

## The Case for Cause: It's a Powerful Tool

What if I told you that there is a firm management tool that could keep your current partners, associates and staff happier, boost recruiting, improve firm visibility and reputation and deepen client relationships? And that putting this game-changing tool into play wouldn't cost you anything more than you've already budgeted?

Doubtful? Just look to top corporations — your clients — to find the evidence that when executed properly, strategic philanthropic investment is a powerful tool that can deliver significant business value and improve your bottom line.

For decades, corporate brands have put their philanthropic commitments front and center, showcasing charitable and cause marketing programs as a central part of employee relations, marketing, branding and public relations, and as a result have realized real gains in market position and profit. Consider these facts:

- 85% of people report that an employer's commitment to social and environmental issues is a factor in determining where they want to work. And, when given a chance to play a role in how an employer supports its causes, they are far more likely to feel a strong sense of loyalty.
- Nearly 9 of 10 people believe it's important that business, government and nonprofits collaborate to solve pressing social and environmental issues. Your clients will applaud and respect your cause-related efforts.
- 86% of people believe that business needs to place as much weight on society's interests as on business interests. Have your clients and prospects seen your values in action? A signature cause platform brings to life characteristics like trustworthiness and likeability, which leads to deeper client relationships.
- Collaboration on cause-related projects improves firm culture, bringing staff, partners and associates together, as well as individuals from different regions or offices, with a shared purpose, allowing them to get to know each other in meaningful ways.

According to the corporate sector, it's not necessary for firms to give more to nonprofits to realize these benefits — only to give differently and more strategically by following these best practices:

1. Find common ground. Successful initiatives are founded on a shared cultural passion. From the mailroom to the most senior ranking partner or executive, what social issues inspire your people?
2. Take the time to find well-run organizations that match your interests, culture and involvement criteria and make a commitment to support those nonprofits over time. By concentrating your firm's collective time and money among a few outstanding organizations, your gifts will do more good for both you and the beneficiaries.
3. Think beyond the checkbook. It's important to build a program that is multi-faceted and inclusive, giving everyone — no matter his or her role in the firm — a chance to get involved and make a difference together.
4. Use your commitment to cause to set your firm apart. Letting the world know what your firm believes in becomes a natural, authentic extension of business development and recruiting.

Implemented properly, a cause platform yields a differentiated, values-based brand, improved partner/associate/staff loyalty, enhanced community visibility and strengthened client and internal relationships — which combine to support increased revenue and overall firm success.



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