

Are Canadian Businesses Generous and Engaged in Community Life?

'In a word, yes. Our survey of 2,500 Canadian businesses will tell us how.'

Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz, *President and CEO of Imagine Canada*, talks to Lisa Hartford about corporate citizenship in Canada.



Q: Businesses are obviously in the business of making money. But increasingly we hear about the importance of an expanded bottom line – one that recognizes a business's role as a member of the community. Is this more than just window dressing?

A: It used to be about “chequebook philanthropy,” simply responding to requests for donations. Now it's much more strategic. Businesses are building significant partnerships with nonprofit organizations that are designed to have a measurable impact on the community.

Q: So you're saying that businesses can directly affect our quality of life. How do they do it?

A: First and foremost they contribute financially to the charities and nonprofits that speak most directly to them and their employees. Employees are key here. In fact 92% of employees want to be involved in their company's social responsibility in some way.

Businesses today create conditions for their employees to volunteer in the community. This has a huge impact that our upcoming research will help us to fully understand. Businesses also sponsor events and give “in kind” donations, lending their expertise, products and services to community groups. The scope of business contributions is huge. We intend to shed light on the full picture when we release our findings in the fall. We want to capture the scope of business support and, ultimately, the impact on the community.

Q: What do you mean by “community,” exactly, and what does “impact” look like?

A: I'm referring to all of us, really – wherever we live and however we live in places big and small across the country. We all need and benefit from clean air and water, safe communities, access to theatre and other forms of cultural expression, opportunities for physical activity and civic engagement. Canada's 161,000 nonprofit organizations provide the backbone that supports healthy and vibrant communities. When businesses invest in them, they improve the lives of all Canadians.

How Business Gives

The Landscape of Community Investment in Canada

By Julia Howell

Businesses have long been engaged in community life. Rod Lohin of the AIC Institute for Corporate Citizenship (part of the University of Toronto's Joseph L. Rotman School of Management) references 1670 when King Charles II authorized a Royal Charter creating “The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.” Lohin says this is much more than the birth story of a retail empire.

Rather, it can be considered the beginning of corporate citizenship in Canada. “Canada was governed, run and managed by a chartered company,” Lohin says. “People sometimes wonder about the role a corporation could play in society; how far it could go. Well, it can go really far.”

While we have a long history of commerce and community working hand in hand, the idea of professionalizing the practice is a relatively new phenomenon.

Imagine Canada's Caring Company program understands this and has

developed a framework that recognizes the myriad ways businesses can have an impact on the community, and serves as a catalyst to stimulate increased community investment from Canadian businesses. Since 1988, Imagine Canada's Caring Company program has utilized a benchmark to encourage Canadian businesses to contribute a minimum of 1% of pre-tax profits to the community.

“Our members are doing some really innovative work; they're setting the standard for best practice in community involvement. And the exciting thing is

that businesses from multi-national corporations to medium-sized companies and small owner-operated local businesses are getting involved,” says Jocelyne Daw, Vice President, Marketing and Social Engagement, who oversees the Caring Company program from Imagine Canada's Calgary office.

While the practice of community investment may still be relatively new, as with our early example, the output and impact on the community is extraordinary.





WINTER WARMTH FUND

“We believe everyone is entitled to energy to fuel everyday living and we recognize that we have a responsibility to ensure that this happens,”

D’Arcy Levesque, Vice-President, Public and Government Affairs, Enbridge Inc.

1 Investing strategically in children and youth

“Kids Help Phone needs our support to ensure that the organization can respond to the growing number of kids seeking professional counselling and advice by phone or online,” said Kevin Crull, President, Residential Services, Bell Canada. “Bell is committed to helping children and youth reach their potential and Kids Help Phone is there to help them along the way.”

2 Stimulating in-kind gifts

Coopers Office Supply Company Ltd. in Toronto took action to fight poverty and homelessness by donating excess office furniture. This quickly grew to donations from other companies of household products, clothing and food, resulting in millions of dollars in donated goods and services. Company President David Cooper adds, “We’ve helped 80 small charities who have been able to earmark funds designated for capital purchases like

responsibility to ensure that this happens,” says D’Arcy Levesque, Vice-President, Public and Government Affairs, Enbridge Inc.

4 Employee-matched charitable giving

EnCana employees demonstrate their commitment to the communities where they work and live every day. The EnCana Cares program matches dollar for dollar every charitable gift given by an employee, up to \$25,000 per employee per year. In 2006, EnCana and its employees contributed over \$4 million through this program to charities and nonprofit organizations. “Our employees tell us how much they value the opportunity to shape our company’s community investment work,” says Florence Murphy, Vice President, Public and Community Relations.

5 Product sales to raise awareness and money

Hbc has developed several

10 WAYS Caring Company Leaders Give Today



KIDS HELP PHONE

“Bell is committed to helping children and youth reach their potential and Kids Help Phone is there to help them along the way.”

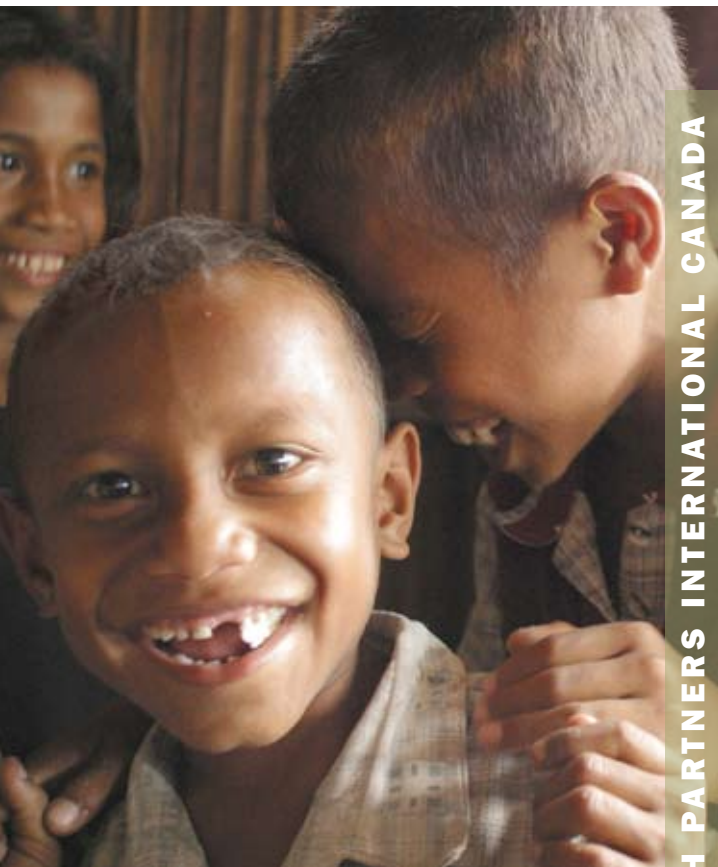
Kevin Crull, President, Residential Services, Bell Canada

furniture straight to urgently needed programs.”

3 Aiding economically challenged customers

In Ontario, Enbridge Gas Distribution is committed to providing assistance to its customers who have a genuine inability to pay for their energy. Since the Winter Warmth Fund was launched in 2004, together with Toronto Hydro and the United Way, Enbridge has helped hundreds of families. “We believe everyone is entitled to energy to fuel everyday living and we recognize that we have a

unique product-focused programs that support a variety of causes. Through the sale of products such as Charity Plush, Think Pink blankets and Hbc Run for Canada performance athletic socks, Hbc gives customers the ability to directly support causes that matter to them. “These retail product programs allow our customers to select the cause that’s most meaningful to them, and the product they purchase serves as a reminder of their chosen cause,” says Diane Gordon, Director, Hbc Community Investment.



HEALTH PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL CANADA

“Our medicines have helped improve the lives of thousands of children and adults in Malawi, Afghanistan and other parts of the developing world.”

John Helou, Vice-President, Public Affairs of Pfizer Canada

Caring Companies commit 1% of pre-tax profits to the community

- Gifts to registered charities
- Contributions to nonprofit organizations that are not registered charities and exist for public benefit
- Community economic development
- Community sponsorships for public benefit
- Support for employee volunteerism

“Our future depends on the success and the vibrancy and the health of this community as a whole, so we recognize that we need to step up and support that in a meaningful way.”

Roundtable participant, Business Contributions to Canadian Communities: Findings from a Qualitative Study of Current Practices. ©2007, Imagine Canada Phase II Report - the National Survey - to be released fall 2007. For survey results or a full list of Caring Company members visit www.imaginecanada.ca

6 National/local office collaboration tackles a single issue

The Investors Group’s head office in Winnipeg partnered with the Canadian Association of Food Banks to support its work. By mobilizing local offices, IG staff from across the country also assist the needs of their local food banks to create awareness and generate significant funds and food. “Getting our local offices involved has contributed to both food banks and employee pride,” says Richard Irish, Assistant Vice-President, Community Affairs & Area Marketing.

7 Mobilizing staff to raise funds

As a company driven by innovation, Paladin Labs of Montreal applied their marketing savvy to create an original and winning fundraising event. In just 18 months the Texas Hold ‘Em Charity Championship raised \$400,000 and involved the entire company. “We wanted to involve as many people as possible,” says Jonathan Goodman, CEO and President, Paladin Labs Inc., “to give them a taste of giving back.”

8 Donating products to the developing world

In partnership with aid organization Health Partners International of Canada, Pfizer Canada has contributed \$27 million in medicines to countries in need. “We are committed to working for a healthier

world,” says John Helou, Vice-President, Public Affairs of Pfizer Canada. “Our medicines have helped improve the lives of thousands of children and adults in Malawi, Afghanistan and other parts of the developing world.”

9 Paying employees to volunteer

Sharon Watkins, CEO and President of Sandstone Asset Management, has ensured that 40 hours of annual paid volunteer time is written into each worker’s contract. “We’re a small firm. We have limited staffing, time and money. Every single individual in this company is involved.”

10 Balancing conservation with responsible development

Suncor Energy and the Alberta Conservation Association have formed a unique partnership to advance the conservation of ecologically significant portions of Alberta’s boreal forest. “We started out as two unlikely partners – a large energy company and a nonprofit environmental group,” says Cathy Glover, Director, Suncor Energy Foundation. “But through a joint advisory committee, we have developed strong working relationships and a shared vision that have enabled us to make significant progress on habitat conservation.” The Foundation has committed \$1.05 million to the three-year partnership.

For a full list of Imagine Canada Caring Company members visit imaginecanada.ca