

## Denim and donations: Why not go Casual for a Cause?

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BY PATRICK ROSS MARCH 13, 2012



In the often "buttoned-up" world of accounting, casual Fridays are coveted days where employees embrace the opportunity to dress down. Now, thanks to a unique program, they can also represent the chance to give back to those in need.

At Haskell & White, we've turned casual Fridays into a charitable cause by implementing a Casual for a Cause Friday program. This program, which is gaining momentum among firms across many industries, is simple but effective. Employees who wish to enjoy the benefits of a casual Friday are encouraged to make a small donation. The proceeds are then distributed to various charities selected by the participants.

Jeans, comfortable shoes and the opportunity to make a positive impact? Why not?

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Implementing your own Casual for a Cause Friday program is easy. Here are a few tips to help you kickoff your program and to get your team engaged:

1. Communicate the program to employees: The goal is to get everyone involved, so send out emails to announce the program, include the program in employee newsletters, hold a staff meeting to announce the new initiative and include information in new employee materials.
2. Designate an amount for the donation: We designated \$5 a Friday for employees and \$10 for the management team. Lead by example with participation from the management team.
3. Set out a collection jar: Make sure the donation jar is prominently placed where all employees will see it.
4. Be flexible: We've kept the program optional and our employees on the honor system. Although participation is encouraged, we don't place any requirements on our staff. By giving employees the option to participate whenever they can, our program has maintained its success for more than seven years.
5. Choose charities important to your staff: We kicked off the program by including charities Haskell & White already supports. Many of our firm's partners and managers are involved with local organizations by serving on their board, so we like to include those organizations in our Casual for a Cause program.
6. Keep your employees in the loop: At the end of the week, we total up the amount and send a thank you email to all our employees letting them know how much was raised and to which charity the funds will be donated. The weekly reminder that they are doing something to benefit people in need is a great morale booster.

Ever since the implementation of this program, we have seen a steady increase in participation and funds raised. Most of all, the opportunity to bring together denim and donations has brought a new meaning to the tradition of casual Friday.

*Patrick Ross is a partner in the audit and business advisory services department of Irvine, Calif.-based CPA and business advisory firm Haskell & White. If you have questions about implementing your own Casual for a Cause Friday program, tweet the firm at [@HaskellandWhite](https://twitter.com/HaskellandWhite) or find them on Facebook at [Facebook.com/HaskellandWhite](https://www.facebook.com/HaskellandWhite).*