

# COMMUNIQUÉ

*Trends, Best Practices, and Opinions on Community Involvement*

## **What are Best Practices in Corporate Citizenship Today?**

*Part 4 of a 4-Part Series on Best Practices: Communications and Evaluation*

In this fourth part of a four-part series on best practices in corporate citizenship (CC), we discuss communications and evaluation.

Although separate topics, the two are related. Communications tell the story of CC, and often include the results of the evaluation. When they do, they strengthen the story the company is telling of its citizenship. Even without being communicated, the results of rigorous evaluation help inform and direct corporate contributions of all types.

### **Communications**

To understand why communications are so important, let's go back to the reasons why companies even have corporate citizenship programs. For many, a primary reason is to enhance their brand, reputation and image. In this socially conscious age, a company needs to have a good reputation and build positive relationships in its community, among employees and potential employees, with clients and with regulators and elected officials. This is very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without good internal and external communications.

The number one best practice is to create both internal and external communications strategies that clearly articulate what will be communicated and by whom, the audiences, the time frame and the medium. More specifically:

- The messaging should connect to and align with the overall business strategy
- There should be regular internal/external communications as well as different channels that are appropriate for different stakeholders
  - While there is a growing emphasis on social media, it is important not to forget more traditional types of communications such as flyers, posters, and town hall and community advisory group meetings
- External publications should include at a minimum an annual community, foundation or CSR report
- The impact on the target population should be included
- Senior leaders should be provided opportunities and talking points/sound bites to ensure regular and consistent messaging

Additional best practices include:

- Encouraging nonprofit partners to release their own communications regarding the partnership
- Building strong relationships with the corporate communications team

- It can provide some communication metrics, such as social media likes, media mentions, website impressions, press clippings
- It can increase the likelihood that corporate citizenship stories are included in the company publications such as newsletters, emails, etc.

## Evaluation

There are many levels to measuring the success of a CC program. Inputs, outputs, process, outcome and impact are the five types of data that can be collected. While impact data are highly desirable, gathering that for every grant or program is just not feasible. Best practices in evaluation include the following:

- Clear goals and measurable objectives for the overall CC program
- Clear understanding of the goals of the specific grant programs to be measured and the data needed to evaluate success
  - Seek agreement with the partner(s) on the data to be collected
  - Include evaluation funding in the grant
- Measurement of:
  - Individual participant outcomes
  - Program/organizational outcomes
  - Community-level outcomes
- Assigning the appropriate level of evaluation to each grant or program
  - Signature programs and large grants deserve more rigorous evaluation than small grants
- Measuring data across grantees by focus area or other aggregation

*We'd like to thank the members of LBG Research Institute's Thought Leader Forum for their time and insight into delineating best practices. Their input was critical to building these lists.*

**Would you like a PDF copy of all four Communiqués? [Click here to download.](#)**

*For help aligning your corporate citizenship program with best practices, call us for a free half-hour consultation.*

### *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](http://www.lbg-associates.com).*

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