



People Make The Difference whitepaper

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By Craig Tegel

Leadership + community engagement = a stronger team

For many leaders, it can be hard to make the time to think about the big picture. Pressures include quarterly targets to make, board members to satisfy, and shareholders demanding better returns. Leaders spend so much time thinking about how to increase revenue and customers that they don't get around to thinking about community engagement – it's a take, take, take mentality.

But it is vital to also think about what your organisation can give back.

All organisations operate within the wider community and being able to give something back to that community can play a critical role in uniting your team around a common cause. A strong corporate social responsibility program often infers practical benefits for team morale and improving your organisations reputational capital. Clearly, CSR can be good for business. But more than that, investing in communities and maintaining a long-term view about the sustainability of an organisation and its operations is simply the right thing to do.

But how do you decide which programs to fund? When I was a leader of the Japan and Asia Pacific region with a previous company we always involved our leaders and our teams in CSR activities in each country that we had an office. This meant programs were relevant to the local market and would engage the team members. Despite different tactical implementations in each geography, all projects united our team members around the chance to give back to less fortunate people and to make a difference in a social way.

Now at People Make The Difference, this commitment to CSR is continued through our support of the Nelune Foundation. The Nelune Foundation's motto is 'helping patients fight cancer with dignity' and it recently held its 15th annual Lilac Ball in Sydney. Through the event, the Nelune Foundation raised over \$2.1 million to make cancer

treatment more accessible to patients and the experience more tolerable. The services and facilities funded include transport to and from treatment, psychologists, breast care nurses, more comfortable treatment chairs and beds – anything that can help patients through their treatment and on to recovery. As a small organisation, our sponsorship was limited, but every dollar raised can make a difference to a cancer patient. More important than the financial aspects was the opportunity for our team, friends and business partners to work together in support of the community.

As sustainability advisor Dr Carol Adams says on the topic of [leadership and CSR](#), “change towards sustainability is mostly about people and we can all make a difference – together.” Obviously, at People Make the Difference we 100% agree that having a strong and motivated team is critical to an organisation’s success. A well-considered and effectively implemented CSR program can play a significant role in maintaining team motivation and contributing to a strong workplace culture.

- When developing a CSR program that both serves your organisation and the broader community, we believe there are four critical factors to consider:
- Your commitment as the CEO (or organisation leader) to the program and your leadership qualities.
- The executive team’s understanding of the relevance of sustainability to strategy and risk and your ability to communicate that relevance effectively.
- Supporting an organisation that is relevant to employees and that they can engage with. Consider involving employees in the selection of the organisation you support.
- It’s not about the money. Instead focus on what projects you are able to support and how this enables your team to work together on something that has a positive social impact.

If you need help with getting support in your organisation for a CSR program and implementing it in an effective way, People Make The Difference can help. Our leadership coaching can assist you to be clear on your values and why you want to support a particular program, how it aligns with your organisation, and how to communicate that in a way that will motivate and inspire team members. To find out more about our training and coaching services, visit www.peplemakethedifference.com.au or call +61 412 333 415.