

Can non-profit organizations be good social citizens?

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ABSTRACT

This article makes the case that corporate social responsibility should not only apply to corporations. Governmental organizations, hospitals, universities and other non-profit agencies also have a responsibility to society. While there are many CSR programs in the for-profit sector, there is very limited information or best practices available for the non-profit sector. This research demonstrates that there is not only a need for a model of social responsibility in the not for profit world, there is also the will to implement such a strategy on the part of non-profit agencies operating in the health care sector in Ontario. As a result of this research, concrete tools have been developed for those non-profit agencies that wish to establish a best practice model in their workplace and reap the accompanying benefits.

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) seems ubiquitous of late. Multiple academic articles as well as pieces in the press, books and on-line blogs discuss and analyze CSR programs and policies. Consequently, over the past years, the pressure on businesses and for-profit companies to be accountable and socially responsible has dramatically increased.

While the term “corporate social responsibility” is relatively new, the concept certainly is not (Griffin, 2007). As early as the 19th century, companies were undertaking what would be considered socially responsible actions such as building towns for workers. Other companies gave donations to charities in order to be seen as good corporate citizens.

Why were these businesses being so generous to their employees and their communities? Because they knew that being a good corporate citizen was good

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for business (Griffin, 2007). Today, nothing has changed – being a good corporate citizen is still good for business, among other things. Being seen as socially irresponsible can actually have a negative impact on a business: poor management of supply chain issues, inadequate environmental management, human rights abuses and poor treatment of employees, suppliers or customers can – and do – result in decreased sales and shareholder value (Regester & Larkin, 2008). In fact, relationships have become the priority over the bottom line for many businesses as “human capital has become more important than physical capital” (Regester & Larkin, 2008, p. 79).

Corporate social responsibility versus social responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility: the very term implies that corporations practice CSR and that is it. What about non-governmental organizations, universities, hospitals, and non-profit agencies (Bernhart, 2009)? Do they not have roles and responsibilities when it comes to CSR?

Many different terms have been used to describe the concept of CSR: corporate responsibility to avoid the misconception that the programs are concerned only with social issues, social responsibility (SR) to include all organizations and businesses, community relations, corporate citizenship, and the list goes on. The real question should not be what the concept is called, but rather does the organization or company in question add value to society by its actions (Heath & Ni, 2008).

For the purposes of this paper, I focused on SR and whether or not it applies to non-profit agencies particularly in the health care sector in Ontario and what, if any, best practices SR programs exist for that sector.

Area of focus

Non-profit organizations play a significant role in society. They are created through either federal or provincial legislation and many are volunteer-based. These entities do not generate profits, thus their title: non-profit, or not for profit agencies. Some examples of non-profit organizations are schools, churches, sports associations, museums, charities and unions.

There are other non-profit agencies as well. Most governments and government agencies meet this definition, such as hospitals, health units and community care access centres.

The health care sector in Ontario is mostly non-profit. In addition to the governmental agencies such as the hospitals and access centres, there are hundreds of community support service agencies, non-profit agencies, such as Meals on Wheels and the Alzheimer Society that are also key players in the health care field.

Literature Review

The Canadian Business for Social Responsibility defines CSR as “a company’s commitment to operating in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner while recognising the interests of its stakeholders, including investors, customers, employees, business partners, local communities, the environment and society at large” (Canadian Business for Social Responsibility, 2010).

Industry Canada says that,

corporate social responsibility is about the integration of social, environmental, and economic considerations into the decision-making structures and processes of business. It is about using innovation to find creative and value-added solutions to societal and environmental challenges. It is about engaging shareholders and other stakeholders and collaborating with them to more effectively manage potential risks and build credibility and trust in society” (Industry Canada, 2010).

The “triple bottom line” is part of the new CSR terminology (Conference Board of Canada, 2004, p.7). For a company to be successful, it must show it is respectful of its responsibilities in three areas: economic, ecological and social. That is where CSR comes in. Some would even argue that CSR is not an opportunity; it is an expectation (Mark-Herbert & Von Shantz, 2007).

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Why CSR/SR?

CSR is more than just a salutary concept. There are real benefits to companies having an established and reputable CSR program. In its January-February 2006 edition, *Communication World* magazine outlined what it considered to be the top 10 benefits of CSR for businesses. In addition to profitability, the list includes an enhanced brand image and reputation, customer loyalty, positive impact on employee recruitment and retention and increased operating efficiency. (Briggs & Verma, 2006)

Industry Canada (2010) has also weighed in on the question. That agency believes that there are five major benefits to companies who implement a successful CSR program: profitability, positive impact on investor relations, enhanced employee relations, stronger relationships with communities, and improved reputation and branding.

The benefits of CSR can be grouped into three large categories: employer of choice, reputation management and profitability.

However, can the same be said about non-profits? Are the advantages that apply to businesses that have a sound CSR program also apply to non-profit agencies? Let's look at this more closely.

Employer of Choice:

As individuals, we each have our personal set of values. These values are part of who we are. It therefore makes sense that we would want to bring our values to work as employees. It also makes sense that we would want to be working for and with companies that share and reflect similar behaviours and expectations that we do. As individuals become more aware of their own social responsibilities, it would make sense that this would impact their choice of employer.

A 2007 Scotiabank study of employed Canadians concluded that 70% would consider changing jobs if their employers did not operate in a socially responsible manner (Industry Canada, 2010). This seems to support the theory that a good CSR program can and does positively impact staff recruitment, morale, employee loyalty and even productivity (Rubinstein, 2004).

Corporate volunteer programs also make a difference internally. Not only can these types of activities help to attract and retain high-calibre employees but they also serve to foster teamwork across diverse ranks of the

organization, build morale and increase job satisfaction. There can also be an added advantage of professional development by allowing employees to develop new skills that prove useful in their professional roles (Industry Canada, 2010). A concrete example of this would be an individual or team coordinating the internal United Way Campaign.

It is important to note though that in order to be an employer of choice, management must understand the concept of CSR and grant it the place and respect it deserves in the company. CSR cannot only be external facing; it must also have an internal focus. There can be no positive employee impact in a company that is seen externally as a good corporate citizen when that same company treats its employees poorly (Glavas & Piderit, 2009).

In summary, being an employer of choice is important, regardless of whether or not the organization is for profit or not for profit.

Reputation Management:

The image and reputation of a company or business can make or break it. More and more, CSR is an important tool in the reputation management toolkit.

By voluntarily going above and beyond its legal obligations, a company can form strong bonds with its key stakeholder groups (Mark-Herbert & Von Shantz, 2007). In order to get and maintain support from its stakeholders and the community at large, a company must position itself as a good corporate citizen. Wise managers know that the key to successful stakeholder relationships has to be a successful CSR program (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). It is important to note that there must be two-way communication in order to determine that the CSR program actually responds to the values and needs of the stakeholders. Not to do so could actually pose a risk to its reputation (Conference Board of Canada, 2007). Informed consumers as well as socially responsible consumers look to see the face behind the brand. Does the company walk the talk? The costs of damage to reputation, loss of customers, difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff and negative perception by the community must not be ignored (Regeher and Larkin, 2008). If there is no *walk* behind the *talk*, the company will lose all credibility with its stakeholders, including its employees, and will be labelled as CSR frauds (Mark-Herbert & Von Shantz, 2007).

Most non-profit agencies have to fundraise constantly to be able to stay

afloat. Other government non-profits receive ministry funding – taxpayers' dollars. Fundraising successes or failures can hinge on reputation management. The same can be said about government funding: a non-profit agency is less likely to bear a cut in funding if it has a stellar reputation and support from the community. In fact, it can actually get increased funding. A strong brand and positive public image will generate attention from policy makers, who are also the funders of the non-profit agencies (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

Profitability:

Customers like to do business with companies that support the communities where they operate. They also like to support businesses and companies that share similar values and beliefs (Heath and Ni, 2010). In 2001–2002, 54 per cent of Canadians indicated that they translated perceived social irresponsibility into consumer action (Conference Board of Canada, 2009). Consumers are more aware and conscious of social and environmental issues and seeing a company or business supporting these causes in a concrete manner, or not supporting them, will influence their purchasing decisions (Regester & Larkin, 2008).

Non-profits are not profitable by nature. That does not mean that they are not concerned with their bottom line – particularly when it comes to “community currency.” Building positive relationships with stakeholders, is imperative. Having that currency can make the difference between success and failure. Being socially responsible is key to obtaining community currency.

There is also another way that CSR contributes to the bottom line, for both profits and non-profits. Energy programs and environmental strategies such as turning off the lights when you leave a room and reusing products can actually result in cost savings (Conference Board of Canada, 2009). Finally, successful CSR programs can lead to free publicity, which is another concrete way to reduce advertising and marketing costs (Kotler & Lee, 2005). A socially responsible company can actually save money by being a good corporate citizen!

What makes a good corporate citizen?

It would appear that many of the advantages that apply to businesses that have a sound CSR program also apply to non-profit agencies. If the

assumption is that the case for SR has been proven, we now need to ask what constitutes a sound SR program? What are some of the themes and strategies that make the difference between a successful program and a failure?

According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, CSR typically includes activities pertaining to ethical corporate governance, environment, human resources management (i.e. health and safety), corporate philanthropy, fair competition and accountability/transparency (Industry Canada, 2010).

Regeer and Larkin (2008) identify four groupings of actions that constitute good SR. These are environmental responsibility, investing in people, playing fair in politics, and spreading best practice through supply chains. Kotler and Lee (2005) have identified six distinctive categories of CSR strategies: cause promotions, cause marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering and socially responsible business practices.

When it comes to CSR or SR for corporations or businesses, the appropriate course of action is clear. There are a multitude of best practices and CSR programs and templates available to businesses that want to implement a successful CSR program.

The same cannot be said for the non-profit sector. There is very limited documentation of social responsibility programs in non-profit agencies. In fact, this researcher found very few examples of SR programs in the non-profit sector. That is not to say that there is no SR activity in the sector; it may not be a structured program or it may be called something else.

Key Steps to developing a Social Responsibility Program

There is no magic cookie cutter approach to SR. Each organization or business has unique characteristics, strengths and needs. Here are a few key steps to developing a successful SR program:

Involve your stakeholders: The organization's SR program should reflect issues that are relevant and important to their stakeholders (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

Community Involvement: Stakeholders and potential stakeholders like to see organizations and companies supporting causes and projects that impact the communities in which they operate.

Management Support: In order to ensure the success of a SR

program is to actually have a program, a plan of action.

Communication Planning: An organization can have the best SR program but if its stakeholders do not know it, it is effectively useless.

Evaluation: As with any strategic plan, it is imperative to evaluate what was a success, and what was not such a success (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

Research problem

There is no way to avoid paying serious attention to corporate citizenship or social responsibility: the costs of failing are simply too high. In order to be successful and responsible, CSR is no longer simply a potential opportunity – it is a necessity. (Nunn & Daley, 2010).

The growing field of Social Responsibility offers tremendous opportunities for leveraging corporate and other resources to produce significant benefits to society. Social Responsibility does not, however, apply only to corporations. Governmental organizations, hospitals, universities and other non-profit agencies also have a responsibility to society (Bernhart, 2009). How can these organizations add value to the society in which they operate and live (Heath & Ni, 2008)?

While there are many programs and best practices available for implementation of CSR programs in the for-profit sector, there is very limited information or best practices available to the non-profit sector. In Ontario, the health care sector is made up mostly of non-profit agencies, which could benefit from a model or template for social responsibility program to implement in their workplace.

Research questions

In order to provide objective data for this study, three research questions were studied:

Research Question #1: How and to what extent are non-profit agencies engaged in social responsibility activities beyond their already established or incorporated mandate?

Research Question #2: How and to what extent do participating agencies benefit from the Social Responsibility programs or activities in non-profit agencies?

Research Question #3: What types of Social Responsibility programs would be effective and appropriate for non-profit agencies involved in health care?

Objectives/Deliverable

The purpose of this study is to explore the need and interest in the non-profit health care sector for social responsibility programs. Using this information, the researcher was able to establish a best practice model that can be used by non-profit health care agencies that wish to establish a Social Responsibility program in their workplace. An analysis of the results of the study also outlined the benefits and advantages of such programs for different stakeholders such as the employees, the targeted charities or foundations, the clients of the agencies and the agencies themselves.

Methodology

Research Design

For this case study, the evidence came from several different sources:

- Literature review;
- Review of social responsibility models currently in place in non-profit agencies; and
- Interviews with human participants to respond to questions regarding social responsibility activities and programs in non-profit health care sector.

Sampling

Different health care non-profit agencies were identified as being necessary to this research (i.e. hospitals, health units, health care unions and

community support services).

Data Analysis Techniques

“Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing [and] tabulating” (Yin, 2003, p. 109) evidence gathered during the data collection exercise of the case study. The key to a successful data analysis is to define the priorities of what you want to analyze and why you want to analyze it (Yin, 2003). For this case study, I applied the explanation building technique, which “analyzes the case study data by building an explanation about the case,” (Yin, 2003, p.120). I chose to follow this technique of data analysis in pursuit of the goal of developing a best practice model for Social Responsibility Programs for non-profit agencies. The case study was able to develop best practice guidelines to ultimately arrive at a model or template applicable to all health care related non-profit agencies by establishing “causal links” (Yin, 2003 p.120) based on the collected data from the interviews, documents and published SR and CSR plans.

Results

Fifteen senior executives were interviewed for this case study. Confidentiality and anonymity are very important, particularly given the geographical location of the majority of respondents. The data have been grouped under umbrella questions that capture different themes that emerged from analysis of the interview results.

***RQ 1:** How and to what extent are non-profit agencies engaged in social responsibility activities beyond their already established or incorporated mandate?*

There is a clear understanding in the non-profit health care sector of what constitutes social responsibility. Contributing to the well-being of your community, giving back to your community, being conscious of your carbon footprint, as well as being good to your employees were all things that were mentioned when participants were asked what social responsibility means to them. One participant summed it up well by saying that social responsibility

is really 'neighbours helping neighbours.'

53% of the participants noted that their organization's mandate actually includes social responsibility. However, over and above their mandated responsibilities, all of the organizations participate in social responsibility activities in one way or another albeit in an informal manner.

All of the organizations represented believe strongly in partnerships – indeed it is often what makes them succeed. Most of the partnerships are with other non-profit agencies.

When it comes to officially endorsing socially responsible activities, most agencies are very supportive. The way they support varies greatly, ranging from permitting fundraising activities to be announced on the intranet or via the internal email system, providing time off to participate in volunteer activities, giving time off to donate blood, even buying corporate t-shirts for employee volunteer teams. There is little recognition of employee participation in social responsibility activities outside of work amongst the organizations interviewed. There are some agencies that will highlight those staff activities in their newsletters, and some actually have citizenship awards recognizing the community involvement of their staff.

Some of the concrete examples of social responsibility activities mentioned were:

- Green activities such as recycling, encouraging staff to carpool, going paperless;
- Pro-active human resource policies such as Employee Assistance Programs, health and safety policies, student placement programs, wellness policies, flex time/compressed work week schedules, Work Safe programs, leadership development programs;
- Employee involved in fundraising activities such as the Dragonboat Festival, the Heart and Stroke Big Bike Ride, the CIBC Run for the Cure; and the Alzheimer Coffee Break;
- Special initiatives such as the Christmas Adopt-A-Family program, food drives, and delivery of Christmas baskets.

Proven Best Practices

1) Days of Caring: the organization provides 2 days per year paid time off per staff member who wants to get involved in volunteering at an agency receiving United Way funding

2) Community Summit: More than 140 planners, health professionals, administrators, business people, government officials and community members came together to collaborate on the principles of healthy communities. Key themes that were discussed included: aging populations, seniors' housing options, physical activity and walk-ability of neighbourhoods, quality of life, transit options, reinvesting in existing neighbourhoods and community design and infrastructure. During roundtable discussions, it was confirmed that collaboration between the community and its stakeholders is key to achieving the goal of developing healthy communities. (Special thanks to the Erie-St.Clair CCAC for authorizing the researcher to mention the Summit)

3) Formal partnership inventory: On the organization's intranet, there is a list of all internal and external committees that staff and management are involved with.

RQ 2: How and to what extent do participating agencies benefit from the Social Responsibility programs or activities in non-profit agencies?

Stakeholder expectations vis-à-vis social responsibility does not appear to be well defined or communicated. The expectations regarding the stated mandate are quite high. Some stakeholder groups have more expectations than others, for example – staff. There are also high expectations around transparency and accountability. Certain organizations publicly report on their social responsibility activities in board reports or annual reports.

When asked about whether or not there were benefits to social responsibility activities, the respondents unanimously agreed that there were many, to both the stakeholders as well as to the organization.

Benefits to stakeholders:

- healthier and happier communities
- employee satisfaction and pride
- students get quality placements and learn valuable skills
- partner agencies benefit by the fundraising and volunteerism
- relationships are built and maintained

Benefits to the organization:

- Helps to achieve the vision and mission
- Positive impact on the agency's reputation
- Relationship building - earns the trust and respect from stakeholders
- Economic - the organization can save money by implementing some of the green initiatives + it can also broaden its fundraising base
- Employer of choice - seen as a great place to work therefore assisting with the recruitment and retention of employees

RQ 3: What types of Social Responsibility programs would be effective and appropriate for non-profit agencies involved in health care?

Is there a need for a social responsibility program in non-profit health care? 93% of the study participants said yes there definitely is a need.

When it came to identifying barriers to developing and implementing a social responsibility program, 100% of respondents mentioned money as being a challenge. 70% also noted that time and workload pressures were definitely barriers. Other barriers mentioned were communication, territoriality and lack of commitment.

There were several suggestions put forward as key components of a successful social responsibility program:

- Choose activities that will have an impact
- Tailor the activities to the needs of the community
- Create awareness of the program
- Weave social responsibility into everything you do
- Need for a formal program or policy that does not impose social responsibility activities on individuals but permits it
- Have a formal recognition of social responsibility involvement
- Need to have support from upper management but involvement from all levels of the organization
- The activities need to be the right fit for your organization; they need to reflect your vision and mission
- Senior leadership should lead by example and participate in social responsibility activities

- A social responsibility program has to be resourced appropriately
- Program needs to be evaluated and reviewed regularly so it does not become stagnant

100% of the participants stated that communication is important in the success of a social responsibility program. Internal communication is key: for individuals to participate, they need to know about it. External communication is also important; the public should know that your organization is involved in giving back to the community. Communication at all levels is also important in that it creates awareness of the importance of social responsibility programs and activities.

Analysis/Discussion

The results of the research sought to identify whether there is a need and interest in the non-profit health care sector for social responsibility programs. The participants were quite willing to discuss the subject of Social Responsibility, whether or not they actually had a strategy as such in their own organization.

Is there a need for Social Responsibility in non-profit health care?

This research sought to understand if there is a need for non-profit agencies in the health care sector to go over and above their mandated responsibility, particularly when it comes to social responsibility.

The results are clear: yes, there is a definite need for a social responsibility program in non-profit health care. The challenges are also evident. First, there is a lack of understanding or awareness about the definition of social responsibility. In fact, the term is not used commonly amongst the organizations the researcher interviewed. Although there are socially responsible activities happening in these agencies, there is a lack of formal processes or guidelines – this can also impede the participation of employees. The perception that money, time and workload are potential barriers is an interesting one. Some of the comments made to the researcher around the money barrier was mostly about providing paid time off to staff for volunteer work without having replacement back-ups, allocating appropriate resources to be able to effectively

research and survey stakeholders' wants and needs, and being accountable to the funders or to the public about where every dollar of the budget is spent. As for the issue of time or workload, everyone is being asked to do more with less, which makes time budgeting more difficult than money budgeting in some instances. Can these barriers be overcome? The research shows that they can, but only by having a flexible, well defined program with accompanying policies that set out realistic goals and objectives, as well as taking into account the organization's limitations.

The benefits identified during the interviews were very similar to the benefits identified in the literature review for CSR programs. Employee satisfaction, relationship building, increased positive partnerships, positive impact on reputation, positive economic impact and being seen as being an employer of choice are all concrete benefits to a sound SR program.

How do we develop and implement a SR program that is successful?

Both the literature review and the participant interviews demonstrate several recurring themes and suggestions for best practices in the development and implementation of a successful SR program. One of the first key components has to be to involve your employees. SR begins at home. Therefore, it is important to get buy-in from the beginning from your front line workers all the way up to the CEO, and everyone in between. Although it is imperative to have upper management support in order to get the necessary human and monetary resources, the SR program has to be employee driven. A best practice would be to form internal, cross-functional teams to develop the plan and to champion it throughout the organization as well as externally to all key stakeholders.

Stakeholder involvement is another key element to a successful SR program. The study participants indicated that they already have strong linkages with their key stakeholder groups, both internal and external. However, where there is a lack is in regards to understanding what the expectations of the stakeholders are when it comes to SR activities. After explaining 'the what and the why' of the development of a SR program, it is imperative that the SR activities address the issues that are relevant and important to your stakeholders. In addition, there needs to be symmetrical, two-way communication as well as a feedback mechanism weaved into the SR program. Both the literature review and the interviews substantiate the importance of the stakeholder

of the stakeholder participation from the beginning of the process.

Community involvement in the organization's SR program is also quite important. Individuals and groups like to see organizations supporting causes and projects that impact where they live and work. For this reason, you should tailor your SR activities to the needs of the community. Of course, in order to do that, you must first find out what those needs are. This can only be a win-win situation as not only is it great relationship building, it can also have a positive impact on employee recruitment, corporate reputation and fundraising.

Another important step toward a successful SR program is to have a plan of action; a strategy that is formal and in writing, that permits, rather than imposes, social responsibility in an organization. The SR activities not only need to address stakeholders' wants and needs as well as the community's, they also need to reflect the vision, mission and values of the organization and support its business goals.

It is easier for staff to get involved in causes of organizations that they are familiar with and the odds are that they will probably have the needed expertise to do the work if it is in the same sector. Another key component of a SR strategy or program is that the program should only target a few causes to support. Focusing energies on a few key activities will permit the organization's participation to have a greater impact and a better chance of success. The SR program should include clear objectives and measurable goals. At regular intervals, there should be an objective evaluation process, including a reporting mechanism for all key stakeholders, to evaluate the success or failure of your SR program and activities. Finally, following the evaluation process, the necessary changes or adjustments need to be made to the SR program, and the process restarts.

Having a robust internal and external communication plan is essential. First of all, the employees as well as all the other stakeholders need to be made aware of the intentions to establish a SR program. There is also the need for extensive communication during the determination of the needs of the stakeholders and community that will then be incorporated into the SR program. A feedback mechanism has to be put in place so that the stakeholders can communicate with the organization at every step of the process. External communications are also important. By generating publicity for your organization and the cause it is supporting, it can benefit the reputation of the organization by highlighting how the agency gives back to its community, all the while providing publicity for the recipient agency or cause.

Establishing a formal recognition program as a component of an

organization's SR program is a best practice needed to ensure success. It does not have to be an expensive endeavour; it can be as simple as mentioning the employee and the cause or event in the agency's newsletter or on the bulletin board.

Conclusion

Social responsibility is a definite must, both in the for-profit and non-profit sectors. This research has proven that the benefits of SR are applicable to both types of organizations. The research also shows that best practices in CSR programs can be adapted to non-profit agencies and a successful SR program can be implemented in that sector.

The results of this research are the development of two tools that can be used to develop a Social Responsibility program for non-profit health care agencies. The first tool is a framework outlining the steps that need to be followed when developing, implementing and evaluating a SR program. The second tool is a list of the ten components of a successful Social Responsibility program in a non-profit health care organization as well as concrete examples for each of the components.

The need for social responsibility in non-profit health care agencies has been demonstrated in this study. There are needs and opportunities for these organizations to go over and above their legislated mandate in order to add value to the society in which they operate and live. A framework and a toolkit of key components of a SR program are now available to those non-profit health care agencies that would like to become better social citizens.

Deliverables

There is no one-size-fits-all method for implementing a social responsibility program. Every non-profit organization is unique in its own way: each has its own level of awareness of social responsibility and each has differing levels of pre-established social responsibility practices.

However, there is value in proceeding with social responsibility implementation in a systematic way. The bottom line is that social responsibility needs to be integrated into everything the organization does.

Ten Steps to Success

Social Responsibility Program in a Non-Profit Health Care Organization

1. Involve your stakeholders

- Identify your key stakeholders and communicate with them about wanting to establish a social responsibility program, with their help
- Social responsibility issues should reflect the issues that are relevant and important to your stakeholders
- This will create immediate buy-in as the causes are near and dear to their heart
- Ensure there is constant 2 way, symmetrical communication and a feedback mechanism throughout the whole process

Example: organize a corporate team to answer telephones at a telethon, organize a health care information fair

2. Engage Your Employees

- Get buy-in from your employees from all levels, from the top, middle and bottom
- Provide ongoing feedback opportunities for your employees
- Ensure basic concerns such as work-life balance, and working environment, are addressed
- Form internal, cross-functional teams to develop plans

Example: providing time off to participate in volunteer activities, establishing a leadership development program in-house

3. Obtain Management Support

- Identify an executive lead that has the authority to allocate the appropriate resources, both financial and human
- Management must lead by example and participate in the social responsibility activities
- Provide incentives for employees to volunteer

Example: provide 2 days per year per employee of paid time off to volunteer, include social responsibility activities when preparing the annual budget

4. Involve the Community

- Stakeholders and potential stakeholders like to see organizations supporting causes and projects that impact where they live and work
- Tailor your activities to the needs of the community; in order to do that, you must first find out what those needs are
- This is great relationship building which has long-term benefits for employee recruitment, corporate reputation and fundraising

Example: organizing a community summit, give equal and fair opportunities to local suppliers, hire locally

5. Establish a Social Responsibility Strategy

- The first step toward a successful social responsibility program is to have a plan of action
- The strategy needs to be formal and written
- Need a formal policy that permits, not imposes, social responsibility
- Establish clear objectives and measurable goals

Example: keep track of the amount of staff hours spent volunteering, calculate the amount of money raised for breast cancer



Limitations

Since the researcher works for a non-profit organization, it should be noted that there is the possibility of research bias in this study. A constant effort was made by the researcher to be objective and unbiased throughout the study. From the onset, the researcher believed that the results of this case study could be used to improve the non-profit health sector in Ontario.

The participants were chosen purposefully as they represent different non-profit organizations in the health care sector.

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