

WHY CHARITABLE GIVING IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Beyond the obvious value that donating to a nonprofit brings to those they serve, charitable giving provides important benefits to business and employees.

With the holiday season approaching, perhaps this is the time when you may want to design a formal **Charitable Giving Strategy** for the holiday season or new fiscal year. The Lighthouse Shelter, a nonprofit chamber member, has worked with a number of companies and offers insight into best practices for business/nonprofit patronships in giving - making giving a win win strategy for all.

Vetting the Charity and Sponsorship Agreements:

- **Vetting:** When creating or revising your Charitable Giving Strategy be sure to vet your beneficiary and select a beneficiary that will take a proactive role in helping you to meet marketing objectives. There are a number of ways to vet a charity, such as online data, touring the project, reviewing executive compensation and annual reports. Do your home work to ensure that your donations will have long term value.
- **Sponsorship Agreements:** After selecting a charity, work hand in hand with the organization to create an annual sponsorship agreement. This agreement will not only help the organization understand your marketing objective, but will help the organization to project annual contributions. For example, when making a major donation, a business may want an agreement that includes media exposure, an exchange of tickets to the fundraising event, such as golf outing or other. Tickets can be passed along to your own employees increasing their morale, providing opportunity to network, and allowing you to recognize employee community involvement on your own social media platforms.

Public Relations:

- **Print and Television Media:** All charitable organizations and fund-raising events rely on the media to spread the word about their work. That is why it is important

for your business to request that your company name be included in all media and should be included in your sponsorship agreement.

- **Social Media:** While some organizations are concerned about potential backlash from negative comments on social media, a company involved in strategic corporate giving will be reaping the benefits of positive social media mentions and sharing. The impact of this kind of publicity cannot be overstated.
- **Reputation:** While less tangible, there is no denying that many customers base their buying on how they feel about a business owner or company. Your reputation among community influencers is critical.

Employee Benefits

- **Keeping up with Technology:** A good example of how technology is affecting giving is virtual food drives. Technology has helped to avoid many logistic issues such as purchasing, sorting and delivering canned good. Virtual food drives reduce soft cost to employees by minimizing personal costs and expanding their impact. This is accomplished by making food purchases on line through Amazon and other online distributors.
- **Reinvent Casual Fridays:** Reignite the tradition by giving it a new meaning. Consider adding a fundraising component to the day. Employees can make a small donation to a charity.
- **Employee Engagement and Teamwork:** Corporate giving programs bring together employees from all levels of the organization. By providing a C-level employee the opportunity to be recognized and interface with top level executives, you are adding to employee morale and retention.

The Lighthouse Shelter, a faith based nonprofit homeless shelter, was founded in Marion in 2007 and has been home to over 6,000 individuals. Of the total served, twenty-five percent are children and fifteen percent have been veterans. The organization has a history of successful partnerships with business and individual donors. If you would like assistance in designing a **Charitable Strategic Plan** that has maximum benefits for your business, please contact Wanda Zwick at 618-922-5496.