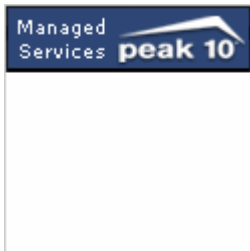



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An Investment You Can Trust:

By Michelle Durner, *Special To LTW*

Company leaders must constantly evaluate the ROI on system-wide programs initiatives. Things that were once considered simply a good business practice, I community and philanthropic involvement, are today considered an investment in business, what is more valuable than your time and money? Yet, community involvement remains one investment whose power can never be underestimate involvement in charitable programs is still one of the easiest methods to increas corporate awareness, recruit and retain employees, and give back to the comm supports you.

Common sense dictates that philanthropic involvement is a feel-good, easy wa positively position your company with shareholders, investors, customers and employees. Not only does your involvement improve your image with those wh vested interest, but it is also a good way to generate positive media coverage fo company.

More importantly, community involvement can do wonders for employee morale lead to higher productivity and a team-focused, enjoyable work environment. It coming together for a common cause promotes teamwork and the desire to lea skills and practices. Many companies use workplace philanthropic programs to their employees and even recruit new ones. Job-seekers are often attracted to that give back to their communities, and allow personal time away from the offic volunteering. In fact, 58% of companies use their employee volunteer program recruiting and retaining employees, according to the Corporate Volunteer Progi Strategic Resource.

Your involvement doesn't just benefit your company and employees, ultimately organization in which you are supporting has a better success rate because of goodwill and generosity – you have opened the doors for them to get their mes out. In addition, your company's involvement may have helped them reach the goals, whether it's increasing their volunteer base, community support or in-kin monetary donations.

Obviously donating corporate time and money to community involvement is a v situation, however there are literally hundreds of credible organizations in your that want and need your support. How do you choose the right one for your business? Nearly 82% of corporations focus their employee volunteer program business functions. (i.e.: those in the real estate business start out with progra

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Habitat for Humanity). In addition, programs that are directly related to the com which you are based, or programs that are universal to all businesses and lifes; also great places to start looking. The good thing is that any non-profit you chc support will be appreciative and eager for your involvement.

It may sound cliché but getting your employees and company name out into the community can be one way to achieve your corporate mission. It allows everyc company, employees, and the community itself – to win. But just remember th: community involvement, just like with the many important things in life, you get what you put into it.

Source: Corporate Volunteer Program as a Strategic Resource

Michelle Durner, president of Durham-based healthcare services company App Medical Services. She has implemented the "Make a Difference" employee pro non-profit involvement at her company. She can be reached at mdurner@ams-

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