

COMMUNIQUÉ

Trends, Best Practices, and Opinions on Community Involvement

What Are Best Practices in Corporate Citizenship Today?

Part 3 of a Four-Part Series on Best Practices: Employee Engagement

This is the third part of a four-part series on best practices in corporate citizenship (CC). A primary focus for any corporate citizenship program is employee engagement. Indeed, many CEOs have told us that this is the most valuable benefit of such programs. The advantages of involving employees are well-known, so we will not cover them here. Suffice it to say that a best-in-class citizenship program has a very strategic employee engagement program that impacts the company, community and employees alike.

Employee engagement in the corporate world usually involves both volunteer activities and employee-directed giving. The best practices of each are considered below.

Employee Volunteerism

The best practices include the following:

- Having a thoughtful strategy that reflects the company's values and beliefs in regard to volunteerism. The strategy includes:
 - A mission statement
 - Policies and guidelines, including release time or paid-time-off
 - A clearly defined program structure, process and procedures
- Creating a corporate culture that makes employees want to get involved
- Educating employees and management on the importance of volunteering and training them on how to get involved
 - Create strong, clear messaging to generate enthusiasm
- Encouraging senior management to:
 - Buy into and support volunteerism
 - Participate in community and board service activities
- Incorporating a range of activities to appeal to employees at their level of interest and time commitment
 - Have traditional as well as skills-based opportunities
 - Have pro bono opportunities for professional staff
 - Have micro-, Done-in-a-Day and longer-term volunteering opportunities
- Recognizing volunteers in an informal or formal way
- Tracking employee engagement
 - Measure and evaluate the data
 - Use the data for communication and/or continual improvement

Employee-Directed Giving

Most companies provide employees the opportunity to donate time or money by facilitating the contribution and often matching it as well. Best practices within this area include:

- Having a Matching Gifts program
 - Most match at a 1:1 ratio
 - The major giving category for Matching Gifts is education
- If there is a workplace giving program, providing one that is open and not restricted to funding just the United Way
- Offering a Dollars for Doers or volunteer grant program
 - The volunteer hour is usually valued between \$10-\$15 per hour

Coming up next: Best Practices in Communications and Evaluation

About LBG Associates

LBG Associates is a woman-owned consulting firm focused on designing, implementing and managing corporate citizenship and employee engagement programs and initiatives. Founded in 1993 by Dr. Linda Gornitsky, LBG Associates drives social change through advice, implementation, research and training. Find more information at: www.lbg-associates.com.

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