

All good things come from within

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You cannot do something if you do are not truly committed to it deep inside yourself. If your mind is not set on the goal you aim to achieve and if you do not feel the urgency yourself, you cannot advocate for change.

And, above all, if there is no passion for what you do, there will be no feeling of fulfillment which is essential if you aim to continue doing whatever it is you set your mind to. If a company puts their passionate people in the center of its "doing", they literally can move mountains.

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This is easier said than done but, if done right, amazing things can happen. And that does not only concern individuals. More and more companies feel the responsibility for the environment they operate in. They strive to be a good neighbor, give back to community, be ecological, reduce their waste or support the underprivileged - the list could go on and on.

Companies usually opt for one of these areas, combine them or develop overarching programs. But how do they keep the programs alive and successful? Over years, I have learned that no matter how the companies try to define their corporate responsibility strategies, they never last longer than one season if these are not coming from or being important to their employees.

When your company culture and its unique nature grows to an

extent that it combines fun and help and puts the passionate employee in the driver's seat, your programs are destined to make an impact. So how can this be done?

Hear their voice

More often than not, inspiration lies right in front of you. Take some time to go and talk to your employees, to your partners in local NGOs, to your business partners. They are the ones in the front line, living their lives in communities, feeling the needs. Talk, listen and, most importantly, hear what it is that they are really trying to tell you. Hear their voice and then connect the dots properly.

Engage

Things that make sense bring people together. In other words, if a corporate responsibility activity is meaningful for your environment, there will be no boundaries in the company when it comes to its implementation. Everybody pitches in. People join forces, compete to be the first ones to attend, create, and help. They are active and present. They engage in any way possible, feeling their little share of accountability, are keen to meet those whom they are helping or see the immediate results of their work. They are proud of their actions and do not shy away from talking about it.

And above all, if people feel heard and seen, you can be sure they will make this effort again, and again and again... most likely also encouraging their colleagues. And that is your way to success.

Create true value and give back

You know what the true beauty of working with people is?

All of us come from different environments and backgrounds, we have different beliefs and we are driven by passion inspired by all that formed us. Each and every one of us is truly unique and that is what comes of great use when creating true value.

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Discover the unique skills and passions of your employees and let them transform into joint programs and projects. Do not limit your people. Instead, empower and lead them. Let those engaged get in the driver's seat and watch true magic happen, impacting the lives of those in need. If these programs are to be at the heart of your company's corporate responsibility activities, even better.

Remember to embrace the differences, acknowledge uniqueness, for open-mindedness and the creative process is the

key. Moreover, if you are able to upgrade the programs and activities together to the level where you can open them up and invite other businesses to create an even larger impact, the value created is beyond average.

Align with needs

Things that work well in one environment, business, a group of people or for an individual do not necessarily fit another context. Looking at this from the corporate level, anything that is created must be driven by certain business needs and be in line with the company's mission and strategy. Still, my advice is to be devoted to that thing which is coming from within, from our own employees and from their environments, as the ones carrying on the legacy (assuming we are creating one) need to be able to identify with the goals we want to achieve.

There are indeed many things that need to be considered and done right in order for the activities to be successful. Therefore, please, always remember that companies are made of people. So take a leap of faith and listen to them, for if you want to make something of true value, they may be your best guide.

And also bear in mind that, whatever the stage of your corporate responsibility strategy you are at, just be kind, be giving and, above all, act responsibly.

