



Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Business Partnerships

The Business Perspective

POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES:

- Positive customer relations – Your commitment to the schools is likely to make a positive impression on customers who value healthy public schools.
- Improved employee morale – Company volunteer programs can help attract employees, increase employee motivation, strengthen company loyalty, and provide leadership training opportunities for staff.
- Healthier corporate culture – James Austin of the Harvard Business School reports that “Community service can foster empathy and caring, attitudes that reinforce a service-oriented mentality. It can encourage high-involvement and high-impact leadership...[and] serve as organizational glue, creating cohesion through common values.”
- New business – Community partnerships can expand your market and increase access to key consumer groups.
- Tax Savings – Financial contributions and some in-kind donations are tax-deductible.
- Greater community exposure – Partnering with the schools can offer public relations opportunities through event signage, mention of your business in school publications (distributed to parents and community supporters), and media coverage.
- Stronger community – Supporting the schools is one way of creating a stronger community, and strong communities are better able to support local businesses. Supporting schools is also an investment in children who may one day be your employees and customers.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESSES:

- Choose a partner and a cause that is a logical fit for your product, service or employee pool.
- Look for a match between your target markets and your partner’s constituency.
- Commit sufficient resources, attention, and priority to your program.

- Make sure you have commitment and support for the partnership from senior management on down.
- Identify a project leader to be the liaison working with your school partner.
- Be open about the financial and social benefits you hope to achieve through the partnership. Get to know the school's needs, hopes and motivations as well.
- Invest the time and energy into building a solid, long-term relationship.
- Look for multiple ways to be involved, in order to maximize community impact, positive public relations, and staff morale. Consider in-kind resources, employee volunteers, technical assistance, joint marketing opportunities and financial support.
- Be realistic about expectations, especially in the early stages of the partnership. Set attainable goals to create early success, then expand the partnership from there.

Compiled by Marjory Hamann of Values Into Action (503) 238-8604
from the following sources:

The Collaboration Challenge by James E. Austin, 2004. Jossey Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

Making Money While Making a Difference by Richard Steckel, et al, 1999. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

“Profits for Nonprofits: Find a Corporate Partner” by Alan Andreasen in Harvard Business Review, November-December 1996.