

Giving for Good

By Tim Miles

Since our son was diagnosed with autism, I have had the chance to speak to more than 1,000 nonprofit organizations. My message is, essentially: Greed is no longer good. (Sorry, Gordon Gekko.)

In this interconnected world where the emerging generation longs to marshal its forces toward some greater collective good and where aging baby boomers look for something to occupy their time that makes them feel like they are making a difference, your company needs to demonstrate that it is supporting more than your bottom line.

Giving Back

Today's emerging generation wants to see not only what you say, but also what you do. It wants to make sure that you share its values and interests in trying to make the world a better place.

If you don't know where to start, try asking your children, your employees and your customers. Develop a program that measures and rewards the best places to commit and make a difference.

Because of the way the world has shifted, Western society has swung from an inward-focused "me" generation to an outward-focused "we" generation. In our lifetime, there has never been a better time to do good works. This may run contrary to what you would think, given the state of the economy the past few years.

Tuesdays." The program is simple: on Tuesdays, D. Rowe's quietly gives 5% of all gross sales to a local registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

The organization changes from month to month, but they are all local, officially registered nonprofit groups.

Notice the language on the flyer in Figure 1, though—it is important. "We won't even mention it other than this." The Rowes did not want people to feel guilty for not giving.

This is a new way of thinking: not trying to make people feel bad to get them to do something good and not going around from table to table asking for more, making people uncomfortable.

One of the things that frustrates me about going through drive-through lanes or going to gas stations is when the cashier asks me if I would like to give a dollar to such and such charity. A few years ago, I went into a local gas station, and I feel bad for saying it, but the cashier caught me on a bad day. She had no way of knowing my family history when she said to me after I had made my purchase: "Would you like to give a dollar to autism research and treatment?"

I paused, then I replied: "Miss, I've given more than \$100,000 to autism research and treatment. Would you mind if I sat this one out?"

Your company does not need one of those giant checks or a grand spectacle. When you start to make a difference in your own community, people will notice. It has never been easier for people to find out. Actions have never spoken louder. *wqp*

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Standing out by working with charities

Figure 1. D. Rowe's 'Good Tuesdays' Flyer