

IMPROVE REPUTATION BY SUPPORTING A GOOD SOCIAL CAUSE



This is one of a series of +points on The Journey – a route map designed to help you build a business that people value. Check out other +points on www.smallbusinessjourney.com.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

You CAN build better relationships with your customers and employees by supporting a social cause.

WHY?

- Giving relevant skills or time can contribute to real social change.
- You can choose a social cause that is relevant to your business or sector.
- Encouraging your customers and suppliers to work with you gives a new dimension to your relationships.
- Developing a cause-related marketing programme to help others can boost your bottom line.

EXTRA BENEFIT TO YOUR COMPANY

- Supporting a good social cause is motivational for staff at all levels.
- By seeking mutual benefit you can boost your staff development programme.
- You can help increase sales and customer loyalty.

LIVING PROOF

VIRIDIAN NUTRITION AND THE CHILDREN'S COUNTRY HOLIDAY FUND

Viridian Nutrition supports a wide range of good causes. It has a joint initiative with the organic retailing chain, Fresh & Wild, which aims to generate funds for the Children's Country Holiday Fund (CCHF) and boost sales of Viridian products through Fresh & Wild stores.

For every bottle of Viridian vitamins purchased through the six stores between April and December 2002, Viridian donated 20p to the CCHF. In addition, for every Viridian bottle recycled through the stores, Fresh & Wild gave another 25p to CCHF.

The CCHF provides ten-day holidays in the countryside for underprivileged London children aged five to 12. Many of the children would not have the chance of a holiday without CCHF.

Viridian has continued with a further promotion in 2003 with Kids Cookery School

THE RESULTS

Viridian's cause-related marketing campaign has had a direct impact on its bottom line. It has experienced sales growth in excess of 100% year-on-year and the number of health food stores the company supplies has more than doubled in the last year. It has also had a direct positive impact on the local community.

WHO ELSE IS MAKING A POINT?

Many companies throughout the UK understand the real business benefits that can be gained by supporting a social cause. Here are just two:

- **Quadrant**, a small communications company in Wales was looking for a way to grow its brand. Welsh National Opera (WNO) was keen to engage with local SMEs. In 2000 they built a sustainable, highly flexible partnership with clear agreed objectives. Quadrant invested cash and donated skills in staff media training, video and filming of WNO performances and school workshops. This enabled them to market the brand in England as well as in Wales and to demonstrate their outstanding technical capabilities.

The results: Quadrant has developed its profile and reached new audiences by associating the brand with the excellence of WNO. The partnership won the SME award of Arts & Business in 2003, recognising the valuable benefits gained by both parties.

- **CHaMPs**, the Construction Helping Missing Persons Scheme, led by Penlaw & Co. involves a selection of construction companies working with the National Missing Persons Helpline. Posters of missing people are displayed on the lorries of participating companies. The lorries involved in the scheme travel over 4.7 million miles in a year.

The results: This scheme has had clear benefits for the businesses. It has helped to raise awareness of the various companies involved, created a better image of the construction industry and improved relationships amongst the participating companies. It has raised awareness of missing people and raised additional funds for the Helpline.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- 83% of the British public have purchased a product or service associated with a cause or charity they care about compared with 68% in 2002.

Source: Business in the Community, Brand Benefits 2002

- Companies which take part in cause related marketing are seen as being more trustworthy and more innovative by consumers.

Source: Business in the Community, Brand Benefits (2003), Giving Now (2003) and Secrets of Success 2002

- 95% of consumers who have participated in cause related marketing programmes recognise the benefits for charities and good causes.

Source: BitC Brand Benefits 2003

- 80% of consumers and 85% of charity fundraisers think marketing programmes are a good way for charities to gain funds or equipment.

Source: Business in the Community, Reaping the Benefits 2002

HOW TO GET STARTED IN A SMALL WAY

- Find out about local, regional or national causes that are relevant to your business.
- Check with employees and customers that they support your choice of cause.
- Discuss with employees the many ways you can make a difference to the cause.
- Aim to balance social and business benefits and, if you can, try to measure the results.
- If it involves a long term relationship with a charity consider a service level agreement so you both know what to expect of each other.

WHO CAN HELP YOU TO GO FURTHER?

Strengthening the performance of your business in the ways outlined here is really just a matter of common sense. But if you are committed to achieving major business benefits in this way, then it's good to get some expert help.

National help

Business in the Community (BitC) is a movement of 700 member companies committed to continually improving their positive impact on society. The BitC website has a section dedicated to its Cause Related Marketing Campaign where you can find detailed guidelines on principles and processes for good practice. Details can be found on: www.bitc.org.uk or www.crm.org.uk.

Arts and Business helps arts organisations and businesses to work together. Details can be found on: www.aandb.org.uk.

Local help

Most regions have an organisation dedicated to helping companies get involved in local causes. Check with your Chamber of Commerce or other business advice services for local contacts. Find your local chamber:

www.chamberonline.co.uk/include/chamberlist.jsp.

Online help

Business Community Connections is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping charities obtain more support from small and medium-sized companies. www.bconnections.org.uk.

IT'S COMMON SENSE

This briefing paper is one in a series of +points that make up The Journey – a route map designed to help you build a business that people value. You need only do one if you like. It's your journey. It doesn't have to be time consuming or complicated. It's basically common sense.

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