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Bringing Corporate Giving into Your Public Relations Plan

By: *Cindy Moen*

Eight years ago, American traveler and entrepreneur Blake Mycoskie launched a for-profit company with a mission to give away a pair of new shoes to a child in need for every pair the company sold. That company – TOMS – has given away more than 10 million shoes and had estimated revenue of a healthy \$300 million last year.

While most business owners do not set out to build a company with the sole purpose of charitable giving, many feel the pull of corporate responsibility and philanthropy. When done discerningly, corporate philanthropy can be part of a successful public relations program.

TOMS relies on a thriving public relations program to help promote its brand; Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, blogging, press releases and media outreach have rocketed the company into the public eye. As a result, other concerns such as Microsoft, AT&T, AOL and American Greetings have included the TOMS story in their own advertising campaigns. Even if most businesses cannot expect results on the scale TOMS has achieved, they can look forward to generating goodwill and building name recognition by using public relations tools to showcase philanthropic efforts. Some opportunities include:

- Issuing a press release announcing your support of an organization. Explain in the press release how your assistance – whether financial or time-based – will help the organization. Be altruistic; let the press release focus on the organization and not your business.
- Posting pictures of your team in action on social media. Clients who follow you on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook will appreciate seeing your employees supporting a good cause.
- Including a story in your monthly newsletter and encouraging others to donate to the charity.
- Taking a video of a charitable event, having it professionally edited and posting it on YouTube with a link to your social media sites, newsletter and website.
- Inviting local media to cover a charitable event. In the offer share details of the event and why it is important to your community.

Volunteering and giving back to the community take time and effort. But both offer many rewards including fostering teamwork, building goodwill, enhancing your company's image or brand and making a difference in the community around you.



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About the Author

Cindy Kremer Moen has been a senior account manager with Edge Legal Marketing since 2007. When she is not working with clients, she and her husband are raising two hilarious and slightly awkward middle school-aged boys.

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