

## Rewarding Work in the Community and in the Office

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# THE GOLDEN AGE *of* GIVING



In the fourth article of the **Golden Age of Giving** we examine how inclusive corporate social responsibility programs improve corporate culture and the tone of the workplace, and thus, employee productivity and retention.

### **Everyone is Getting Involved: Engage Employees to Create a Better Culture**

A corporation's identity is not only defined by its business practices, but also by the conduct of its employees. Good people are at the heart of every good corporation, and smart executives recognize that each dedicated member of their workforce is a brand ambassador. CSR is expanding to include creative programs designed to engage employees in the company as a whole. Corporate gift matching, community service days, and student mentoring programs strengthen an internal sense of community and build employee loyalty, all while contributing to the greater good at the core of CSR initiatives.

According to the Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR) report *Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Recruitment and Retention: A Primer*, the corporate giving arm of an organization not only attracts qualified candidates, but it also

helps employee retention, thereby giving philanthropically involved companies a competitive edge. In 2010, 60% of employers offered paid time off for volunteering, according to 501 Connect. Additionally, The Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy report *Giving in Numbers* reports that 67% of companies have "Dollars for Doers" programs in which employees are incentivized to volunteer during non-work hours by an offer from their employers to match volunteer time monetarily. Company-wide giving programs engage employees and create a better corporate culture which, by extension, improves the bottom line.

TransNational Bankcard, a merchant service provider, demonstrates the role management involvement plays in creating an outstanding corporate culture. Having worked with Habitat for Humanity, the ORPHANetwork, Special Olympics of Illinois, and Compassion International, TransNational has fostered relationships with many notable nonprofit organizations

through their philanthropy programs. The Director of Corporate Giving, Aaron Subich, was recently kind enough to share some of his thoughts on TransNational's philanthropic involvement. Subich emphasized the strong influence CEO John Pitzafferro and President Jae Haas have had both on the culture of the company and directly on the employees. Under their guidance, the TransNational Benevolence Program was launched in 2009 expressly to "give away, at TransNational's cost, its services, equipment, and expertise to churches, charities, and other faith based 501c3's," according to their 2011 CSR Report. The program is setup so that TransNational can provide services to charitable organizations on an in-kind basis. "We've donated over \$2.1 million worth of time, services, and goods since 2009 to these charitable entities," Subich reported. "It has evolved more and more into an employee engagement and coordination program." The Benevolence Program directly involves the entire Sales Team

within TransNational, as each employee regularly “gives away” processing services and their expertise to their nonprofit clients.

The Benevolence Program is not the only corporate giving initiative in which TransNational engages its employees. Later this year, Subich will produce and run the 2nd Annual Party with a Purpose, a sponsored and hosted benefit concert. In 2011, the event raised \$50,000 for the ORPHANetwork. Additionally, TransNational has partnered with Compassion International, and with the help of its employees’ fundraising efforts they have helped put three international students through college. Subich has found that the more involved employees are with its company giving programs, the more likely they are to be successful within the business. Subich concluded, “No workplace is a good place if people don’t want to be there or feel good about what they’re doing at the end of the day, but the more vested people are in making a workplace good, the harder they work.” TransNational keeps their CSR programs fresh and exciting, utilizing them as catalysts for employee bonding and involvement.

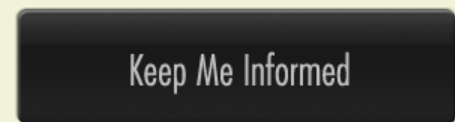
Adobe is another company that engages its employees through CSR programs. Not only does Adobe offer standard programs such as gift matching, Dollars for Doers, and community grants through the Adobe Foundation, but it is currently spearheading two major creative giving programs that are employee driven: Adobe

Action Committees and the Adobe Green Team. The Action Committees program encourages Adobe employees to become active leaders in local volunteer organizations, and supports the employees with Adobe tools, resources, and funding. The Adobe Green Team encourages its employees to organize volunteer projects and environmental programs with their peers. According to their website, “Team members arrange education sessions, discuss pressing issues, and work with Adobe management to develop environmental sustainability practices.” Adobe hopes to expand their employee-led Green Team to all 12 of their major sites by 2015. Adobe has gone so far as to create an extensive Employee Engagement section on their website. The page headline reads, “Our employees are our most valuable asset. That’s why we actively support and reward their efforts to pursue their passions in the workplace, at home, and in the community. We know that each person’s ideas, personal and professional well-being, and enthusiastic involvement are essential to the sustained success of our organization — and crucial to the quality of work-life balance our employees deserve.” Essentially, Adobe is more than a company; it is a community.

The corporate culture and business ethics of both Adobe and TransNational Bankcard have earned each company accolades. The Chicago Tribune named TransNational one of Chicagoland’s Top 100 Places to Work. TransNational has also been nominated for the Better

Business Bureau Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics for three years in a row. Moreover, Adobe was recognized as one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies 2012 by Ethisphere, and ranked as one of Fortune’s 100 Best Companies to Work For in 2011 and the UK Sunday Times Best 100 Places To Work For in 2012.

The achievement of a healthy work-life balance is, in short, the American Dream. Traditionally, items such as salary, benefits, safe facilities, etc. have allowed companies to make positive contributions to the “work” side of the scale, and have defined what it means to be a “good employer”. However, companies such as TransNational and Adobe are redefining what it means to be a “good employer” by offering opportunities for enrichment that fall on the “life” side of the scale in the form of engaging CSR programs. The Role in Human Resource Management in Corporate Social Responsibility asserts, “The firm of the future is expected to have undergone significant transformation such that CSR no longer becomes managed as a separate deliverable, but is part of the experience of being an employee in an organization that lives its values.” This holistic approach fosters a healthy marriage of work and life; it benefits the community, fulfills employees, and builds company moral. When everyone gets involved, everyone wins.



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