

Doing good while doing well: 3 ways to bring purpose to your business

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Corporate philanthropy is a great way to grow your network, build your brand and influence a cause dear to your company. In 2015, corporate philanthropic giving saw a , reaching \$18. 46 billion. This figure indicates that, for busy entrepreneurs, it’s easier to write a donation check than it is to bring philanthropy deeper into your company.

Balancing work and goodwill takes effort, but a purpose larger than a donation can deepen your company’s mission and impact -- while connecting your brand to your community.

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Nick Gross, entrepreneur and musician, is one example of someone who is successfully bringing a deeper purpose to his business initiatives. While working on his creative-branding company, , Gross founded the , which works with underserved youth to develop their skills andgoals.

These young people have talent inmusic, the arts ortechnology, but they often don’t have the resources available to reach their potential. Find Your

Grind connects them with materials, space and even financial assistance to take their talents further.

“ With a goal of teaching young people how to network, learn from each other’s experiences and define success for themselves, we ask, ‘ How do you find your grind each day, and how can you share that with others?’” .

Although he acknowledges that an auxiliary benefit of philanthropy is the networking and inbound branding Find Your Grind’s efforts garner, philanthropy is about more than the potential boost to your brand or the tax write-offs.

For entrepreneurs looking to make a difference, here’s how to get started:

1. Actively partner.

Business might be competitive, but philanthropy is collaborative. If you notice another company taking on a similar cause, don’t try to outdo it -- make it your ally. You’ll be able to achieve more together, while making connections.

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Gross’s first philanthropic priority is Find Your Grind, but he participates in similar organizations’ efforts to empower youth. This summer, Gross’s band, , played at Clayton Kershaw’s annual ping-pong tournament to raise funds for at-risk youth. Kershaw’s organization’s mission aligns with Find Your Grind’s, but partnering -- not competing -- puts more power behind each organization’s goals.

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Keep an eye out for opportunities such as this and take advantage of them when they arise. Who knows -- you might have complementary skills that take each other's missions even further!

2. Make better decisions with data.

One of the leaders at the intersection of philanthropy and technology is , which has built innovative solutions to create a more accessible and transparent ecosystem for foundations and nonprofits.

“ When funders and nonprofits have more access to data and an easier ability to share stories, greater impact is realized,” says Jason Ricci, founder and CEO at Fluxx. “ Leveraging technology and the insights it produces empowers organizations of all types and sizes to better assess their strategic priorities, track dollars to measurable results and produce fresh perspectives.”

3. Generate interest.

Bringing purpose to your business means your employees need to play a role. Doing service takes passion. The amount of enthusiasm your employees have for your cause can make or break your influence -- especially today, as one of the that motivates to get involved in a philanthropic cause is passion.

They may work for you in the office, but treat them like partners in your philanthropic efforts. Learn what they're passionate about. Would they rather partner with local communities or global ones? Do they want to work with youth? Environmental causes? Find common areas of interest that will excite everyone, and you'll have a team ready to serve with passion.

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Taking time to connect with a cause and bring purpose into your business is what makes a true impact. With a driven team, likeminded partnerships and work that doubles as goodwill, making those connections should come easily.

Writing a check might take only a minute, but it could never accomplish the results that hands-on, thoughtful philanthropy achieves.