

Giving back to community is good for business

Question | A number of employees want the company to support charitable events. Why is it important to get involved in the community?



Clint Mahim An | Executive vice-president and COO, London Drugs

Some people may say this is a no-brainer; an absolute must in business is to give back and support your local community. At London Drugs this has been part of our DNA since the beginning. Many people still seem surprised to learn London Drugs is a local family-owned company with deep heritage and roots dating back to 1945 in Vancouver. In fact, we are now a fourth-generation family company. The first and foremost value of London Drugs' forefathers that remains inherently true today is to be kind and charitable to customers.

It is crucial that a business understands customers' needs, including the nuances of where they live and what is important to them. Our stores are a reflection of the communities we serve and our employees are our window into these communities. Our employees live, participate and grow their families in these communities. We know our employees can't do their best work unless they are proud of the company they represent.

Our staff sees that we are always trying to do better for the public and our communities. Whether it is leading the charge on recycling, participating in local grassroots fundraisers, supporting hospitals and education – all of these ways businesses support community are important and crucial to all of us.

Stores and staff are here to help our customers and communities simply because it is the right thing to do. Wherever London Drugs can get involved, we do so with pride. Healthy communities help our customers and employees live better lives.



Jill Schnarr | Vice-president, community affairs, Telus

In today's world, customers have a lot of choice. It's no longer enough for companies to provide exceptional service and innovative products – modern customers want to do business with companies that share their values for community and environmental well-being and that are doing their part to help make their community a better place.

At Telus, we continually strive to be a leading corporate citizen, balancing our company's economic health with the social and environmental well-being of the communities where our team members live and work. Our philosophy is quite simple: we give where we live. For us, it's about our company and our team members sharing their generosity of spirit to make a real and meaningful difference in our local communities.

Telus leadership in corporate social responsibility instils a sense of pride in working for Telus and helps us attract and retain top talent. Our team members feel they are a part of a bigger social purpose, and we foster a corporate culture of giving by engaging our team members and retirees with structured volunteer and donation opportunities. In fact, since 2000, Telus, our team members and retirees have contributed more than \$350 million and over 5.4 million volunteer hours to charitable and community organizations across Canada.

Enabling your team to support causes they are passionate about is a rewarding way to enhance your company's reputation in the community, authentically engage with your employees and stakeholders and shape your company's culture. In essence, doing good is not only the right thing to do – it also makes good business sense.



Karl Sigerist | President and CEO, Crelogix

Doing the right thing. Motivating employees. Raising public profile. There are numerous reasons any seasoned CEO could list to illustrate why it is important to get involved in the community. However, for us it comes down to two very simple things:

- Supporting our staff and community in a real and practical way, and
- Demonstrating that our values are more than simply just words.

Our approach is to support the tangible actions and financial commitments our staff members make for the causes they care about. First an employee brings an issue to everyone's attention, develops a plan and then engages other employees. This inspires others to take action and contribute.

So what about the how? Here are a few ways you can increase the effectiveness of your community involvement:

- Lead by example. Senior management needs to demonstrate a commitment to community involvement. At our last annual meeting, I established the goal of Crelogix contributing \$20,000 this year to charity, alongside our five-year set of organizational goals.
- Match all financial contributions made by staff. This means individual efforts can create major ripples. For example, a \$1,185 donation by our staff to the World partnership Walk ballooned to \$28,440 through co-contributions.
- Create a team to spearhead and co-ordinate efforts. We have CFOs (chief fun officers) who organize at least one charitable event a month on issues our staff care about. Not only do they keep staff engaged but they offer a go-to team for anyone wanting to support a cause but unsure how to start.