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## Strategic Philanthropy

By Paul Lemberg

Strategic philanthropy is a unique and powerful way to combine your company's marketing goals with a your desire to increase the well-being of mankind.

We call it strategic philanthropy. Two of the more popular names are cause -related marketing or community partnering. No matter what you call it, strategic philanthropy is a positioning that connects your company with a not-for-profit organization or cause. In this way, while you are being helpful and working for the common good in your community, your business is receiving parallel benefits. These benefits include exposure, lead generation, employee retention and increases in performance and productivity. They can even include benefits to your bottom line.

### Basic Philanthropy

Many businesses already engage in basic forms of philanthropy, such as:

- \* Donating gift certificates to a church's silent auction
- \* Allowing a high school club to set up a car wash on the company parking lot
- \* Contributing coffee for a community event
- \* Buying a school yearbook ad
- \* Sponsoring the local children's sports team

No business can afford to say yes to all of the requests they receive for donations. Thus they find themselves saying "yes" to the few and "no" to the many. Creative strategic philanthropy can enable you to say yes, in one form or another, to almost every group who solicits you. (Of course, you can see how this is a distinct marketing advantage.)

### Seven Creative Strategic Philanthropy Ideas

## Strategic Philanthropy

Here are a few creative strategic philanthropy ideas that have been implemented by our clients:

- \* Introduce a special pre-packaged product that community groups can sell these products to their stakeholders and they get a healthy percentage of the margin
- \* Create a program where any community service group, school, non-profit, etc. can distribute coupons (i.e. they do your marketing!) so that when their supporters buy at your store (or website) that group gets a percentage of the sales.
- \* Help groups to organize fundraisers to be held in your store or facility
- \* Offer to partner with a youth education group or school, proposing that a transportable community mural be painted at your location, which later circulates around the community as part of educational

efforts

- \* Invite groups who have major events in progress to hold a reception at your location, with some kind of value return to them (discounted purchases, a percentage of sales, some gift certificates, etc.)
- \* Give groups involved in addressing important local needs free or discounted gift certificates to pass on to their hard working volunteers (you can steer these, in part, to groups tied to your target markets)
- \* Partner with respected social action groups, to host a lunch workshop series or community dialog sessions about local needs and issues

Here's one more idea from business coaching franchise company, Quantum Growth Coaching. Quantum is the primary sponsor and donor of the Cras Tibi Foundation, (

<http://www.crastibifoundation.com>

) set up to provide grants to organizations involved in developing

nation micro-lending. My partner, Tom Matzen and I have written a book called Earn Twice As Much With Half The Stress. Quantum donate \$1 from each sale of the book to Cras Tibi. It's a win-win-win. Quantum gets exposure because of the tie-in with Cras Tibi and microlending, Cras Tibi gets the donation, and the micro-borrowers get to use the money.

### Market Differentiation

Strategic philanthropy can be useful in distinguishing your business from your competitors, most of who are probably stuck in old "business as usual" paradigms. They likely think the purpose of business is merely to sell things and make money. Such a narrow belief creates all sorts of sad consequences such as:

- \* The public's skepticism or distrust of business's self-interest fixation

## Strategic Philanthropy

- \* Employees often feeling less than fully engaged or even exploited, thus having little interest in being loyal to the company
- \* Employees, and even business owners, feeling like their "real lives" are separate from their work life.
- \* Situational ethics taking the place of foundational moral beliefs
- \* Employees and owners lacking the synergistic and creative skills to achieve high performance and marketing success

Authentic strategic philanthropy is based upon the advantages of a much more empowering and abundance-filled set of beliefs.

- \* The purpose of business is to understand and meet some group's needs, i.e. everyone's needs, including the owner(s), employees, consumers, community, and even the natural environment
- \* The high level purpose of business is to create and distribute excellent products and services, in a manner which generates profits and abundance for everyone involved.
- \* Businesses can be powerful models for the larger community. They are able to demonstrate the

value of such things as innovation, dedication and responsiveness to customers, risk-taking, process and systems innovations, financial practicalities, and teamwork.

Strategic philanthropy can be a core element of how you operate your business and see yourself as an entrepreneur. It can functionally help you to refine the values and purpose of your business, in a manner, which not only distinguishes you from your competitors, but also contributes to your bottom line while improving the quality and success of virtually every aspect of your staff, your systems and your overall business.

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program guaranteed to help entrepreneurs create More Profits and More Life™.

## Three Planning Myths

By Denise O'Berry

Are you — like 70% of business owners — working without a plan? Here are three myths that need to be dispelled about strategic planning for small business.

1. It has to be formal — Not so. The value of a strategic plan for your small business is in putting the ideas on paper, creating action steps that will get you where you want to go and implementing those action steps.

2. I'm too small — Not so. Even a one-person business can benefit from a strategic plan. A strategic plan can help you make decisions about time management and budget. Use your strategic plan to help you determine whether to attend an event or advertise in a publication. It's a check and balance tool.

3. A strategic plan is like a ball and chain — Not so. It's your plan. Too many business owners feel like once it's on paper, it can't be changed. Wrong! It should be an active document that gets reviewed and updated at least monthly, if not weekly. You're the business owner, you wrote it, you know what's happening in your market — adjust as necessary.

Denise O'Berry helps small business owners take action to grow their business. Find out more at

<http://www.whatspossible.com>

Three Planning Myths

Your Very First Steps To Outsourcing

Strategic Planning Steps For Optimum Business Management

Strategic Checklists

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