined below and Table 3 illustrates the relationships between the four case studies and each company that will be further detailed throughout the Results sections.

**Nonprofit Case Study 1: Build Institute**
Themes: entrepreneurship, small business, workforce development, community development

“Because we make entrepreneurship accessible, we’re all about democratizing entrepreneurship and allowing anyone who has a potential idea or dream about owning a business to explore that and figure out if that’s something they want to do. With over 1100 alumni in 5 years, we’re able to really provide a vehicle to allow individuals to actualize what their future holds. We know that we prepare individuals to really embark on that journey of entrepreneurship.”

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Build Institute representative in discussion with the author, July 2017: 1.
Nonprofit Case Study 2: Forgotten Harvest
Themes: food security, workforce development
“I think Forgotten Harvest plays a role in trying to revitalize folks who maybe during the economic downturn lost their jobs or had health issues and they needed somewhere to turn at that point. So we see our role in Metro Detroit as an organization that is going to help people get back up on their feet, whether it be they need that help for a week or a month or a couple months that doesn't matter. [...] Food is constantly being wasted so we kind of see ourselves as a logistics organization to be able to find that food that's going to be wasted in the U.S [...] and finding where it needs to be directed.”

Nonprofit Case Study 3: Big Brothers Big Sisters
Themes: education, youth development, workforce development
“We build our youth, we provide them with guidance, a role model, support, information so they can grow up and be better citizens in our community, so they can provide what is necessary. I mean, they are our future. So I think that the way that they are raised and the support they have, every person in their life that can influence that, will impact Detroit’s future.”

Nonprofit Case Study 4: United Way
Themes: education, emergency food and shelter, workforce development
“Our biggest asset is our ability to influence the educational space. We’ve always been known as this kind of safety net, as a basic needs component. It’s making sure that if you’re in need, you have a place to fall. We started to realize that if we want to make a true sustainable change within just this market alone, within Southeast Michigan, we need to focus on the kids, making sure that they have a solid foundation to build their future on. If we can teach [...] the children that they’re going to have a strong foundation for their education, then they’ll hopefully continue that on--whether they get a college degree, get an apprenticeship or go into the military, they’ll come back to serve our community, our future, to continue that chain, build their family here and just keep that going.”

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34 Forgotten Harvest representative in discussion with the author, July 2017: 1.
35 Big Brothers Big Sisters representative in discussion with the author, July 2017: 1.
Table 3. Relationships between Nonprofit and Company Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Motors</th>
<th>Quicken Loans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Big Brothers Big Sisters</strong></td>
<td>Four $10,000 annual grants; $30,000-$40,000 annual fundraising campaign; volunteer at four schools</td>
<td>None as of July 2017 (Used to fund and volunteer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build Institute</strong></td>
<td>None (unsuccessful application for Foundation grant)</td>
<td>Annual funding; liaison connects alumni entrepreneurs with capital and storefronts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forgotten Harvest</strong></td>
<td>$90,000 annual grant; children-focused programming and event outreach; funding since 2001 and volunteers since 2007; Gm rep on Board</td>
<td>Largest volunteer base for Forgotten Harvest; Special events funding, operational giving, crowdfunding campaign; Quicken rep on Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United Way</strong></td>
<td>$27.1 million grant over five years to form Network of Excellence schools; annual fundraising campaign</td>
<td>Largest volunteer base for United Way; The Network education reform</td>
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GENERAL MOTORS

1. Mission

*Driver: Alignment of strategy, mission, values*

*Enabler: Focused Attention*

General Motors: Philanthropic → Integrative

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Structure</th>
<th>Corporate Giving Structure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philanthropic</strong>: Annual grants to nonprofits in wide range of focus areas, with mid-year and end of year reports as the only point of contact</td>
<td><strong>Integrative</strong>: Targets key pillars of giving and aligns with employee volunteering and company resources Ex. Student Corps and Network of Excellence</td>
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In 1976, GM founded the General Motors Foundation and began aligning its grants with four pillars of giving: Advancing STEM Education, Fueling Vehicle and Road Safety, Sustainable Communities, and Hometown Giving. Their donation history has centered around “typical nonprofit partners [...] and community service type organizations” geared towards the issues of food security and workforce development. The Foundation donated $11,190,511 to Detroit nonprofits across all of these pillars in 2015. There are philanthropic, transactional, and integrative aspects of the GM’s work, but the majority of Foundation grants are annual grants. The Foundation largely operates at the philanthropic stage of Austin’s continuum. Through an Open Giving system in an online portal, nonprofits can apply for one year grants with the possibility of renewal each year based on performance. Next, strategic partnerships are more long term, where grants are more transactional within a working relationship and targeted project. For example, their Buick Achievers Scholarship Program provides scholarships up to $25,000 for 50 first year students enrolled in higher education to study STEM subjects with an interest in an automotive industry career. Finally, signature grants are large donations and collective partnerships that directly integrate into the philanthropic and business goals of GM, exemplified by their initiative with Safe Kids USA promoting seat belt safety in cars throughout the nation.

The GM Foundation has a standardized reporting system that generates metrics based on the pillars of giving and helps align the nonprofit work with GM’s mission. When a nonprofit indicates the giving pillar they want to apply for, GM automatically gives them an output goal of how many students, families, or community members the program must impact. For example, if the nonprofit wants a grant for a STEM education initiative, GM mandates that the indicator is the number of students with employable skills and civil labor skills for careers in STEM. The nonprofit then fills in the programming it will undertake to achieve this goal. Finally, GM

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37 GM Community Outreach Team in discussion with the author, June 2017: 3.
provides three social outcomes by which they will measure success: increase in students with a degree in STEM, increase in underrepresented or minority populations in STEM fields, or an increase in the supply of qualified teachers and teacher training in STEM related subjects.\footnote{GM Foundation representative in discussion with the author, August 2017: 4.} Once an organization reports these outcomes, GM also expects them to provide stories for press releases or further volunteering opportunities. Figure 3 demonstrates the model the GM Foundation uses to address its four giving pillars and how they apply their Open Giving system to STEM Education as an example.

**Figure 3.** General Motors Foundation Giving System: General and STEM Example

![Diagram of General Motors Foundation Giving System](image)

Source: General Motors Foundation Interview, September 2017

A 2009 newspaper article brought alarming information to GM about Detroit’s failing education system: Out of the thirty high schools in the country with the highest dropout rates, Detroit had fifteen.\footnote{United Way Interview, 5.} General Motors realized this was unacceptable in the city they call their headquarters. In response to the article, the President of GM North America, Mark Reuss, spent time with United Way of Southeast Michigan learning more about their mission and initiatives across the city. As Figure 4 demonstrates, GM had a history of giving to United Way prior to this meeting, but it was often through employee giving campaigns and grants ranging from $500,000-$1 million without consistent structure. In the midst of the financial crisis and aftermath of GM’s bailout, sending out a fundraising letter to employees felt inappropriate and the company was looking to make a bigger impact in Detroit. United Way took the opportunity of peaked interest to create an experiential opportunity for the GM leadership team to tour and learn about current initiatives. After cultivating a strong relationship and establishing that United Way’s educational mission aligned with GM’s goal to improve the current 48% high school graduation
rate, GM granted $27.1 million to United Way over five years.\textsuperscript{41} A grant and goal of such significant size were unprecedented for both GM and United Way.

**Figure 4. GM Foundation Grants to United Way 2003-2015**

![Bar chart showing GM Foundation Grants to United Way for Southeastern Michigan from 2003 to 2015.](image)

*Source: The Foundation Center Online Directory (Note: Missing 2014 Data)*

United Way used the $27.1 million to form seven ‘Network of Excellence’ schools and over 65 early learning centers to tackle the unsatisfactory high school graduation rate. GM saw an additional need at these schools for experiential learning opportunities and support during the summer. They kicked off GM Student Corps, giving 10 high school students at each Network of Excellence school a paid summer internship at the company, mentored by GM retirees and college students. The program continues to adapt and expand to meet the needs of the students. After the five years, the financial investment via United Way and the 53,000 volunteer hours across about 3,000 GM employees and retirees resulted in graduation rates improving to 82.5\%.\textsuperscript{42} This powerful example of mission alignment catalyzed General Motor’s renewed corporate social responsibility efforts.

Within the last three years, General Motors started moving towards a new corporate giving strategy that aligns outreach, giving, and employee volunteering with the core focus areas of the business. The partnership with United Way jumpstarted significant efforts to restructure the community giving and employee engagement “to be able to track it, understand it, and align it to the company’s focus.”\textsuperscript{43} As a result of this restructuring, there are three segments to GM’s philanthropic activity: General Motors Foundation, Community Outreach, and Corporate Giving. They work together using the four pillars of giving to more strategically align with the overall

\textsuperscript{41} GM Community Outreach Interview, 9.
\textsuperscript{42} United Way Interview, 4.
\textsuperscript{43} GM Community Outreach Interview, 1.
mission of General Motors: to be a global automotive company that earns customers for life with a “Winning with Integrity” code of conduct. Vehicle and road safety is intrinsic to this commitment and they view STEM education as an essential driver for producing an economically prosperous Detroit and the next generation of employees. Investments in the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Detroit Institute of Arts further contribute to people visiting or moving to Detroit and increasing positive perceptions of the city.

In June 2017, The Detroit News announced that General Motors was ending their Foundation and shifting towards a corporate giving model. The company further elaborated in a press release that GM Corporate Giving will now directly distribute funds in order to streamline the process. Interviews with the community outreach and the Foundation representatives corroborated that with the Foundation structure, GM had to remain hands off from many grants and could not overtly market the programs as coming from the company. The transition allows GM to move away from their merely philanthropic initiatives towards transactional and integrative partnerships where its community development goals align with its corporate goals.

2. Relationships

Driver 2: Personal connections and relationships

Enabler 2: Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Motors: Transactional → Integrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation Structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Transactional</em>: Many volunteer hours, but not attached to mission or goals</td>
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Historically, community outreach was not an organic aspect within General Motors. While employees had been volunteering in Detroit and across the country around office locations since the company was founded, there was little organized effort to track time and impact: “GM is not new to volunteerism. As a one hundred plus year old company, they’ve been volunteering forever. We just weren’t tracking it and [...] we weren’t building projects around the interests that employees have.” The personal relationship employee volunteers form with nonprofits and the community are a key aspect of driving stronger corporate-nonprofit partnerships.

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46 GM Foundation Interview, 2.
47 GM Community Outreach Interview, 10.
The Community Outreach team saw a need to translate their philanthropic volunteering work in Detroit to simultaneously improve their strategy and receive more credit. They describe the volunteer activity at General Motors up until 2011 as the “Wild Wild West,” because employees were volunteering in such a wide variety of activities that did not necessarily align with GM’s key giving pillars. Sabin Blake, previous Cadillac marketing manager and current Community Outreach Manager, led the way in creating a company volunteering platform called TeamGM Cares. Employees are still able to volunteer for the causes they care about, but there are certain constraints in place to ensure company volunteer time aligns with business needs and the pillars of giving. GM started using their “Giving Back” website to promote these volunteer activities that directly align with their focus areas. The Community Outreach team acknowledges TeamGM Cares as the key to the company’s deep connection with the community today, translating to hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours.

There are some employees who want to complete all of their mandatory volunteer hours one day a year, while there are many who want to further contribute to community outreach initiatives. GM therefore manages their volunteering on a team-by-team basis as a way to allow employees to work with their leadership and make the volunteer hours work best with their work schedule and their passions. For employees who want to be involved with volunteering on a regular basis, but are not able to leave their desk so frequently, GM set up a program called TutorMate to impact elementary school literacy rates. They can video conference into a classroom for thirty minutes once or twice a week to tutor elementary students in reading. GM sees substantial success in reading proficiency over just a yearlong period with these students.

GM structures the Community Outreach team in the Global Product Development group, which also encompasses engineering, design, and purchasing supply chain. The team points to a key advantage of this position: Heidi Magyar, Director of Community Outreach, has a seat at the table with fellow leaders of the company. She has an opportunity every week to report to and gain feedback from GM executives on the team’s work. This high-level engagement with the company’s overall business initiatives allows quicker activation of large community partnerships, especially with STEM activities. The position also poses challenges due to its structural separation from the corporate giving team, requiring constant communication for proper alignment.

Aside from volunteering, GM forms relationships with the Detroit community through company executives serving on the Board of Directors for nonprofits. It was common for the Foundation structure to allocate grants based on which nonprofits had preexisting relationships.

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48 GM Community Outreach Interview, 3.
49 GM Community Outreach Interview, 1-2.
50 GM Community Outreach Interview, 5.
with the program managers or had GM employees on their boards directors. A GM VP on the board of United Way largely facilitated the initial conversation that led to the monumental $27.1 million grant. Furthermore, once the partnership was underway, GM employees sat on the United Way Advisory Council as an extra level of expertise and knowledge from the corporate sector that combined with United Way’s community relationships: “We had the relationships and GM brought the process and kind of the weight to the work that we were doing and the credibility of the work that we were doing.” United Way additionally formed the ‘Champion’s Council,’ which allowed the Community Outreach team to fully connect with the nonprofit sector and the Network of Excellence school administrations. This allowed GM to leverage some of their own resources to meet the needs of the schools and the students.

3. Value

Driver 3: Value generation and shared visioning

Enabler 3: Organizational systems (managerial complexity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Motors: Philanthropic → Integrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation Structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philanthropic:</strong> Typical grants range from $10,000-$50,000 through the foundation to Detroit nonprofits; reactive CSR in the face of crises</td>
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In 2010, it became clear to the marketing team at GM that a structured volunteering and corporate giving system was essential to translating its CSR efforts to shareholders and stakeholders. As a publicly traded company, reputation is critical. After the government bailout, change was necessary in order to improve the public image and shareholder confidence in GM’s value. Figure 5 demonstrates how philanthropic activity drastically fell during the recession and bailout period: “During that time, for context we’re talking about 2010, we had just gone through some pretty tumultuous times. Some bankruptcy, at the lowest of lows for our company, in terms of being in front of Congress asking for a bailout, so we had a huge reputation problem.”

Organization was necessary for recordkeeping and marketing purposes, but also to expand the company’s potential with such a large workforce. The United Way partnership was far more than a check writing opportunity; moreover, it was GM’s chance to create a more strategic effort around corporate giving and employee volunteerism.

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51 Build Institute Interview, 5.
52 United Way Interview, 10.
53 GM Community Outreach Interview, 2.
The reputation problem for the company and the city presented the GM Foundation with an opportunity and responsibility to truly analyze the needs of Detroit. When the program officers delved into the paths they could take to most effectively revitalize the city, they found that education and workforce development needed significant improvements. Third grade literacy became a key target, based on research indicating how this metric can strongly predict high school graduate rates and career outcomes. GM uses this measure to create value for the company in its pre-existing relationships with anchor institutions that have strong reputations in Detroit. For example, GM built off of a partnership with a food security nonprofit to start putting together backpacks filled with food for young children to take home on the weekends. This helps kids come prepared to focus and learn during the school week, indirectly meeting the third grade literacy metric.\(^4\)

An essential aspect of the integrative focus on value creation is defining metrics that will powerfully portray the results of corporate giving and community outreach work. GM’s summer Student Corps initiative can be especially hard to measure, because numerical metrics don’t properly relay the impact the program is making. The Community Outreach team prefers stakeholders to hear the stories from students and learn about the key mile markers the students reach, like building confidence, growing academic interests, and making career path decisions. Return rate is one way they use numerical metrics to demonstrate their social impact. High schoolers from the original program are returning as sophomores and juniors in college to mentor new students. They see this as true testimony to the power of early career training and confidence building in workforce development.

\(^4\) GM Foundation Interview, 6.
Until GM completes the Corporate Giving transition, partnerships with nonprofits are often broken up into two parts. For example, the Foundation gives four direct grants around $10,000 each to Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) every year. Separately, the corporate giving team runs a “Bowl for Kids Sake” employee fundraising event that typically raises $30,000-$40,000 every year. The community outreach team then coordinates volunteers to be consistent mentors for students in GM’s partner BBBS schools. The combination of the grants and fundraising campaign covers the costs for the four schools where GM employees mentor.

The transition from the Foundation to a corporate giving platform reflects the expectations of the market to “expand how they give dollars and how they engage differently than within the restraints or limitations of a foundation when it comes to doing things globally or doing things that are better connected to the brand.” GM also recognizes expectations from current and future employers to positively impact the surrounding community. A couple times a month, GM brings a group of around 30 new hires to tour the downtown United Way office and hear about the work United Way does for Detroit in partnership with GM. By putting emphasis on their community efforts, GM is working to recruit socially responsible employees and create future value for the company.

4. Sustainability

Driver 4: Continual learning

Enabler 4: Mutual expectations and accountability

General Motors: Philanthropic → Integrative

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<tr>
<th>Foundation Structure</th>
<th>Corporate Giving Structure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Philanthropic</em>: The GM Foundation process of 1 year grants greatly increases accountability</td>
<td><em>Integrative</em>: Long term, collaborative partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the system of annual grants proves difficult for mission alignment, relationship building, and value creation, it does promote a sense of responsibility for the nonprofit to meets GM’s expectations. Before the GM Foundation makes a grant, they analyze a nonprofit’s annual report to set expectations and goals: “We’re looking to make sure our funds go towards an innovative project that we feel can make a difference.” They therefore ask the nonprofits for relevant experience and annual reports to see how well they implemented funding in the past. If prior grant recipients did not meet GM’s goals, then the Foundation staff will set up a meeting to discuss expectations for any future grants. Because nonprofits know they have to deliver results

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55 GM Community Outreach Interview, 4.
56 GM Foundation Interview, 4.
within that year or they risk not getting funded again, the annual grant process is effective at increasing accountability.

However, GM learned through its United Way partnership that long term partnerships can also provide a platform for continual learning. Even though the five year grant period ended, GM remains in the Network of Excellence schools with GM Student Corps and an annual giving campaign. They continue to see the program evolve with their own resources and the growing expertise from United Way.

QUICKEN LOANS

1. Mission

*Driver 1: Alignment of strategy, mission, values*

*Enabler 1: Focused Attention*

Quicken Loans: Transactional → Integrative

Quicken Loans subsists within the Rock Ventures Family of Companies portfolio of over 100 companies owned by CEO Dan Gilbert. Because Gilbert grew up in Detroit, he recognizes its history as a “federally forgotten city” since the end of World War II. He has seen the ebbs and flows of the city and now is in a position to implement enormous change. The mission of Rock Ventures, with Quicken Loans as its flagship, is “to increase growth, innovation and prosperity in the cities in which its more than 30,000 team members live, work and play.” Before Gilbert even announced its headquarters’ relocation, he invested in Detroit’s M-1 Rail, a new light-rail system to connect neighborhoods with the riverfront, business district, and other downtown attractions. This initial mark on the city set the stage for the following eight years of commitment to revitalization through real estate development, community investments and economic development. “Isms” are the glue and the culture that hold the Family of Companies together and allow them to scale dramatically, such as “simplicity is genius” and obsessed with finding a better way.” Gilbert creates a work environment that not only fosters responsibility to grow the companies, but to be a strong proponent of Detroit and a thoughtful partner in Detroit interactions. The company deems themselves “for more than profit” because they are a capitalist enterprise, but with an “ethos of operation that prioritizes the needs of stakeholders: “We’re looking to deliver the most good to the stakeholders in the community, in the company, in the customer layer.”

Developing downtown Detroit and the surrounding neighborhoods has been central to the “for more than profit” mission of Quicken since its arrival in Detroit. However, when Quicken

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60 Bedrock representative in discussion with the author, July 2017: 1.
first moved its headquarters downtown, the company played the role of “good corporate citizen,” with a mix of philanthropic and transactional initiatives in the city. They were not necessarily working towards anything strategic, instead donating smaller $5,000-$10,000 grants to all sorts of nonprofits or sponsoring dinners for city initiatives. The team would sort through over 2,000 unsolicited grant requests without much prioritization for mission and strategy.

Rock Ventures restructured their Community Investment Team in mid 2016 as a way to focus on reforming education and enhancing the entrepreneur ecosystem in the city. The team helped evolve Quicken’s philanthropic efforts to make targeted, innovative investments with much larger donations. Instead of waiting for grant requests, the team’s model is to plan a strategy and find the best partner to help them execute their goals. While they have still kept a few smaller transactional partnerships to maintain ties with prominent Detroit nonprofits, they estimate 80% of their investment fund is now used for larger, in-depth grants. They incorporated the Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund in January 31, 2017 as a revamped community outreach structure. The fund has four focuses to drive holistic change: Activating and Animating the City, Creating Education Initiatives, Supporting Local Entrepreneurs, and Increasing Homeownership. The team approaches these goals through strategic investments in education, experiential learning, tax foreclosure issues, blight remediation, urban placemaking, and community event sponsorship. The main driver of these focuses is fostering a positive perception of Detroit, which will in turn support new and existing businesses and attract residential development. Through the investment fund, Rock Ventures oversees three overarching goals:

1. Invest in Detroit’s population growth  
2. Drive Detroit job growth  
3. Create opportunities for all Detroiters

The Community Investment Team sees an important role for the company to fill in Detroit’s education gaps, creating impact and value in a focus area where the city is struggling immensely: “The education piece is also self-serving because we need to stock up if we’re going to be based in Detroit and be a sustainable company then we need the next wave of the talent to be properly educated for us.” Quicken therefore has both a market imperative and a mission imperative to reform Detroit’s education system and affect change. They have been working with thousands of Detroit students to give them experiential program in the Quicken Loans buildings that will demonstrate the opportunities and mentorship available in the city. In September 2017, they announced a $700,000 donation to City Year, an education nonprofit that matches AmeriCorps members with at-risk students in low income communities. Rather than a small

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61 Rock Ventures Community Investments representative in discussion with the author, September 2017: 2.  
62 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 1-2.  
63 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 4.
annual grant to go towards City Year’s general operations, this investment is very targeted towards improving the struggling Cody Rouge neighborhood.

Quicken Loans’ relationship with the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program (DAPCEP) is further representative of their evolution from a transactional to an integrative CSR strategy. Previously, Quicken had given them about $20,000 each year and facilitated a few of the program’s coding classes for kids. With the new goals and outcome-oriented strategy, the Community Investments team approached DAPCEP in 2016 with a proposal for a $500,000/year relationship. This proactive strategy of seeking out the nonprofits to best help Quicken reach its community goals completely turns around the typical structure of a nonprofit sending proposals out to as many companies as possible in order to secure funding. During just the first year of this revamped partnership, DAPCEP and Quickens’ IT team coordinated an in-depth coding program for 700 middle school students.64

When Gilbert first started building the Quicken Loans Family of Companies in 1985, he was seeking better ways of doing things that were otherwise too difficult or intimidating for people. He created Quicken Loans’ services that streamline processes for people trying to get a mortgage, but the entire Family of Companies is now focusing on “finding better ways of doing business.”65 This translates to investing in startups and technology companies that have the ideas and the ability to scale quickly and truly affect change. Quicken’s focus on entrepreneurship reflects further commitment to job growth and opportunities for all. In late 2010, Gilbert established Detroit Venture Partners to invest in early-stage technology companies interested in Detroit. In 2017, Quicken hosted the inaugural Detroit Demo Day, where they narrowed down hundreds of Detroit’s small businesses to a Top 8 that each received a portion of $1 million in capital ranging from $50,000 to $200,000. While Quicken certainly has a strong interest in supporting upcoming technology startups, they also heavily invest in ‘lifestyle’ businesses to ensure every neighborhood has access to grocery stores, restaurants, laundromats, barbershops, and other basic services. Entrepreneurship and small business has the potential to drive Detroit’s growth and economic stability. Quicken recognized access to capital as an enormous barrier to entry for small businesses and plays a strong role in driving opportunity.

Building density downtown is another essential goal of Quicken Loans. By building up downtown with living spaces and restaurants and attractions, they are working to convince larger retailers that there is a market imperative for their business. They recognize the enormous discrepancy between metro Detroit and the surrounding suburbs. Quicken strongly believes that if they can build up the inner core of the city, the new density and wealth can start paying the bills for the city services that the surrounding neighborhoods will benefit from. The city was built for 2 million inhabitants but it currently only has 650,000 people, so there is plenty of room for people. Part of Quicken’s five to ten year plan is to attract as many people to Detroit as

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64 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 4.
65 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 3.
possible: “What do we do to make Detroit appealing not only from a business perspective, why we need businesses here, but why do we need as many people as possible?” They note that many cities in the U.S. have saturated markets so it is harder for millennials to find jobs and reasonable rent. Detroit has an upswing in momentum from people realizing they can affect change in the city, especially compelling to millennials who “want to be a part of the mission bigger than themselves.”

2. Relationships

Driver 2: Personal connections and relationships

Enabler 2: Communication

Quicken Loans: Transactional → Integrative

One of the biggest assets Quicken Loans has is its enormous volunteer base, which sets a basis for a positive relationship between the company and its nonprofit partners. The nonprofits pointed to the extraordinary passion Quicken employees exemplify and the Community Investments representative highlighted what makes a Quicken employees stand out from others:

There’s not that many people who grow up wanting to work at a mortgage company. They just didn’t. But people from all over the place want to come work for us because they want to be a part of something that’s bigger than themselves and they want to reinvent a city like Detroit or like Cleveland. And so you have this DNA of people in this place that want to get out into the community and I think that’s a lot of it too- I mean our volunteer corps is ridiculous, the work that they do, how aggressive they are. People come to the work, come to this company and the family of companies with the deeper desire to do good and I think that just distinguishes us with some of that creativity and passion.

At Forgotten Harvest, Quicken started sporadically sending employees to volunteer every few months. The relationship quickly grew to include event support and consistent monthly volunteers. Quicken Loans employees soon started showing up every day, a demonstration of how seriously the company takes volunteerism and community engagement: “It’s almost like Quicken Loans is one of our employees, if you walk in there’s going to be Quicken people somewhere.” Quicken has made it a priority to include their leadership on the Forgotten Harvest Board of Directors, providing invaluable insight into the organization’s strategic path. United Way similarly discussed how they formed their relationship with Quicken and quickly built up a strong volunteer base. The nonprofit provided their relationships with the public school

66 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 10.
67 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 10.
68 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 9.
69 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 6.
community district and connections with fifteen high need high schools, and in turn “Quicken knows that’s where we’ve done well and they have an amazing volunteer platform. They probably have a better volunteer platform than we do. And so if it just comes down to we want to volunteer, they can do that.”

Another essential aspect of Quicken’s relationship building beyond volunteers and money is their willingness to look at every single person, nonprofit, and company as a potential partner: “Everyone’s a partner in this, just how do we find a way to partner with them in the most effective way possible?” This also means that they are not going to force fit relationships. For example, they emphasized that they would not form a partnership just because a Quicken executive is on the board of a nonprofit, but only if it fit organically with the company. Furthermore, Quicken recognizes that there are other ways beyond funding to work with a nonprofit or community group. If the organization has “the right mission behind them and they’re doing the right things and they’re affecting outcomes for as many people as possible,” then Quicken is committed to somehow fitting them into their CSR strategy.

For example, if a local barbershop does not necessarily qualify for a Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund grant, Quicken may host an event to help with advertising or find another way to create some sort of value for the shop. With such vast human capital, Quicken can be thoughtful with creating partnerships and working to provide value beyond monetary contributions. One example of how they strategically employ their workforce for community outreach is with IT employees. While they do have the option to do typical volunteer work like neighborhood cleanups, Quicken gives them the opportunity to instead use their volunteer time to teach community coding classes or offer IT assistance to nonprofits. This creative approach builds strong community relationships and takes advantage of Quicken’s enormous human capital and technical expertise.

Build Institute pointed to Quicken’s tendency to invite the small nonprofit team to different leadership opportunities. Every year, Quicken hosts a day of training around the cultural “Isms” that drive their mission, and always invite the Build team to attend and take part in the corporate culture. While Quicken is not a primary funder for Build’s programming, they have become an invaluable resource to fund and support graduates of Build’s entrepreneurship classes as they look to upgrade their small businesses to a storefront. The Quicken liaison for Build knows the inner workings of the organization, reaching out to the team to spotlight entrepreneurs and connect them to events or resources: “He’s a great champion of ours.” The Bedrock real estate arm of the Quicken Loans Family of Companies helps these rising

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70 United Way Interview, 4.
71 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 7.
72 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 6.
73 Build Institute Interview, 3.
entrepreneurs occupy space in downtown or midtown Detroit. Build emphasized appreciation for the actual relationship that brings opportunity, rather than just funding without follow up.

3. Value

*Driver 3: Value generation and shared visioning*

*Enabler 3: Organizational systems (managerial complexity)*

**Quicken Loans:** Transactional $\rightarrow$ Integrative

The community initiatives at Quicken Loans seek to create value for both the company and the Detroit community. In order to do so, the philanthropic experts realized a more specific outreach plan was necessary in order to drive productive outcomes. Dan Gilbert and his team of senior leaders initially recognized around 2015 that there was a need for a more strategic lens in order to create value for the company and the city. The Rock Ventures strategic investments representative postulates they were “frankly, probably getting frustrated, that we were actually putting a lot of dollars into the community without showing any return on it, from either like a social perspective on it or back to a market perspective on it.”

A key component of this strategy is creating return that “affects the most change per person” and also ensures Quicken receives some credit from the community for their work.

The switch from smaller grants to larger investments reflects strategic prioritization of partnerships that will engage all levels of the enterprise. The recent $700,000 investment to City Year will primarily expand the organization’s education services into the Cody Rouge neighborhood. In addition, Quicken can now take advantage of the efficient network City Year has built with Detroit school districts to expand their other programs for students. Finally, the relationship provides a distribution channel for Quicken Loans employee volunteering opportunities in all of the schools where City Year works. The partnership’s multiple integrative dimensions serve to create longterm value for both Quicken and City Year.

While larger grants are now the main priority, the community investment team still leaves about 20% of their time and resources for more philanthropic and transactional initiatives. These provide critical help to the city, without involving in-depth strategy. For example, Quicken found out from the Detroit Workforce Development Agency that thousands of residents were “missing out on entry level jobs” because Detroit Public Schools hadn’t digitized their records so the applicants could not prove they had earned high school diplomas.

Thousands of records were sitting in cardboard boxes throughout a warehouse, so during summer 2016 Quicken sent a team of 20 people a day to sort through the records and digitize them. This simple transaction used Quicken’s skillset as a privately held company and plethora of employee volunteers to increase

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74 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 7.
75 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 2.
76 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 6.
entry level job access in Detroit. The partnership therefore helped drive one of Quicken’s three main goals, job growth in the city.

While Quicken’s CSR approach to education and other community initiatives experienced a transition from transactional to much more integrative, one of the Family of Companies’ biggest and most consistently integrative sources of value generation and shared visioning with the city is real estate and downtown business development: “We’re both helping the enterprise and helping the community. The $2.5 billion we’ve put into real estate, or the $3 billion of real estate projects we have in the pipeline, don’t make sense from a pure ROI standpoint but make a lot of sense in the long term community development standpoint.”

Quicken Loans’ finds one their biggest assets to be their status as a privately held company. Because they do not need to report quarterly returns to shareholders, they can focus on long term investments.

When Quicken first relocated, they did not buy nearly 100 buildings downtown for the profit necessarily, but because they know there are other investors that could have come in and just held them, letting them decline further and making it more expensive for the next investor to come in and fix them up. They want people to buy buildings for the right reasons and they want them to be filled with destination retail, a mix of different tenants to meet the needs of current Detroiters and attract newcomers. This proactive business development is proving beneficial to downtown Detroit, as vacancy rates dropped from 25% in 2010 to 13.3% five years later.

A final way Quicken Loans continues to transition towards more complex systems and value generation is acting on the metrics measuring the success of their untraditional business and giving practices. Metrics are essential to demonstrating the return on investment from a donation. Upon making a grant, companies often require key metrics that help outline exactly where every dollar went in programming and what impact was created from those dollars. These can include demographic information and engagement levels. For example, Quicken Loans requires Build Institute to send annual reports on how many people signed up and attended their entrepreneurship classes, how many events were held, and who attended specific programming. Forgotten Harvest reports to Quicken Loans on the number of volunteers they receive from the enterprise annually and the cost per volunteer hour. Providing budget breakdowns of the exact cost to run a program helps Quicken best identify where they can support Forgotten Harvest.

Quicken also places an emphasis on testimonials. They are now trying to transform “how we measure success. Like a lot of companies, we had kind of measured success with output, the dollars out the door or the volunteer hours. That’s one huge part about what we do, we run 70 volunteer events a week here, we’ll hit well north of 125,000 volunteer hours this year. So we’re

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77 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 2.
78 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 8.
measuring that stuff, but we weren’t executing on specific goals relative to what those hours did.”

4. Sustainability

*Driver 4: Continual learning*

*Enabler 4: Mutual expectations and accountability*

Quicken Loans expressed strong interest in continual learning for both individual partnerships and their overall Detroit revitalization strategy. When asked about how they develop long term partnerships, the Community Investments team emphasized, “You can’t fund and forget, it’s absolutely not that mentality. You have to kind of continue to co-develop.” The DAPCEP partnership exemplifies Quicken’s commitment to co-development with a nonprofit. After rolling out the program, Quicken recognized that the coding class for children had a lot of benefits, but also needed improvement: “We went back through, interviewed our team members, and interviewed DAPCEP members, interviewed whoever was involved in the program and said, ‘What can we do better?’” The feedback helped move the program towards more in-depth sessions over eight weeks, rather than one time classes. While the City Year partnership just began, Quicken anticipates frequent communication for them to co-create initiatives and learn how to evolve each other’s best practices.

Through his commitment to revitalizing the city of Detroit, Dan Gilbert established a strong relationship with Kevin Plank, CEO of Under Armour, who contributed extensively to the development of the Baltimore Harbor and downtown area. Learning from Baltimore and Under Armour’s CSR practices provided substantial inspiration for Quicken’s community investment in Detroit: “We’re kind of living and learning what other cities are doing.” Quicken Loans often views Detroit as their pilot program for innovation in more cities across the country. They want to use the example from successful cities and the philanthropic experience of their strategic investment team to propel new strategies forward. The Community Investment team often trades strategies with Cleveland because Cleveland is much farther ahead in their blight remediation work but behind in entrepreneurship, where Detroit is very strong. There are many opportunities for connecting resources and funding options between the two cities. Quicken employs the valuable perspectives from initiatives at the Kresge Foundation, Skillman Foundation, and the Knight Foundation, where team members previously worked. The Rock Ventures Business Development representative pointed to Quicken’s hope to get as many diverse perspectives as possible on the revitalization as possible, with a strong willingness to tweak their strategies.

The Business Development representative envisions a toolkit to provide to others trying to do similar work in Detroit and elsewhere: “We say this is what worked for us to be a ‘for more

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79 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 5.
80 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 8.
81 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 8.
82 Rock Ventures Community Investments Interview, 7.
than profit’ company in Detroit, here are basic steps and things you need to assess.”

Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 5.

He points to both physical and human capital assets as the essential drivers of sustainability: “We don’t want to just pump capital into it and then just assume that’s going to work. How do you find the root cause of the problems and then try to remedy those so you turn the faucet off at its source and you don’t let it trickle down?”

Two of the most essential root causes they plan on tackling next are Detroit’s tax system and foreclosure crisis. As a privately held company, they want to take advantage of the ability to see such big problems and systematically solve them: “We don’t have stakeholders to keep happy, we have one billionaire to keep happy.”

NONPROFITS

1. Mission

Driver 1: Alignment of strategy, mission, values

Enabler 1: Focused Attention

As companies refine their community outreach goals, nonprofits must adjust to ensure their work still fits their funders’ targets. While the nonprofits strongly assured they would not change their own missions for a funder, many expressed the need to adapt language in grant proposals to align with a company’s revitalization efforts. As a smaller and newer nonprofit, Build Institute is assessing the full impact they make in Detroit in order to adjust their language accordingly to meet the needs of certain funders: “That’s helping us to better speak the funder language and better position ourselves as more of a full service organization. I think the funders who know us have a good perception of us, but it’s just figuring out how they plug in and how we continue to work together.”

While they originally marketed the organization as an entrepreneur service organization, they found that they are also driving the city’s growth as an agency for workforce, talent, economic, and community development. By understanding the entire scope of their organization’s impact and marketing their work as a ‘New Economy’ initiative, they can more effectively align their own mission and strategy with those of a funder.

Forgotten Harvest recognizes the strategic pillars of giving that many corporations have and subsequently offers a range of specific programs to allow for different giving focuses and priorities across corporations: “it comes down to how do we fit strategically within the company’s guidelines and processes and their employee’s interests, the company’s overall mission, and really it’s about positioning ourselves in why do they need to take a second look at us? And why are we making a difference here that could effectively benefit them?” She especially emphasized the workforce development and job skills training, recognizing how it

Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 5.

Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 5.

Quicken Loans Community Investment Interview, 9.

Build Institute Interview, 2.

Forgotten Harvest Interview, 2.
matches with many companies’ priorities and interests as Detroit revitalizes. While she strongly discouraged changing priorities to fall within a company’s giving practices, she acknowledged that nonprofits need to spend time refining their mission, focus, and vision to strategically use language or certain programs that align with both the nonprofit and the company.

Forgotten Harvest exemplifies mission alignment through its mutually beneficial partnership with the Detroit Pistons, who have funded a truck for the nonprofit each year for the last three years. This large generous gift benefits Forgotten Harvest’s critical food access programming, and then as the truck travels throughout Metro Detroit and closeby counties, the Detroit Pistons receive marketing coverage. In addition, the Pistons can leverage their volunteer activities with Forgotten Harvest by bringing in stakeholders to participate and see what work the team’s foundation is doing throughout the city.  

2. Relationships

*Driver 2: Personal connections and relationships*  
*Enabler 2: Communication*

Nonprofits noted liaisons and volunteers as two of the most important parts of the corporate relationship. Nonprofits with the funds to support a specific internal liaison found success from the close relationship and the strong attention to detail within the partnership. A dedicated corporate liaison also is a powerful resource to keep the nonprofit up to date with available resources and opportunities. Strong communication enables the relationship to continue building. Finally, a strong volunteer force from a company cements the relationship with the nonprofit, as it demonstrates passion and commitment on top of funding provided. When the company actually gets a chance to participate in the work the nonprofit is doing, the relationship often expands.

Forgotten Harvest varies the personal relationship based on the corporate partner: “You have to gauge everybody on an individual basis and I don’t ever think there’s a blanket approach to them overall.” While they may send handwritten holiday cards to some, others only want an update once a year so Forgotten Harvest sets that date and has little other contact. Larger partners usually set up touch points throughout the grant period to assess progress and set any additional goals. Regular communication and personal relationships make the process feel more mission and impact driven, and less like a sales call. With Quicken Loans, their friendly relationship means Forgotten Harvest can reach out to their liaison whenever they are looking for partnering opportunities or event support. Forgotten Harvest also voiced appreciation and need for help with certain in-kind projects like technology expertise. For example, all the truck drivers for Forgotten

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88 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 3.  
89 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 4.
Harvest have handhelds when they go to pick up food and drop it off to families in need. Quicken Loans helped to upgrade the system, utilizing expertise from the Family of Companies.

Big Brothers Big Sisters also relies on corporate liaisons to guide partnerships. They start on an introductory meeting with a company’s CEO, VP, or community outreach representatives, depending on the size of the firm. Once they agree upon the general terms of the partnership, the company often assigns BBBS a liaison who sets up all the recruitment events and interviews that are necessary to choose and train mentors. BBBS notes, “That main point of contact- that’s a lot of work. They give a lot to our youth; they go above and beyond to give back.”\(^{90}\) The individual relationship is essential to securing the day to day details of a partnership.

United Way mirrors the strategy of Forgotten Harvest and BBBS by building relationships with individual liaisons at the company, because the fundraising team finds they are able to meet the needs of the funder much better when there is a personal relationship. United Way shared insight on developing long term partnerships: “We try to figure out what [our donors’] intrinsic motivation is and then go from there.”\(^{91}\) Understanding why a donor wants to give helps the team shape the relationship and the investment of those funds. Some individuals may just want a tax break, while many companies are looking for a financial and social return on investment. United Way can foster these relationships to provide genuine and individualized grant reports that motivate partnership growth.

United Way has learned that the best way to cement a lifelong partnership with a company is to have them follow the company’s motto: “Give, Advocate, and Volunteer.” If a donor does all three with United Way, then they are much more likely to fully buy into the mission and be a supporter for life. Once these relationships start, United Way maintains steady contact and the larger the contribution, the stronger and more constant the communication. Because they are such a large nonprofit, they have the capacity to have a dedicated staff person for each major corporate partner, like DTE and GM: “We’re starting to realize that there’s so much more than just financial giving that can help the community, it’s building these partnerships, working with each other that will really drive true change within Detroit.”\(^{92}\)

3. Value

Driver 3: Value generation and shared visioning
Enabler 3: Organizational systems (managerial complexity)

In order to receive funding or volunteers, nonprofits often have to undergo an extensive grant process and then regularly report progress throughout the year of a grant. While these one-year grants provide essential assistance to the organization, the constant demand to complete

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90 Big Brothers Big Sisters Interview, 3.
91 United Way Interview, 1-2.
92 United Way Interview, 7.
applications and reports creates considerable strain on the administrative time and resources of a nonprofit. The grants are often also very restricted to a certain program, making it difficult for nonprofits to maintain overhead costs and decisionmaking autonomy.

Long term partnerships are therefore valuable in reducing unnecessary competition between nonprofits. When asked about the competition for funding from companies and foundations in Detroit, the nonprofits acknowledge that the annual grant structure can unequally hinder the efforts of smaller organizations who do not have the time or resources to keep up with the ongoing application and reporting process. Build Institute, a team of just five employees, noted the high level of competition that can create vicious annual cycles among nonprofits and take away time from programming. The actual services of the nonprofit can suffer when spending so much time applying for and reporting on grants, for multiple funding sources:

I think every nonprofit would love to have a multi-year grant, but unfortunately that’s not the case. That’s the dream, but for some reason funders are not giving out multi-year grants. They may kind of do a verbal affirmation that you can reapply the next year and get the same amount of money, but you have still have to go through the same process. And the process of applying for grants, and the process of reporting out, is very time consuming.93

Forgotten Harvest concurred that trying to secure funding and attention from big partners can be difficult and creates competition on the local, state, and national level. Because they fall under the national nonprofit, Feeding America, they sometimes lose out on direct funding from corporations who would prefer to donate to a national, wellknown brand versus a local one. Within Detroit, Forgotten Harvest experiences competition from time to time with another food bank nonprofit, so they spend time differentiating themselves in order to secure funding.94 They also pointed out that a nonprofit has to consider if a grant will create enough value to be worth their resources and time: “Some people can see that as conceited or rude, but we really have to be conscious of our resources as well because we don’t have a huge development staff.”95 They have had to pass on a project grant because they did not have the manpower to receive a strong enough return on the time and effort it would have taken. They acknowledged that the smaller grant could make a much greater impact on a smaller nonprofit: “Ten thousand dollars makes a really large impact when your budget is half a million dollars but ten thousand dollars when you’re talking about close to ten million dollars doesn’t have the same impact.”96

Big Brothers Big Sisters has recognized the benefits of their long term partnerships and contrary to the other nonprofit case studies, did not acknowledge any sense of funding

93 Build Institute Interview, 2.
94 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 2.
95 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 9.
96 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 9.
competition among nonprofits. They have developed a unique employee volunteering program that sets initial expectations for a longer relationship—both the student mentee and the employee mentor gain from building their relationship over at least 1-2 years. Long term partnership growth reduces training and logistic costs for BBBS and provides consistency for student mentees. Additionally, they rely on organizational systems to create value in their corporate partnerships. They created a volunteer system that works well with a business work schedule, because employees can come just twice a month during their lunch hour. Employers are supporting the partnership, so the employees benefit from paid volunteer time and students can look forward to a consistent mentor.97

United Way was very careful to cultivate a relationship with General Motors that would generate long term value. They had never experienced that level of financial interest or human capitals, so they had to build up a process and system that could handle the enormous volume of GM’s volunteer force and ensure all $27.1 million would be spent appropriately. They worked “to create a best in class corporate social responsibility opportunity for companies to engage with.”98 Education was the perfect intersection because United Way had the expertise and GM had the money and volunteers. United Way found similar value in their educational partnerships with Quicken Loans, especially with the infrastructure they had already laid out with GM. A few years after building the Network of Excellence with GM, United Way partnered with Quicken to start ‘The Network,’ with a very similar structure that sends employees into high school classrooms and helps those students with resume workshops, networking, mock interviews, and report card evaluations. Even if Quicken is not a consistent financial partner with annual giving campaigns like GM and Ford, they use their manpower to make a significant impact on education and other initiatives with United Way.99

4. Sustainability

Driver: Continual learning
Enabler: Mutual expectations and accountability

Because of the competitive nature of funding, nonprofits must keep pace and adjust with the changing goals of corporate philanthropy. The ability to showcase concrete impact is crucial to securing funding, even if it can lead to unnecessary among nonprofits. In its fifth year of operation, Build Institute has learned that, “Funders dictate a lot and you are kind of at their whims as well. We’re constantly adapting to the changing ways of the marketplace.”100 This continual adaptation can also be beneficial for maintaining partnership accountability and revamping services that are mutually beneficial. Mutual expectations help lead to innovative partnerships that go beyond financial assistant. Alignment of strategies and missions is part of

97 Big Brothers Big Sisters Interview, 1.
98 United Way Interview, 9.
99 United Way Interview, 4.
100 Build Institute Interview, 2.
the key to sustainable partnerships. Forgotten Harvest notes, “I would say a successful partnership really goes both ways, so not only is it beneficial for us, but we would like it to be beneficial in some way for our partner as well. Not only does that make them feel good about what they’ve done, it makes them look at their return on investment differently.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters shared that the most impactful corporate partners for them are ones who take the relationship seriously and have the drive to set collective goals. They generally start a corporate partnership with mentorships at just one school and then lets the relationship grow from there. This tends to happen organically and allows the companies to participate in the growth process. Each site-based program needs a school, funding, and mentors. Once a company provides mentors to one school and enjoys the partnership, they often want to expand to another school and then start providing funding in addition to volunteer mentors. One of BBBS’ long term goals is to encourage mentorship with high school students to turn into internship and career opportunities.

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101 Forgotten Harvest Interview, 3.
102 Big Brothers Big Sisters Interview, 3.
Discussion

Analytical Framework

The use of nonprofit-business case studies generated both theoretical and practical insights for the field of corporate social responsibility. The nonprofits were selected due to the prominences of their services in Detroit and their relationships with General Motors and Quicken Loans. The two companies served as representatives for the historical and contemporary corporate relationships with Detroit, respectively. Prior to the current revitalization period, both companies and the nonprofits relatively lacked experience in developing cross sector relationships that went beyond the typical philanthropic, check-writing opportunity. By investing time and resources into more transactional and integrative partnerships, companies demonstrated abundant potential to generate value for themselves, the nonprofits, and subsequently the surrounding city.

Austin found five key benefits corporations are looking for in order to create value from a nonprofit partnership: “enhanced reputation and image; improved employee morale, recruiting, retention, and skill development; enrichment of corporate values and culture; increased consumer patronage and investor appreciation; and technology testing and development.” General Motors and Quicken Loans voiced similar benefits they seek in a partnership, as demonstrated in Table 4. Corporate philanthropy had been a major initiative for both companies for many years, but they realized in the 2010-2017 time period that they were generating less social impact and company value than they wanted. Without aligning their giving practices to their mission or strategically using company resources, the companies were receiving neither credit for their efforts nor a noticeable return on investment in the Detroit community. On the nonprofit side, Austin found five major benefits from his case studies: “additional financial resources, services or goods, access to other corporations, technology and expertise, new perspectives, and greater name recognition.” The key themes the Detroit nonprofits discussed as part of their optimal relationship with a corporation nearly mirrored Austin’s themes.

Table 4. Detroit Corporate-Nonprofit Partnership Benefits Comparison

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Benefits</th>
<th>Nonprofit Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing Opportunities</td>
<td>Strategy Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Social Return on Investment</td>
<td>Long Term Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee Volunteering Opportunities</td>
<td>Passionate Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangible Metrics</td>
<td>Resource Sharing</td>
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103 Austin, “Strategic Collaborations,” 76.
104 Austin, “Strategic Collaborations,” 76.
Austin’s analytical framework assessed how the two companies serve the needs of the nonprofits. Table 4 demonstrates how the four common threads of corporate benefits in Detroit align with the four themes across nonprofit interviews. The results further demonstrate how GM and Quicken Loans moved from philanthropic and transactional relationships with the community to more integrative partnerships that meet both their needs and the needs of nonprofits.

Positive Outcomes and Future Challenges

This transition to an emerging CSR approach reveals three beneficial outcomes and three challenges that the two companies should address while moving forward with their community initiatives.

Positive Partnership Outcomes

The emerging CSR strategies led to three positive partnership outcomes that have a significant effect on the revitalization of Detroit as it experiences growth: collaborative impact, long term partnerships, and workforce development.

→ Collaborative Impact: Collaboration across sectors exemplifies a recognition that nonprofits, companies, and foundations have very different sets of expertise, resources, and human capital. Corporate-nonprofit partnerships are most beneficial when they properly allocate responsibilities of the initiative. In many of the partnerships outlined in Detroit, the nonprofits often relied on the corporations for private sector efficiency, while the corporations needed the nonprofits for their network within the community and their understanding of Detroit’s most essential needs. The Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance, detailed below, demonstrates a historical partnership between multiple companies, nonprofits, and foundations with the potential to revolutionize one of the most struggling neighborhoods in Detroit. This deliberate cooperation capitalizes on the specific resources and expertise unique to each type of company and nonprofit.

→ Long Term Strategic Partnerships: It quickly became clear from both companies and nonprofits that larger investments over time encourage co-innovation and sustainability of strategies. A long term partnership allows strategies around a certain community initiative to evolve over time and allows both sectors to have a stake in the direction the initiative takes. It is mutually beneficial to rely on liaisons to foster a long term relationship that aligns the community missions of companies and nonprofits for significant value generation.

→ Workforce Development: The strongest examples of mission alignment between the corporations and the nonprofits in Detroit surround education and workforce development, as a common goal for Detroit’s revitalization. GM, Quicken Loans, and the four nonprofits heavily emphasized how they are shaping their work to contribute to Detroit’s workforce development. The nonprofits especially voiced a necessity to adjust the grant language around their community
services to address workforce development as a way to improve their funding chances. This improved focus on creating job opportunities for all Detroiter is an essential aspect of ensuring sustainable change for the city.

Outcome Challenges

Entering into these new types of business-nonprofit partnerships meant a significant learning curve for GM and Quicken Loans, with GM experiencing a larger jump from philanthropic to integrative relationships with the community in a relatively short timespan. As a result of the rapid transition, there are three shortcomings in some of Detroit’s most prominent cross sector partnerships.

→ Nonprofit Competition: The small annual grants both companies relied on in 2010 often foster a sense competition in nonprofits. Each nonprofit representative emphatically described the value of corporate partners to their organization. They heavily rely upon the support of companies and foundations in order to cover administrative and operating costs. Because many nonprofits have low to zero profit margin from the various services they provide, they could not survive without external funding. However, the relationship often leaves organizations at the whim of their funders, adjusting their administrative time and grant language to best appeal to funders. The urgency to fill out a myriad of grant proposals and reports puts immense pressure on a nonprofit’s human capital and overhead costs. Furthermore, annual grants are often significantly restricted to programming and cannot be spent on the essential administrative costs. Because of the struggle to meet the need of funders and limited resources available, nonprofits are competing when they should be working together. The focus on applying for grants can distract the nonprofits from performing their mission. Larger, more secure nonprofits reflect a sense of fairness in the process, yet smaller nonprofits can grapple with managerialism. While it can be beneficial to have a restricted grant with specific qualifications, the interviews reflected the concern from the existing literature that this system gives corporations power to strongly influence how a nonprofit operates and who it serves.

→ Metrics: GM and Quicken Loans struggled with defining the value from their CSR initiatives in partnership with the nonprofits. There is a lack of norms around qualitative social impact metrics for companies, yet a strong value proposition for community outreach work is essential to incentivize innovation and commitment. The GM partnership with United Way was especially successful because it defined from the start a clear goal. High school graduation rates needed to improve drastically. The initiative would only be successful if Detroit’s high schools experienced a jump from the status as a “dropout factory” to graduation rates of at least 80%. The two companies and the nonprofits struggle to balance social and financial metrics when reporting the impact of their community services. There is a sense of urgency to report key data as tangible numbers, yet these metrics can ignore the qualitative importance of an initiative. Some of the metrics that could simultaneously demonstrate a financial return on investment and convey the
true social impact are jobs created, living wage jobs supported, number of families with rising income, student retention, and diversity and inclusion. Especially in areas like STEM education, these metrics, combined with storytelling could be compelling to many types of stakeholders.

→ Gentrification: Finally, the interviews with General Motors and Quicken Loans often skirted around key discussions about gentrification and the persistence of economic degradation outside Detroit’s downtown core. The main business plan of Quicken Loans and the Family of Companies is to build up infrastructure and density at the core of Detroit, with the implication that success in the 7.2 square miles of the downtown and midtown areas will move out and affect the surrounding neighborhoods. As the central business district develops and attracts major companies such as Microsoft and Google, there is still the stark contrast of extreme poverty and blight among those not impacted by the revitalization. Many of the nonprofits expressed appreciation for the work that the companies were doing for the city, but also acknowledged a feeling of ‘two Detroits:’ the neighborhoods versus the central business district. The changes in CSR strategies towards the Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund and GM corporate giving model demonstrate that the companies are recognizing they cannot rely on the indirect approach to the neighborhoods anymore if they want to truly revitalize Detroit and retain a positive public image.

**Hypotheses**

With regard to the hypotheses, the case studies and analysis of positive and negative outcomes validated H2, but not H1. An emerging alliance between the two companies offers insight on H3. Interviews with General Motors and their nonprofit partners proved the philanthropic giving hypothesis (H1) incorrect. While the Foundation structure of GM certainly functioned at a more philanthropic level, the company has restructured to greatly improve CSR structure and impact. The new corporate giving model fosters strategic investments into the city through focus areas that meet the needs of Detroit and align with the mission of GM. The dissolution of the Foundation reflects a firm commitment to a long term partnership with the city.

The interviews with Quicken Loans and various nonprofits confirmed the hypothesis that Quicken Loans currently follows a very strategic, innovative corporate giving model (H2). The hypothesis did not anticipate that Quicken Loans began their CSR in Detroit at a transactional level. Their CSR strategy follows a similar model to the Top 20 Philanthropic technology and finance companies, with Detroit-specific innovation. In addition, it represents the move towards emergent philanthropy strategies. The comparative analysis also validated the final hypothesis, that the arrival of Quicken Loans has jumpstarted significant progress in Detroit. While Quicken Loans has certainly made its unique mark on the real estate and business development aspects of the revitalization, many of their nonprofit relationships mirror the framework led by the GM Foundation.
The research uncovered an additional and important finding about the difference in how a private versus a publicly traded company can make CSR decisions. Because it is publicly traded, General Motors must focus on a positive public image and a maximal return on investment for shareholders. This shareholder demand influences the way GM can give their CSR dollars. Metrics were a key theme among discussions with the Detroit companies and nonprofits, emphasized as an essential means for the nonprofit to report to the company and for the company to project impact to the community, stakeholders, and shareholders. While a public company might have to focus more on financial and economic metrics for shareholders, a private company may experience less pressure to conform to those standards. As a privately held company, Quicken Loans and the Family of Companies suggested they have the capability to make more investments that have social returns in the short run and no significant financial return until the long term. An important quip from Rock Ventures highlights this difference:

> We always want to make money, but it's not so that we can adhere to shareholders and give them more money so they have more money to buy a summer house. We're a private company which makes money so that we can innovate and run a little bit quicker than a bureaucratic corporate publicly traded company, right, but it also means that we can use those excess funds in the ways in which our heart desires which is through community work so instead of a big public company around here like writing a check and checking off the philanthropic box saying 'we gave to United Way I got my tax write off we're done with it.'

Emerging CSR

A final case study, the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance, exemplifies a new stage of corporate social responsibility and collective impact in Detroit. The initiative encompasses the positive corporate and nonprofit outcomes; moreover, it begins to address some of the three partnership concerns. The Skillman Foundation brought together executives from General Motors, Quicken Loans, and DTE Energy to discuss how to work together and build community in order to go into a “tipping point neighborhood” that was really struggling, not one that would be fine otherwise. The Skillman Foundation President emphasized in the alliance’s press release that, “Corporations and others absolutely have to do more to help bring the neighborhood back, and they do have to lead.” In order to truly integrate with the community, the group of powerful actors was looking to stand behind an already existing community group and help them execute their revitalization plan. They isolated a 40 block region of the Cody Rouge neighborhood, and chose the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance as the nonprofit to collaborate with on their initiative. The initial concept began in 2015, but it took months to

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105 Rock Ventures Business Development Interview, 1.
choose a neighborhood and figure out how to work together on targeted investments for workforce development, housing rehabilitation, and education.\textsuperscript{107}

Each company contributes to the initiative where they have expertise and resources: “we’re starting to figure out how to get out there and layer our respective talents.”\textsuperscript{108} General Motors’ main focus is education, layering tactics from the United Way partnership to contribute resources and coordinate GM employees volunteering in Cody Rouge schools.\textsuperscript{109} Quicken Loans is contributing rocket fiber--super high speed internet--to a Cody Rouge community center, as well as overlapping their educational work with their City Year investment. They are also working to rehab vacant houses and put them up for sale. Finally, DTE focuses on workforce development and basic electric needs for those struggling to maintain utility costs. They are all collaborating on meeting very specific metrics for the Cody Rouge investments, especially relative to workforce development and education. One of the overarching goals of this monumental collaboration is to transform the Cody Rouge area into a ‘20 minute neighborhood,’ where every resident should be able to walk or bike to access all basic necessities, such as a doctor, job, or retail. They are emphasizing that they need to make Detroit and its neighborhoods livable for families. While it is of course positive to attract recent college-graduates or retired individuals, the alliance views families as a key measure to creating density and stabilizing a city.

An integrative level of CSR proved to produce the highest value creation for both the companies and the Detroit community. The progression of a corporate giving model from philanthropic to integrative requires mission alignment, relationship building, value creation, and continual learning. Innovation will be the future of success in CSR initiatives. Companies may struggle to remain competitive with mindless grants to nonprofits. The rising demand for integrative partnerships puts pressure on companies to be more thoughtful and strategic in approaching community development and urban revitalization.
Conclusion

This study sought to understand how the CSR approaches of two different types of companies could affect the economic growth of a city. It tracked how a privately held automotive company and a publicly held finance and technology company transitioned their CSR initiatives for both reactive and proactive purposes. The changing landscape of philanthropy and CSR reflects a market shifting its expectations for the role of a corporation in a city. Demand for more targeted, long term CSR is rising. In Detroit, the CSR strategies of General Motors and Quicken Loans are often converging in key community efforts like education and workforce development. While the two approaches varied dramatically in 2010, the seven year timespan since has included considerable changes from both companies in their CSR practices. CSR in Detroit is evolving from a tangential company initiative to an intrinsic aspect of a company’s business model that can drive systematic change.

The 2017 Detroit Homecoming highlights the revitalization progress already made in Detroit, the passion and financial resources committed, and the underlying problems that need to be faced. After kicking off in 2014, the annual event invites notable former residents and interested investors to return to the city and collaborate with companies and nonprofits on Detroit initiatives. The 2017 theme is ‘connections,’ so the 230 expatriates were encouraged to connect Detroiters to opportunities and to connect the progress of downtown and midtown with the still struggling neighborhoods. The September event was held in the long-vacant Michigan Central Depot, which has become a symbol for the blight and decay Detroit has experienced since the train station closed in the 1980s. The excitement and energy reported in the room exemplifies the deep commitment long time Detroiters have to their city; moreover, the activists protesting the event outside called attention to the many challenges the city faces in spreading the revitalization to all Detroiters.

Limitations and Further Research

The small sample size of nonprofit case studies and the unique circumstance of GM and Quicken Loans in Detroit may limit the generalizability of results to other companies and cities. The largely qualitative nature of using nonprofit partnerships as the proxy for economic and social impact limits the ability to tangibly assess how these companies are affecting Detroit. Despite limitations, the study highlighted how coordination and communication will be essential strategies moving forward to progress the revitalization of Detroit. Further research should build off of the trends from GM and Quicken Loans and more tangibly track their CSR impact in Detroit. Stronger data on the economic impact could incentivize further involvement and collaboration with other companies. The layering of strategies and resources among corporations and nonprofits can have significant impact with the right strategic plan. Forward Cities is a

collaborative initiative focused on four cities: New Orleans, Detroit, Durham, and Cleveland. Its mission is to increase inclusive innovation in all the cities and could be a key tool for future research on corporate social responsibility in cities with similar historical and circumstantial compositions. Its network among the four cities is a valuable tool to spread the best CSR practices found from the Detroit case study and translate them to other cities.
A2. Interview Questions for GM and Quicken Loans:
(varies slightly by company and interviewee)

- How do you prioritize grant requests and projects?
- What projects are you working on?
- How do you encourage employees to get involved in the community?
- How do employees value service to the community?
- How do you balance short term and long term projects?
- How do you assess Detroit’s need? How do you balance your resources and the city’s need?
- How do you begin a nonprofit partnership? How do you make it long term?
- How do the nonprofits you support align with your company’s mission?
- What sort of metrics do you look for from a nonprofit partnership?
- How much does General Motors/Quicken Loans engage with nonprofits after a grant?
- What value does General Motors/Quicken Loans receive from giving to nonprofits?

A3. Survey Questions for Nonprofits:
(varies slightly by nonprofit)

- How do you see your organization fitting into the economic development of Detroit?
- How competitive is it to secure funding and attention from corporations in Detroit?
- Could you tell me about some of your most impactful corporate partners? Goals expected? Restrictions? How do you foster these impactful partnerships to be long term/sustainable?
- What sort of metrics do you think companies are looking for in partnerships?
- Describe your relationship with GM/Quicken Loans
- How long have you received support?
- What type of support does GM/Quicken Loans offer to your organization?
- Does GM/Quicken Loans provide restrictions on the way you can use their support?
- How much does GM/Quicken Loans interact with your organization after a grant?
- What is the impact of having someone from GM/Quicken Loans on your board?
## A4. Nonprofit Giving Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Motors Detroit Nonprofits</th>
<th>Quicken Loans Detroit Nonprofits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forgotten Harvest</td>
<td>Forgotten Harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Brothers Big Sisters</td>
<td>Big Brothers Big Sisters</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way for Southeastern Michigan</td>
<td>United Way for Southeastern Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build Institute</td>
<td>Build Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Area Pre-College Education Program</td>
<td>Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Riverfront Conservancy</td>
<td>Greening of Detroit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowerment Plan</td>
<td>Boll Family YMCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cody Rouge Project</td>
<td>City Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gleaners Community Food Bank</td>
<td>COTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inforum</td>
<td>Downtown Youth Boxing Gym</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan Opera Theatre</td>
<td>Junior Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan Science Center</td>
<td>Mosaic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity</td>
<td>Sphinx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Institute of Arts</td>
<td>Teen Hype Youth Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 Black Men of Greater Detroit</td>
<td>United Negro College Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance for a Safer Greater Detroit</td>
<td>Focus: HOPE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Belle Isle Conservancy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Leaders for Michigan Foundation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional</th>
<th>Integrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment of strategy, mission, values</strong></td>
<td><strong>Integrative</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic</td>
<td><strong>Transaction Continuum: Drivers and Enablers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Minimal fit required beyond shared values</td>
<td>- Alignment of strategy, mission, values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Overlap in mission and values</td>
<td>- <strong>Integrative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shared personal connection to cause</td>
<td>- Core competency transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Core competency transfer</td>
<td>- Top-level leadership attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaborative activities</td>
<td>- Continual learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Value generation and shared responsibility</td>
<td>- Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Social accountability</td>
<td>- Organizational systems</td>
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| - Minimal personal commitment to cause | - Joint value creation |
| - Core personal connection at leadership level | - Culture of each organization |
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| - Expanded personal relationship | - Projects evaluated at all levels within the organization |
| - Increased understanding and trust | - Leadership support |
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