

# New Belgium brewing co. case study

Business



Though most companies commonly mentioned as examples of ethical and socially responsible organizations are large corporations, it is the socially responsible initiatives of small businesses that often have the most impact on local communities. These businesses generate jobs and provide goods and services for customers in smaller markets that larger firms that often are not interested in aiding.

Additionally, they also provide money, resources, and volunteer time to local causes.

Their owners often work as community leaders, and many choose to use their skills and the results of their successes in resolving many of the problems and issues that the community faces. One small business that does just this, is the New Belgium Brewing Company, based in Fort Collins, Colorado. New Belgium Brewing Co. strives to lessen its impact on the environment. New Belgium invested in wind turbines, making it the first fully wind powered brewery in the United States.

It has also integrated a steam condenser that captures and reuses hot water used for boiling barley and hops to start the next one.

The steam is also redirected to heat the floor tiles and de-ice the loading docks during winter. New Belgium Brewery has also incorporated sun tubes that help to light the brew house with natural daylight all year long. Along with many others believe that the company has chosen to focus on the environment because of the owner's love for the outdoors and the social responsibility to its community to do great things. (Ethics, 2013) Along with

innovative energy saving strategies, New Belgium also takes pride in reducing waste through recycling and creative reuse approaches.

It tries to recycle as many supplies as possible, including cardboard boxes, keg caps, office materials, and the amber glass used in the bottling process.

New Belgium also stores disbursed barley and hop grains in an on-site silo and encourages local farmers to pick up the grains, free of charge, to feed their livestock. The company even encourages its employees to reduce air pollution by using alternative transportation. As an incentive, New Belgium gives its employees “cruiser bikes” like the one pictured on its Fat Tire Amber Ale label, after one year of employment and encourages them to ride to work.

Ethics, 2013) New Belgium has also been a participant in green building methods for a long time. With each expansion of the facility they have integrated new technologies. The company also agreed to participate in the U.

S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environment Design for Existing Buildings pilot program. From the sun tubes and daylight throughout the facility to reusing heat in the brew house, they continue to seek new ways to conserve and recycle resources.

Recycling at New Belgium is present in many unique ways, from making “waste” products into something new and useful (like spent grain to livestock feed), to supporting the recycling market in creative ways (like turning their

keg caps into table surfaces). They also buy recycled products whenever they can, from paper to office furniture.

From motion sensors on the lights throughout the building to fans that pull in cool winter air to chill their beer, offsetting their energy needs is the foundation to being environmentally friendly. Ethics, 2013) I do not consider this to be an instance of strategic philanthropy. The owner, Jeff Lobules appeared to have a love for the outdoors. The dead for the company began with a bicycling trip through Belgium, and he and his wife took a hike into Rocky Mountain National Park to write the company's core purpose and beliefs. I think that he felt that it was his obligation to build his business as environmentally friendly as he could, to help save the place that he loves, regardless of whether it would be favorable to the stakeholders or not.

Also, New Belgium Brewing Company strives to improve communities and enhance people's lives through corporate giving, event sponsorship, and philanthropic involvement. Since its beginning, the company has donated more than 1. Million dollars to organizations in the communities in which they do business. For every barrel of beer sold the prior year, New Belgium donates \$1 to charitable causes within their distribution territory. The donations are divided between states in comparison to their percentage of overall sales. This is their way of staying local and giving back to the communities who support and purchase their products.

The funding decisions are made by the company's Philanthropy committee, which consists of employees throughout the brewery including owners, employee owners, area leaders and production workers. New Belgium looks

for non-profit organizations that display creativity, diversity and an innovative approach to their mission and objectives. The company donates to causes with a specific emphasis on water conservation, sensible education, among other areas. The Philanthropy committee also looks for groups that involve the community to reach their goals. Ethics, 2013) The company also keeps a community bulletin board in its facility where it posts a collection of community engagement activities and suggestions.

This community board allows tourists and employees to see the different ways they can help out the community, and it gives nonprofit organizations a chance to make their needs known. Groups can even apply for grants through the New Belgium Brewing Company web site. Also, just to enter their website you have to enter a birthdate to view the content. This shows responsibility to protecting minors and respect to the laws that govern the states. Ethics, 2013) New Belgium Brewery also sponsors many events, with a distinct focus on those that involve “ human-powered” sports that cause insignificant damage to the natural environment.

Through events such as the Tour De Fat “ traveling bike festival,” it supports various environmental, social, and cycling nonprofit organizations. During the Tour De Fat, some participants agree to participate in the Car-for-Bike Trade program, in which participants hand over their car keys and vehicle titles in exchange for a New Belgium commuter bike and trailer.

The participants are then filmed for the world to see as they endorse sustainable transportation over driving. New Belgium also partners with nonprofit organizations to support Skinny Dip for a Cause, a campaign in

which skinny dipping is used to raise awareness of water issues and conservation. In the course of one year, New Belgium can be found at anywhere from 150 to 200 festivals and events across fifteen western states. (Ethics, 2013) I feel that all that New Belgium does for the community and for the environment comes from the owners' core beliefs and standards.

They do not HAVE to do the things they are doing, they choose to be philanthropic by nature. I imagine that consumers will buy alcohol and tobacco products regardless of who is making it. Just because a company manufactures alcohol or tobacco, which is legal, does not make them irresponsible. The consumers are ultimately the ones acting irresponsibly. If the company is promoting responsible drinking and discouraging the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors, then I believe that they are being ethically and socially responsible.

If a company can go into business, being environmentally friendly in their manufacturing and be socially responsible, and keep another company from succeeding that does not care about the environment or being socially responsible, then it will be better for all. Whether it is New Belgium Brewery or someone else just looking to make a profit, someone will be there to manufacture these products. They are hot commodities in society today and the demand will remain prevalent.

I think we should praise the companies that make sincere efforts to do the right things ethically, environmentally and socially. There are not many companies who work this hard, or care this much for their communities, environment or their employees.

Personally, I do feel that New Belgium Brewery Company's actions and initiatives are symptomatic of an ethical and socially responsible corporation. After reading more on their web site you can see that there are even more things they have done to help their community, like providing landscaping and new bike racks.