

# 101 Ways Your Business



## Can Change the World

By  
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With  
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For  
Together We Can Change the World, Inc.  
[www.TogetherWeCanChangeTheWorld.com](http://www.TogetherWeCanChangeTheWorld.com)

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*From the Author:*

As a business owner, you are in a unique and powerful position. You have a large sphere of influence and what you say and do is observed. How you treat your clientele, employees and business associates is a direct reflection on your business. People notice.

More and more business owners understand that the best way to succeed is to "under promise and over deliver." A nineteenth century businessman by the name of Wallace D. Wattles put it this way:

*"Give everyone more in use value than you take from him in cash value. Then you are adding to the life of the world by every business transaction." (The Science of Getting Rich)*

At Together We Can Change the World, we believe that you "cannot out-give the Universe" but you certainly can try! That's what our 101 Ways Series books are all about - giving back. We truly do believe that TOGETHER we can change the world - and don't we all know that it needs changing!

I hope you will use this book as a "launching pad" for ways you and your business can "give back." Perhaps you can use some of the ideas, or perhaps they will trigger new ideas that fit your situation better.

We wish you the very best!

*Sandi Valentine*

## 101 Ways Your Business Can Change the World

### 1) Boost morale in the workplace by recognizing employees.

Put a different twist to the "Employee of the Month" idea and create a bulletin board in a public room recognizing employees who are making a difference in the workplace or community. Post their picture on the "Caught Doing a Kind Act" or "Caught In the Act" bulletin board and give monthly awards (best parking spot, off work at noon on Friday, etc). Feature them in your monthly newsletter.

### 2) Have an Awards Banquet every year and recognize those

who were "Caught In the Act." Give really nice awards - 3-day cruise for two, flat screen TV, etc. Be sure to have the Media there to feature these people in the local newspaper and radio. Your business will be given great publicity and your workplace and community will benefit in a big way, too!

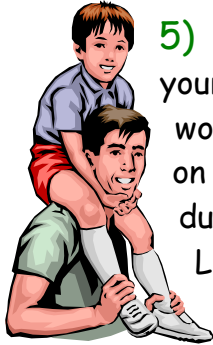


### 3) Sponsor a company-wide contest to choose a local

charity to support. Take suggestions through a Suggestion Box, or have your Human Resource office collect them. Give a time limit in which to turn in ideas, have the ideas tabulated, and then have the employees vote on which organization they want to support. Create a committee to come up with hands-on ways the company can show their support, i.e. serving the Thanksgiving Dinner at a local Rescue Mission, purchasing a handicapped-accessible van for a senior citizens home, helping build a house with your local Habitat for Humanity group, etc. Also have fundraising events to benefit your chosen group. Be sure to invite the Media!

### 4) Create a "Helping Hands" list of skills and talents your employees possess that they would be willing to offer each other. For instance, simple plumbing jobs, car tune-ups, painting, computer repair,

etc. Have the list available in your Human Resource office for referrals when someone needs help.



5) Offer a "Bring A Kid to Work" day and encourage your employees to bring their child or a kid they know to work during the summer or when the kids are out of school on holiday. Let them "shadow" several different employees during the day (or for a couple hours, or half a day, etc.). Let the kids experience several different jobs within your business and all they entail.

6) Sponsor a Kids' Variety Show (avoid the word "talent" so more will participate) and charge admission. Showcase your employees' kids! Make it clear that the money raised will be used for a special outreach to community children such as, free school supplies for neighborhood kids, new sports equipment for the YMCA, new playground equipment for a local park, summer camp scholarships, etc. Invite the Media.

7) Create an "Emergency Fund" for your employees. Let them help raise the funds with raffles, chili cook-offs, etc. When one of your employees hits a rough time (extended illness, bereavement, etc.) use the Fund to help them through that difficult situation. Let the other employees know so they can send cards, or help in other ways (taking hot meals over, offering transportation, etc.).

8) Register your special service projects with Together We Can Change the World Day. You can let others know about what you're doing and invite them to join your efforts on the first Saturday of every month - TWCCTW Day (or T-Day). It's free, and all the information you'll need to get the word out is available here: [www.TogetherWeCanChangeTheWorldDay.com](http://www.TogetherWeCanChangeTheWorldDay.com).



9) **Encourage your employees to better themselves.** Offer motivational CDs, books, videos, etc. that they can check out through the Human Resources office. Pay part (or all) of an employee's tuition if they're taking courses that will improve their work skills. Or pay for their books. Your interest in them will benefit your business ten-fold!



10) **Invite your employees who play instruments to bring them to work and "jam" during lunch.** Or set aside an hour or two every Friday afternoon for a "jam session." Perhaps they'll be good enough to have a benefit concert to raise money for the company's favorite charity or "Emergency Fund."

11) **Take your employees' concert "on the road."** Arrange with a local homeless shelter, senior center, or senior residence facility for your employee concert band to come play. Encourage your other employees to attend the concert and hand out simple gifts (notepads, pens, etc. with your business name on them) after the concert. Make it an annual event!

12) **Don't have an employee band?** No problem - senior facilities and centers, pediatric wards, etc. welcome any kind of entertainment! How about some simple magic tricks, clowning, stand-up comedian jokes, a kazoo ensemble? Have fun and those you're sharing with will remember it and talk about it for months. Invite the Media!



13) **Challenge your employees to have a stuffed animal drive.** Contact your local fire departments, children's hospitals, etc. to see if they use stuffed animals in therapy. Ask if they use just teddy bears, or any kind of animal. Then set the challenge, goal and

time frame to collect what the organization needs. Invite the Media to cover your delivery and presentation of the toys.

**14) Start a Mentoring Program for Kids.** Kids need role models in all areas of life -- socially, academically and even in athletics. Give your employees 90 minutes a week from work to do their mentoring. There are a multitude of organizations (search the Internet) to give you ideas and training. Once a year, have a special banquet for the mentors and their kids and highlight several of them. Or create a video clip showing all of the mentors with their kids throughout the year. The kids will love seeing themselves on "the big screen"!

- ✦ Kids who are mentored one-on-one are:
- ✦ 52% less likely to skip school
- ✦ 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- ✦ More likely to get along with their families and peers<sup>1</sup>

**15) Provide a "School Supplies Blow-Out"** where your business turns your parking lot into a school supplies handout center. Have your employees collect school supplies for several months and then hand them out for free to the neighborhood kids. Invite the community to help you collect supplies through news releases and radio spots. Ask local businesses to donate to your drive. Your community image will skyrocket while you provide a greatly needed resource! Make it an annual event!



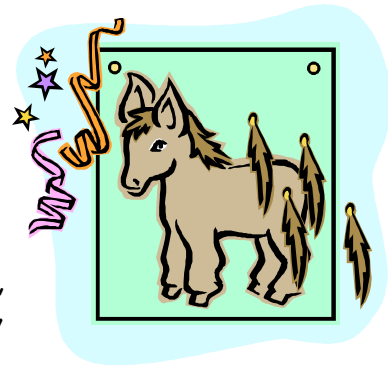
**16) Have a socks drive.** Collect new pairs of socks (all ages, for male and female, and all sizes) for your local homeless shelters. Set an outrageous goal and challenge your employees to meet it. Encourage them to pick up a pair every time they go

grocery or clothes shopping. Start collecting in the Spring so you're ready to make delivery when the weather starts cooling down in the Fall. Keep a "Sock-A-Meter" that measures the number of socks collected (like a thermometer but in the shape of a sock) in a public spot as a reminder. Invite your customers/clientele to join your effort.

**17) Have a furniture faire.** Do you have employees who are good with their hands and can teach furniture repair and refinishing? Ask employees (and their friends and families) to donate furniture for distributing within the business family to those in need, or to a local charity. Or ask a senior or children's facility if they have furniture that needs repair or refinishing. Allocate several weekends for the projects. Not only will your employees be helping others, they'll be learning a new skill at the same time.

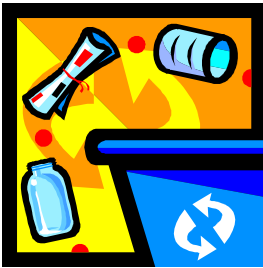
**18) Throw a party for kids in a pediatric ward, homeless shelter or who have disabilities.** These

children are often on the low-end of hope and self-esteem. Make them feel special for a few hours by hosting a party for them. It can be a "Just Because" or "Everybody's Birthday" party or one centered around a holiday. Have balloons, small gifts, cake and ice cream, games, and some form of entertainment (a clown, story teller, magician, local celebrity, etc.).



**19) Offer to help a museum.** Most museums need help in upkeep of their collections or securing new items. They may need volunteer docents or help around the grounds. Getting your employees involved with a local museum will not only help the museum and the community, but will enrich the lives of your employees and benefit your company's public image as well. You might also sponsor a kids' day at the museum with special tours offered by the museum's staff. Make the day as interactive as possible to engage and encourage the children's imaginations and curiosity.

## 20) Place recycling bins in your work room and throughout



**the work place.** Encourage employees to "feed the bins"! Secure volunteers to take the recyclables to the recycling center. Proceeds can be used to throw a year-end party, create a scholarship fund for employee's kids, add to the company's Emergency Fund, start a company child care center, or be donated to a charity voted on by the employees.

**21) Create a Child Care Center in the work place.** You will have very happy and more productive employees when they can drop in on their children during breaks and lunch time. Have the children cared for by professionals, or give employees who are the parents blocks of time to share in the care of the children. Be sure to take all legal precautions guarding against child abuse, etc. Your corporate attorney and/or Insurance Company will be able to provide guidelines.

**22) Provide physical activity for your employees at the workplace.** Encourage your employees to become more physically active. Why would you want to do that? Because employee wellness contributes to the overall health and well-being of your employees, their families and the community. It's good business practice because it helps you

- Reduce health care costs
- Reduce illness and injuries
- Reduce absenteeism
- Enhance recruitment and retention of healthy employees
- Improve employee relations and morale



Just two examples are Canada which has a country-wide program called "Active Living At Work"<sup>2</sup> complete with resources on how to introduce such a program in the workplace. And New York state has a program called MOVE FOR LIFE!<sup>3</sup> which is free and available online.

23) **Stay in touch with your employees.** There is nothing that helps morale more than an employee knowing "the boss" knows who they are, cares about them and appreciates their work. Make it a point to know if an employee is seriously ill, going through a difficult time, is under undue stress. Have supervisors, their secretaries, your Human Resources office keep you informed. Then send an eCard or quick personal note. The fact that you noticed and took the time to acknowledge them can quickly turn a hurting or disgruntled employee into a loyal one.



24) **Provide your employees with their own shopping mall.** Your business can have its own shopping mall and receive monthly checks from the purchases made on it (visit: Shop For Charity Day at [www.ShopForCharityDay.com](http://www.ShopForCharityDay.com)) or **create even greater funding** by having your own mall AND giving free malls to your employees! (visit: My Power Mall at [www.MyPowerMall.com](http://www.MyPowerMall.com)). They are free. Let your employees decide how the funds raised through their purchases will be used, i.e. year-end party, start a work -out room or child care center, provide scholarships for college classes, etc.



25) **Stay aware of community and personnel needs.** Watch the news or read the news paper with an eye for someone your business can help. Has someone's home burned down? Rally your employees together and gather funds, household items, etc. for the family. Has an employee's spouse been assigned extended overseas duty? Alert your employees to be sensitive to ways they can help the family left behind, i.e. mowing lawns, family picnics, anonymous gifts, etc.

26) **Keep your company dynamic!** Encourage new ideas from your employees. Have a day every month (or week) that your employees submit "outrageous ideas" for you to consider. Tell them nothing is "too far out," "too silly," "too inconsequential" or "too expensive."

Make it clear that only ideas offered in a positive way will be considered. Once a month have your staff go through any ideas that have been submitted. Keep all ideas so you can return to them again and again. "Take the lid" off your thinking and allow your imaginations to take flight. All great ideas were scoffed at when first shared. When you implement the ideas that have been suggested, be sure to give credit to the one who submitted the idea and give some kind of appropriate award plus recognition in the company news and on bulletin boards, etc.

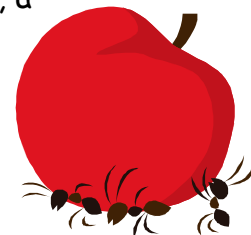
*Zig Ziglar tells a story about fleas in his book, "See You At The Top." It's said that if you place some fleas in a jar with a lid, they will of course begin to jump. Obviously they cannot jump any higher than the lid and after 20 minutes of only being able to jump that high, that's exactly how high they will continue to jump.*

*Once they become accustomed to jumping in the jar, you can remove the lid and they will never jump any higher than the height of the lid.*

*They have become conditioned to the fact that they can not escape the jar and so they stop trying.*

## 27) Have a company picnic that benefits the community.

Choose a site that needs cleaning, a park with equipment that needs repairing, a parking lot that needs the lines repainted, a house or building that needs repainting. Secure permission from the appropriate city office or owner. Then have your picnic on-site and have a work-party at the same time. Not only will your employees have fun getting to know each other at a different level, they will also be helping their community as well. Be sure you push up your sleeves and work alongside your employees. Watch the morale and company profits soar.



28) **Have departments within your company each choose a different charity or cause to support.** Then challenge them within a given period of time to see which department can raise the most funds for their chosen group. The "winning" department is treated to a pizza party, potluck dinner, or spaghetti feed in their honor - put on, of course, by the other departments. This is a win-win-win situation. Multiple causes win in your community because of increased funding. The departments all win because they work together toward a common goal outside themselves. And the company enjoys a meal and good time together!

29) **Sponsor a contest for kids that relates to your business.** For instance, if you are a retail store have kids create the



department or directional signs. If you are a restaurant, have kids draw pictures of their favorite food or favorite table waiter. If you are an animal shelter have kids create and name a mascot for you. When you choose the winner, invite the Media when you confer the award. And be sure to display ALL the submissions and introduce the kids as time permits. Give awards (free meal, free movie ticket, etc.) to every kid who participated so everyone's "a winner."

30) **Have a "Battle of the Bands" for local teens.** Put the word out that your company is sponsoring an evening for featuring aspiring young musicians in your community. Offer prizes for all those who participate. (Other local businesses will be happy to make donations.) Make sure the Media is there and that you do lots of advertising before hand. Have the bands perform on your company property - in the parking lot (be sure to get city permits) would be ideal. Have popcorn, drinks, and perhaps carnival-type booths for younger kids.

31) **Help your employees improve themselves** by providing a variety of self-improvement resources they can check out through your Human Resource department. Consider Robert Kiyosaki and Suzie

Orman financial games and resources; Conant Nightengale books and resources, etc. Happy and growing individuals make happy and productive employees.

**32) Remember your employees on their birthdays.** Consider giving them their birthday off. If it falls on a weekend give them their choice of taking Monday or Friday off. If your business can't afford to let them take the whole day off, consider half a day. If time off isn't possible, then provide a special parking spot in a highly desirable location. Give them a card with a gift certificate inside. Make them feel special and they'll feel you're special, too.



**33) Instead of a company Halloween Party have a "Sight Night"<sup>4</sup>.** Halloween Night is "Sight Night" for the Gift of Sight Foundation. Dress up in costumes (or not) and "trick or treat" for used eyewear. Or throw a Halloween Party with "admission" being eyewear. Employees can collect eyewear from their family, friends and neighbors. Have prizes for the several categories: the person bringing the most pairs, the most exotic eyewear, the oldest eyewear, etc. Go to ([www.TheGiftOfSight.com](http://www.TheGiftOfSight.com)) for more information. Eyewear is cleaned, repaired, and hand-delivered to underprivileged people in developing countries who can't afford eyewear. Have fun while giving the gift of improved sight!

**34) Get involved with First Book<sup>5</sup> and help low-income kids.**



First Book is a national, nonprofit organization with one purpose: to give low-income kids their first new books. Books are supplied to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring and family literacy programs. Every \$2.50 donation buys a new book for a child in need. (Used books are not accepted.) Or, perhaps you have space in your facility to accept books for distribution in your area. There are many ways to get involved. Go to [FirstBook.org](http://FirstBook.org) for more information.

**35) Support your local hospital.** There is a multitude of ways your employees can get involved at the local hospital(s). Contact one to find out how you can volunteer time (in the gift shop, reading to kids, giving visitors directions, etc.). Or ask if there is a particular need they have. Get several ideas and then let your employees decide which one(s) to support. You may want to choose a particular ward to help: pediatrics, oncology, emergency, etc. The human touch is very important in the healing process as well as for the families of patients.

**36) Get involved with Junior Achievement (JA)<sup>6</sup>.** Junior Achievement introduces children to the "real world of business" and helps them see how what they're learning in the classroom is preparing them for their future. JA's purpose is to spark their imaginations and curiosity - it's planting seeds within our future business owners, Board members and economic leaders. It also teaches them how they can influence their world as individuals, workers and consumers. The program begins in elementary school and continues throughout high school. You and your employees can volunteer in a classroom, or volunteer to help with a special event. Junior Achievement is in more than 200 cities across the U.S. but even if you don't have one in your community, you can help impact today's youth with your financial help. Visit their website at [ja.org](http://ja.org) for more information. Give participating employees time off from work to visit classrooms and represent your company.



**37) Stand out and be different in your community involvement.** You know that it's important to be giving back to your community, but it's obvious that your company can't support every good cause. So pick something that you and/or your employees can get passionate about - or something that will make you unique. If you are a furniture store, perhaps you could donate furniture to the charity of your choice or give away the slightly damaged pieces once a quarter from your parking lot. If you are a dentist, perhaps you could give free

cleanings to the mothers and children in a shelter once a month. If you are a trucking company, perhaps you could make free deliveries for the charity of your choice. By making your community involvement revolve around your passion or business, you set yourself apart and are able to help in ways only you and your employees can.

### 38) Recycle your obsolete equipment among your employees.



Do you replace your office equipment (desks, chairs, computers, fax machines, typewriters, telephones, filing cabinets, tables, etc.) on a regular basis? Make it all available for free to your employees - with those making the smallest wages getting "first pick." By "taking care of your own" you will boost morale and create employee loyalty.

39) Start a "Free Room" at work. Encourage your employees to bring gently used items (or never used new items) to give away to others at work. You can accept all kinds of items, or only certain kinds depending on the size of the room. Assign a different department each month to keep the room neat. Set certain hours that the Free Room will be open (and manned by that month's assigned department). If the same items remain in the room for six months donate them to a nonprofit group chosen by your employees.

40) Sponsor a Cook Off for the community and donate the proceeds to your favorite charity. Everyone likes to eat - what better way to bring your community together and support a worthy cause than with a Cook Off? You choose what the participants cook (chili, cakes, spaghetti, etc.). Ask local celebrities to do the judging. Be sure the Media is in on it from start to finish. Feel free to invite other businesses to sponsor the event with you - especially if the community needs something big - like a new wing for the hospital, new equipment for the city parks, additional curriculum for the school, etc.



41) **Throw a "BINGO For Charity" night.** This can be a company-wide or community-wide event. Charge for each BINGO card as usual, but instead of cash prizes offer gifts that have been donated by different businesses (or your business). Wrap each gift so the players cannot see what's in them. Sell popcorn, drinks, and desserts. Donate ALL proceeds to your company's chosen charity. Announce the amount raised by the event so participants can celebrate.

*"The best advice I have about giving back is this: Do it. If you're leading a company, or if you're in a management position of some stature or power, it's just as important to serve as a role model as it is for you to help a specific cause. You have a responsibility to live up to the respect that people give you."*<sup>18</sup>

*~ Michael Dell, Chairman and CEO  
Dell Computer Corp.,  
Round Rock, TX*

42) Along the same line as the "BINGO" idea - offer a **"RIVERBOAT For Charity" night.** Set up "gaming tables" complete with 19<sup>th</sup> century costumed croupiers. But instead of gambling games, offer games like "Yahtzee," checkers, and card games like "Go Fish", "Old Maid", or other family-oriented board games. Sell snacks and drinks. Make it a "G-rated" family night with all proceeds going to your company's chosen charity, scholarship fund, etc.

43) **Sponsor a city walking/driving tour.** Every town has a unique history. How many people are aware of yours? Contact your local museum or Chamber of Commerce for information about your town's history. Identify special areas, buildings and sites with particularly interesting historical, cultural or social importance.

Arrange to have volunteers from the community at each of those places to share interesting facts and stories. Then create a self-guided tour brochure. Set a day with hours and a specific starting place. Have your employees available at the starting point to hand out the tour brochure and give any needed instructions. Or you can just create the brochure with driving directions and information in the brochure about each site on the tour.

44) **Start "lunch-bunch" groups.** Each group has a specific purpose, such as reading and discussing a book, brainstorming ideas for a company project, etc. Each group can be different - or each group can have the same purpose so the entire company is "on the same page."

*"In the quiet hours, when we are alone and there is nobody to tell us what fine fellows we are, we come sometimes upon a moment in which we wonder, not how much money we are earning, nor how famous we have become, but what good we are doing." ~ A. A. Milne*

45) **Offer a company-wide monthly self-improvement speaker.** Shut the company down for an hour each month and invest in your employees' self-esteem and morale. Your company will see improvements in production, employee attendance, fewer accidents, etc. as you affirm your interest and concern for your employees.

46) **Mentor men-to-men and women-to-women at your local prison.** Your employees can teach prisoners life skills they will need upon re-entering society. They can role-play interviews, help them write resumes, teach about dressing for success,<sup>7</sup> and workplace ethics. Learning about team work is another skill they will need to know once they enter the work force.

47) If you are a service that requires memberships to your business (such as an athletic club) donate memberships to charity fundraising raffles or auctions. You can also donate sweatshirts, tee-shirts or mugs, etc. with your business logo/name on them as door prizes. This is win-win as it provides items for the charity's fundraising efforts helping them directly, plus it advertises your business and your support of that charity.

48) Sponsor a Campfire, Boy Scout or Girl Scout or similar



troop or club for summer camp. Many children in these organizations need extra help in order to attend camp. And those of us who have attended some kind of summer camp know the intangible, life-long benefits of the camping experience. You will not only be helping the kids (and troop leaders!) but you will also be gaining community support for caring.

49) Provide child-care tuition for a low-income child. Contact a local preschool or after school program to see if there aren't children they know about who need financial help in order to attend. It's a great investment in the children and your community to provide such a service. Latch-key kids experience many problems and dangers that could be avoided if they are in a safe place. Check with a local elementary school to see if you can help get such an after school program started or expanded.

50) Offer summer employment for high school and college students. Plan special projects or increased production during the summer months and hire students to help. Let the schools know what you are doing. You may be able to speak in front of life skills or home room classes. Be sure to take advantage of Job Fairs where you can talk to the students and hand out applications.

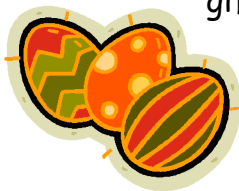
**51) Offer "pro bono" work to a charity you are passionate about.** If you are a law firm, you can give free legal advice to the charity's clientele or the charity itself. If you are an advertising firm, you can do the advertising for their up-coming fundraising event(s). If you are a marketing company, you can do the marketing for the organization in an on-going capacity or for a particular event. Offering a service you know and do well for a cause that is near-and-dear to your heart will create a powerful synergy as well as community goodwill for your business.

**52) Provide "sobriety birthday cakes" for a substance abuse rehabilitation program.** Substance abusers celebrate their sobriety every year. Your company could provide special "sobriety birthday cakes" on a monthly basis or perhaps for an annual celebration offered by the substance abuse program. These are events well worth celebrating in a big way as encouragement to the recovering abusers as well as for the community which benefits from their commitment to sobriety.



**53) Offer a training event for low-income kids or kids who have disabilities.** Have employees with specific skills teach, demonstrate or model that particular skill for the kids. Provide free hand-outs and lots of question-answer time. Have your employees available for one-on-one conversations with the kids. You might provide a tour of your facilities after the training event. Provide snacks and beverages to put the kids at ease.

**54) Sponsor a community Easter Egg Hunt.** Have your employees donate plastic colored eggs that can hold small candies or gifts. Use your own facility if possible and set the time when the public can arrive. Limit the age of the children who can hunt for eggs. You may want to let the youngest children search for the first 20 minutes and then allow the older kids to hunt. You can provide



inexpensive baskets or paper/plastic bags for the children. After the hunt, provide "brunch" with all proceeds going to your company's favorite cause, scholarship fund, etc.

**55) If you are a Real Estate or Mortgage company, donate a percentage of every escrow to charity.** Nonprofit groups that specialize in building homes would be ideal. Let the sell or purchase of every house from your company help create a home for someone who can't afford one. Let your clients know what you are doing and that they are part of your efforts. Keep a tally of how many houses your company "has built" through these efforts.

**56) Landscape a local school or public office.** Whether you are a landscaping company, a nursery, or not you can help beautify a public place. Your employees probably already know of organizations that need this kind of help. If not, call a school, senior citizens center, or homeless shelter and ask if they need any landscaping help. Find out exactly what they need. It would be a good idea to have two or three people from your company go down and physically see what needs to be done. Have employees gather for a Saturday "work party" at the designated spot. They can donate the landscaping materials and plants, or your business can. Or consider co-sponsoring the event with a nursery or landscaping company.

**57) Help your Community Theatre.** Community theaters can always use help whether it's supplies for building sets or costumes, updated lighting and/or sound equipment, refurbished seats, computers or advertising. These people bring hours of entertainment to your community and they will sincerely appreciate your help!



**58) Donate your replaced or surplus computers and office equipment to charity.** Many smaller organizations cannot update their equipment on a regular basis and are working with obsolete

computers and copiers. When you are replace yours, contact a smaller nonprofit group and ask if they could utilize what you are replacing. Offer deliver and set up what you are donating - especially computers and other office equipment. Be sure to send along the manuals that go with them.

**59) Offer to pay for a post office box or mailbox for a local shelter.** Having a mailbox address allows battered women to receive mail without it being delivered to a street address. These women need anonymity for their safety. This is also a great idea for a homeless shelter. Many shelters offer programs to help residents get jobs. However, in order to get a job the applicant must have a mailing address. This is a wonderful gift for people in dire situations who are trying to improve themselves and their situation.

**60) Sponsor a community youth sports team.** You can help your community's youth sports programs by purchasing uniforms or equipment and by paying for advertising on their field fences, etc. Playing a team sport is an important way for kids to learn team skills, cooperation and leadership which they will use throughout their life. Supporting these programs in a tangible way is not only an investment in our kids' future and an immediate boon to them and their volunteer coaches' morale, but shows your company cares.



**61) Encourage your employees to serve on civic or nonprofit boards or committees.** Give them time off if these meetings occur during the work day. Consider paying their membership "dues" and support them attending the monthly luncheons. They will be representing your company at every meeting, so give them all the support they need to represent you well.

**62) Create or contribute to a scholarship fund for single parents who want to go back to school.** Provide funds for tuition, books, and daycare for their children. Set the parameters of

who you will help - employees? Their families? A local agency already providing a similar service? A particular department at the local community college? You can either donate a particular percentage of your gross income, or get your employees involved in fundraisers. Provide a banquet dinner for every graduate you help support.

### 63) Mentor kids in your local youth corrections facility.

Every inmate needs support and mentoring. But kids especially need to know that someone knows and cares about them. Be a friend who visits and writes on a regular basis. Give the gift of hope. See if your company can't help improve the conditions at the facility. Make it a company-wide project.

*"Everybody can do something that makes a difference. Everybody has talents that could help someone else. Entrepreneurs, especially, can contribute real business skills to nonprofits that can help programs function more efficiently and reach more people." <sup>28</sup>*

*~Todd R. Wagner  
The Todd R. Wagner Foundation  
Dallas, Texas*

64) Create an employee volunteer program<sup>8</sup>. Your employees will benefit with improved performance, increased job satisfaction, better team work, increased leadership and skill development and improved communication between them and their supervisors as well as across departments. Your business benefits because such a program builds brand awareness, strengthens trust among the community, enhances your image, improves employee retention and productivity, and strengthens your relationships within the community. In a 1999 survey, Points of Light Foundation found that 74% of companies surveyed agree that volunteerism increases employee

productivity, 93% said their volunteer programs helped improve employee teamwork, and 81% said it directly affected the bottom line.

**65) Donate free website design and development services to a local nonprofit.** Smaller nonprofit companies often cannot afford a web designer and don't know where to start in designing and marketing a website. If you have recently updated your computers, donate the computers you just replaced. Or if you have surplus computers, printers, or scanners donate and network them for the organization.

**66) Offer your lobby as an art gallery for aspiring artists.**

Contact local schools and colleges and offer your lobby as an art gallery for their students. You can display their art year round (having them come and rotate pictures and sculptures). You can also feature artists on a monthly basis complete

with an opening show for their art work. They will be more than happy to come and set up their work at your invitation. Pay for the advertising for their show and invite the Media.



**67) Sponsor a Health Faire in your parking lot.** Invite local health agencies to come and give free health screenings, blood pressure tests, eye exams, glaucoma testing, etc. Invite the Red Cross to set up a blood donor drive at the same time. Your mental health department may have programs they would like to highlight. Let each group set up their own table and hand out brochures along with offering a health service.

**68) Create a nature trail.** Is there an area of natural beauty in or near your town? Consider creating a nature trail complete with resting benches. Employees can participate in many areas: the physical labor of clearing the route for the trail; securing the landscaping materials for the trail itself; research for naming the plants are natural

phenomenon along the path; creating and placing the plant signs as well as directional signs; creating a self-guided tour brochure.

**69) Start a kids' drop-in center (or volunteer to help at one already in progress).** Provide a safe place for kids to come after school and do their homework or play with their friends. Have people there to help with homework questions and supervise the kids' play. Provide table games, basketball hoops, foosball tables, and possibly a TV/DVD area where a movie of your choice is played. Some kids will want to be active, others may need some down-time. If possible provide computers with printers for homework assignments.

**70) Provide healthy vending machines instead of sodas and sweets.** Put healthy food in those vending machines in the lunch or staff room. Offer fruit, yogurt and healthy snacks and sandwiches. Avoid the salty snack and candy machines altogether. Offer juices, milk, and water.

**71) Start a Wish List program.<sup>9</sup>** Solicit lists of items needed from an emergency shelter or temporary home facility in your community. Post the list in the work room or put a copy in each employee's paycheck envelope. Assign a room to accept donations. Ask for volunteers to box the items and deliver them to the shelter and the appointed time. Encourage your employees to stay in touch with the shelter throughout the year for additional ways to help.



**72) Join with other organizations and businesses to create parks<sup>10</sup> in your area.** As more and more of our land is paved over with buildings, residences and roadways, park land is disappearing. Gather together businesses that have trucks, landscaping materials, nurseries, and can create playground equipment and ask the city to donate land for your project. See if there aren't houses or property downtown and in residential areas that can be converted into parks. Solicit help from Real Estate agents, the City Planning Department,

etc. to make it happen. Pull in the Media from the beginning and let them help get the word out.

**73) Sponsor "Make-Overs" for the moms and daughters in shelters or safe houses.** These individuals are under a lot of stress and suffering from poor self-esteem. Contact a beauty college, local beauticians or even women in your own company who will give hair cuts, shampoos, perms, manicures, pedicures and can do make-up. Make them feel extra-special and the center of attention for a few hours.

**74) Sponsor a major food drive for local shelters and/or food pantries.** If you are a membership service, give away a free membership for a bag (or two) of groceries.<sup>11</sup> For current members and employees, give away t-shirts for bags of groceries or donations or participation in your service several times per week for the month during the food drive. Ask local newspapers and grocery stores to partner with you by publishing news releases and displaying brochures and promotional posters.

***"I believe in linking your business to what you do philanthropically. It's a great way to leverage your resources, your connections, and your strengths. Let philanthropic projects be driven by the interests and the abilities of your employees – as well as by the interests of both your share-holders and your clients."***<sup>29</sup>

***~Roger Brown, Cofounder, President, CEO  
Bright Horizons Family Solutions Inc.  
Cambridge, Massachusetts***

**75) Hold an Annual Amateur Models Run-Way Show.** Partner with a low-income program and several clothing stores. Let as many kids as possible participate in modeling the clothes. Get your

employees involved. Have someone teach the kids how to walk down the run-way to music. Get the Media involved in promoting the Show. Sell tickets and donate all proceeds to the low-income program you're working with. Not only will the kids have a blast, learn a lot about hygiene and performing before an audience, but you'll be helping a local nonprofit organization and your public image as well.

**76) Help furnish a "new" home for abused or battered women and their kids.**<sup>12</sup> These women often leave everything behind when they escape their abuser. It's difficult to leave that kind of situation knowing you have to start over. Work with the shelters as well as the placement agencies or groups that are helping women who are overcoming their situation and becoming self-sufficient.

**77) Sponsor a community Dessert Contest.** Invite local celebrities to be the judges. Ask the Media to help you get the word out. Have employees put up posters in Laundromats, bowling alleys, store windows, etc. Ask local restaurants if they will feature the winning dessert for a month. Invite the community and charge per slice or serving of the desserts after the judging is completed. Invite others to make cakes and/or pies for sale as well as having good old-fashioned Cake Walks. All proceeds from the Contest as well as the dessert sold at the local restaurants are donated to a charity, scholarship fund, community project, etc.



**78) Support or start a "Kids Voting USA"<sup>13</sup> program in your community.** This is an organization that provides instructional materials for K-12 teachers to teach our youth to be responsible citizens by learning how important voting is as adults. Kids learn about democracy in family dialogue, classroom activities and by actually voting in special mock polling locations while their parents are voting. Your employees can get involved via their kids' school activities as well as by helping with marketing, public relations, fundraising and

information technology expertise. Go here to learn more:  
<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>

**79) Do you do business in a small town?** Do your kids travel miles for entertainment, i.e. going to the movies, ice arena, miniature golf, bowling etc.? Consider keeping them safe by providing entertainment at home. Offer your facility (or rent a hall for them) for dances, battle-of-the-bands, rented movies. Or challenge the community to build a theater<sup>14</sup>, bowling alley or miniature golf course.

**80) Donate carpeting, freezers, washers, dryers, etc. to families who have lost theirs due to flooding** of basements. Every year areas of our country (yours may be one of them) suffer flooding of basements. After arranging for replacements, help deliver and install them. Get your employees involved. While the families are waiting, have your employees volunteer to do their laundry, cook meals, or help with the clean-up.

**81) Start or support a program that helps adults and youth understand the problems and issues the kids are facing today.** Bring in special speakers (testimonials are the best) and use multi-media to engage the participants. Possible topics would be teenage depression, alcohol awareness, teen suicide, etc.



**82) Create a coupon book for your products/services and provide them to nonprofits as fundraisers.**<sup>15</sup> Sell the books for a \$1 to cover your printing costs and suggest the nonprofit groups resale them for \$3-\$5. Include discount coupons from your vendors or associates as well.

**83) Teach English to non-English-speaking employees and/or members of your community.** Provide tutors (other employees) onsite. Make it available to all employees on a volunteer

basis. Some of your employees may be parents of children in their school's ESL program. You'll be helping not only your employees, but their families and your community at the same time. Contact your local school district for information about how to teach English as a Second Language (ESL). You might also visit [EnglishClub.com](http://EnglishClub.com) for ideas.

**84) Support or start a learning program for kids revolving around outdoor activities.** You can host outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing, archery or fishing. Invite their parents to participate. Teach about the flora and fauna of the areas you visit along with the skills needed for the activity.

**85) Host satellite college classroom sites in your facility.**<sup>16</sup> Encourage your employees to attend the classes. Help them earn a college degree rather than just going through company-sponsored training. You'll be amazed on the return of your investment to your employees, your company and the community.

**86) Help local residents start their own business.** As a business owner you have many insights and skills that you can freely share. Offer a one day seminar and invite other business owners to share their insights. At the end of the seminar, provide a panel of the business owners for a question and answer segment.

**87) Start a CASHFLOW® 101 game night once a month (or more often).** Robert Kyosaki<sup>17</sup> and Sharon Lechter have created an excellent way of teaching people (including kids) how to create income. Utilize his "Rich Dad Poor Dad" books, audios and games and the books of his associates. He makes learning economics fun. Provide it for your employees and their families - or invite kids from the community.

**88) Get your employees to volunteer at an equine therapy center.** These centers are designed to help people through interaction with horses. The centers' needs are as varied as their programs:



- Walking beside a horse being ridden by a person with physical or mental handicaps
- Working in the barn
- Help with caring for the horses
- Cleaning tack
- Helping at fundraising events
- Serving on boards and communities

**89) Are you an accounting or tax firm?** Encourage your employees to donate assistance to small nonprofit organizations or businesses that cannot afford to pay for accounting, auditing or tax services. They might also help individuals who need help with their taxes such as the poor, disabled or elderly. You could also offer free or low-cost seminars and workshops on personal or business finance. Go here to find more ideas  
[www.aicpa.org/pubs/jofa/nov1999/shafer.html](http://www.aicpa.org/pubs/jofa/nov1999/shafer.html)

**90) Set up a different kind of scholarship fund.** Use your imagination and create something unique. There may be children in your community (or even employees' kids) who can't go to preschool or after school programs or summer camp because of lack of funding. Perhaps high school students need help with school supplies and clothing. Maybe college students need help - but you want to use different criteria for awards, like community service, environmental involvement, etc. Perhaps you have employees who would like to go back to school to get their G.E.D. - a scholarship for them might be time off for adult school classes. Maybe you have employees who would like to go to college and you can pay tuition or books. The ideas are as varied as the needs in your company or community.

**91) Give matching grants, award grants or in-kind grants.** Recognize an employee each year who has been active in community service. Award a grant (cash and/or in-kind) to the charity they've been helping. You might also provide a matching grant of any donations they've made.

**92) Sponsor a clean-up day in your city.** Depending on the size of your town you may need to select a specific area instead of an all-city clean-up. Ask the Media to help get the word out. Have employees

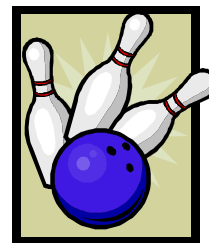


hang posters around town. Make it a fun day at the same time. If it's a smaller area, invite a band or DJ to play while you clean. Provide a hotdog and beverage lunch. Ask the local grocery stores to donate food. If small children will be present, provide a special area for child care with lots of activities. If you choose the first Saturday of the month, list your project for free at the Together We Can Change the World Day<sup>19</sup> website and get as many people involved as possible.

**93) Call the Red Cross and host a blood drive.** If you have the space, offer your workplace as the donation site. If you don't have space, set up a shuttle service for your employees. Donate meals for the volunteers. You can also make the appointments and have employees directing people as needed. Contact the Media and have employees place flyers around town. You might even challenge similar sized businesses to see which company will donate the most blood. If you're a small town - challenge a neighboring town. Be sure to have the Media do stories during the donations and a follow-up story afterward.

**94) Sell rights to "dress down" on Friday.<sup>20</sup>** Employees donate \$1 (or whatever amount you choose) for the right to dress down. The company matches that amount and donates it to an agreed upon charity (or several on a rotational basis) chosen by the employees. Be sure to give the employees a running tally of monies raised and where it was sent.

**95) Sponsor a bowling tournament to raise funds for charity.<sup>21</sup>** Close the office and have employees go to a local bowling alley. Raise money for fun things like \$3 for bowling a strike or \$1 for rolling a gutter ball. Donate the funds to a predetermined



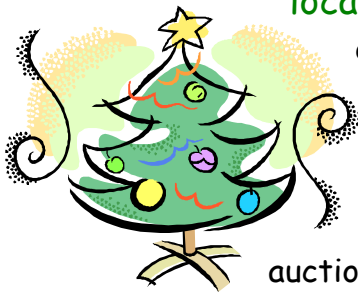
charity (chosen by the employees).

**96) Offer "give-aways" for 2-3 hours.<sup>22</sup>** If you provide a product or service, give it away for a 2-3 hour period in exchange for a donation to a charity. Decide on the charity beforehand and mention it in your media blitz. Be prepared with extra help (and supplies) for the give-away time period.

**97) Are you a printing or copying company?<sup>23</sup>** Provide free in-kind services to local nonprofits in your town. Involvement with the community allows people to see your name and this will generate more business. Being able to help and receive benefits to your company at the same time is definitely a win-win situation. You can also support new businesses in the community by helping them get started by doing some of their start-up printing without charge. They will most likely become your customer for all their printing needs.

**98) Donate one day's earnings to charity.<sup>24</sup>** Choose one day where your employees will perform all their regular services but all money brought in that day will be donated to the charity of their choice.

**99) Sponsor a Christmas tree decoration display.<sup>25</sup> Invite local artists** to decorate trees and put them on



display in front of your place of business or a busy spot - perhaps the local mall. Do a silent auction during their display (or during a particular day and time) with all proceeds going to a local charity. Deliver the trees to the

auction winners. Or instead of an auction, simply donate them to senior centers, homeless shelters, pediatric wards, etc.

**100) Allow your employees to make charitable donations as deductions from their paychecks to a matching fund.<sup>26</sup>** Have employees decide on what nonprofit group(s) will benefit from their

donations. Then allow them to specify how much the company will withhold from their paycheck and put into a special employees' fund. At the end of the year, the company will match the employees' fund and donate the combined funds to the predetermined charity/charities.

**101) Adopt a nonprofit organization and get involved in all areas.** Let the employees choose the charity. Donate time working at the shelter on a regular basis. Help with mailings (usually a huge job), cleaning, yard work, serving meals, bookkeeping, and sorting donations. Provide special "drives" for the organization, i.e. books or resources for their library, toys for the children, school supplies, blankets and coats, etc. By working with them on a regular basis, they will let you know of special needs.

**BONUS IDEAS:**

**102) Give your employees a set number of hours each year for community service projects.**<sup>27</sup> This time is in addition to vacation time or sick leave. Set up criteria for the areas in which they volunteer, i.e. must be nonprofit, non-discriminatory, etc. Set up a way to coordinate employee involvement and keep track of their hours.

***"Even the smallest companies and the busiest people can make a big difference with very little effort. Start by changing your perspective. Recognize that your company has a lot to offer whatever its size. The challenge is to find a way to employ your resources creatively."***<sup>30</sup>

**Ami Dar, Executive Director  
Action Without Borders  
New York, New York**

**103) Help kids think "outside the box" about what they can do.** For instance, if you are a computer or computer software company, offer a class to teach kids how to put together a computer or the different areas of programming, or marketing or business development. Be sure girls and minorities make up more than 50% of your classes!

**104) Set up a monthly luncheon or breakfast for business and nonprofit leaders.** Have them brainstorm community issues and how business philanthropy can help. Have one or more of the business leaders be restaurateur(s) who will donate the meeting place and meal.



## References

- <sup>1</sup> Big Brothers Big Sisters (<http://www.bbbs.org>)
- <sup>2</sup> Canada's Active Living at Work ([http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/introduction\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/introduction_e.html))
- <sup>3</sup> New York's MOVE FOR LIFE! is free and available online at ([www.Move4Life.org](http://www.Move4Life.org))
- <sup>4</sup> the Gift of Sight Foundation started "Sight Night" in 1999 ([www.givethesightofgift.com](http://www.givethesightofgift.com))
- <sup>5</sup> FirstBook ([www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org))
- <sup>6</sup> Junior Achievement ([www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org))
- <sup>7</sup> Dress for Success ([www.dressforsuccess.org](http://www.dressforsuccess.org)) is an organization for women that may be able to help provide clothing and additional training
- <sup>8</sup> Volunteer Match ([www.volunteermatch.org/business/businesscase](http://www.volunteermatch.org/business/businesscase))
- <sup>9</sup> The Wish List program of the Middlesex County Human Services, Massachusetts ([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0EIN/is\\_2005\\_Dec\\_19/ai\\_n15952082](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EIN/is_2005_Dec_19/ai_n15952082))
- <sup>10</sup> "Partners for Parks" program ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=4](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=4))
- <sup>11</sup> Curves for Women in Minnesota ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=5](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=5))
- <sup>12</sup> Becker Furniture World ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=1](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=1))
- <sup>13</sup> Kids Voting USA (<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>)
- <sup>14</sup> Wells Fargo and Baudette, Minn build a theater ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=7](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=7))
- <sup>15</sup> Hy-Vee supermarket coupon books for fundraisers ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=11](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=11))
- <sup>16</sup> Viracon supports high education onsite ([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=18](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=18))
- <sup>17</sup> Robert Kyosaki's website is <http://richdad.org/>
- <sup>18</sup> Quote by Michael Dell, Chairman & CEO, Dell Computer Corp. (<http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/30/one.html>)
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.TogetherWeCanChangeTheWorldDay.com>

- <sup>20</sup> Jeans Day at U.S. Bancorp, Marshall, Minn.  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=22](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=22))
- <sup>21</sup> Bowling tournaments  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=28](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=28))
- <sup>22</sup> Give-aways with donations  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=27](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=27))
- <sup>23</sup> Free in-kind printing  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=26](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=26))
- <sup>24</sup> One day's earnings to charity  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=30](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=30))
- <sup>25</sup> Christmas tree decorating  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=24](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=24))
- <sup>26</sup> Paycheck deductions  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=32](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=32))
- <sup>27</sup> Set number of volunteer hours off work  
([http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view\\_story.cfm?ID=10](http://www.mnchamber.com/foundation/view_story.cfm?ID=10))
- <sup>28</sup> <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/41/one.html>
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/30/one.html>
- <sup>30</sup> <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/12/one.html>

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