Blood Donation As Corporate Philanthropy

Clear Benefits to Reputation and Employee Morale

Major organizations and corporations across the nation understand that being part of a local community is about more than providing jobs – it is also about creating a better and healthier community. To that end, employers who encourage employees to volunteer, especially by sponsoring blood donor programs, develop into respected “corporate citizens.”

Dedicated blood donors and volunteers embody the true spirit of community service and make a positive impact on their fellow employees’ morale and the reputations of their companies. In fact, results of a recent study on corporate philanthropy by the Council on Foundations and Walker Information (CoF/WI) suggest that employees with favorable impressions of their company’s giving and community service programs behave in ways that benefit the corporation.¹

Blood donation has always been perceived as valuable volunteer activity. Blood donors who give an hour of their time experience an indescribable feeling of joy from knowing they have made a real difference in the life of someone in need. Not surprisingly, the CoF/WI study found that employees rank their companies’ volunteer and non-profit sponsorship as the two most fundamental giving efforts.

Corporate blood drives also help build a positive image of the company within the workforce. Donating blood allows employees to communicate with one another in unique ways. Blood drive participation helps employees to build new relationships and improve old ones with their co-workers, and they begin to value and see one another in a different light.

“A blood drive is an excellent way to make a difference during a national crisis or any time of the year,” wrote Ruhal Dooley, human resources specialist, in HR Magazine² after the September 11 attacks. “Blood drives are inexpensive, efficient, and they save lives. Because they are also good for boosting employee morale, they can be held regularly as a company event.”

Moreover, an employee who has positive perceptions of his or her company’s giving programs is four times more likely to feel a sense of commitment to the company itself. And the more employees’ perceptions of company are positive, the more likely they are to act in ways that positively benefit the company’s bottom line.³ The equation is simple: Corporate blood drives help create satisfied employees; in turn, a happy, spirited workforce achieves greater productivity.

The Exxon Mobil Corporation sees the benefits very clearly. As Houston’s fourth largest employer, Exxon Mobile understands the importance of being a responsible corporate citizen and has chosen to embrace the local blood center’s donation program. Support for the community is built into the corporate culture of the company through the guidance of top management and the support of thousands of employees.

Similarly, insurance giant MetLife developed a customer-service culture that reaches beyond its clients. For MetLife, blood donation is a way to express the importance of being a positive part of a community. “We’ve developed a strong culture

². Work-site blood drives help nation, morale, by Ruhal Dooley, 2001, HR Magazine
³. Ibid. n. 1
of ‘the client comes first’ that extends beyond customers. This is a very giving company…Our employees have earned top awards for blood donation in New York City,” says MetLife’s Chairman and CEO Robert Benmosche.4

Johnson & Johnson has been recognized over the years as having the highest blood donation participation rate of any company in the world and has been listed among the best workplaces. In 2003, more than 50,000 units of blood – enough to help save the lives of as many as 150,000 people – were collected during the company’s nationwide blood drives.

“At the core of our company is the Johnson & Johnson Credo, which represents our commitment to our customers, employees, communities and shareholders,” says Theresa Ragozine, Director of J&J’s National Blood Program. “The behavior it requires is clearly one of the reasons why we attract such an extraordinary employee base: caring people who believe in doing the right thing for the right reasons. It’s the people of Johnson & Johnson who make our company special and our programs successful – and blood drives have always been a great success story, thanks to the ‘heart’ of the J&J family.”

By partnering with the local community blood centers, she says, Johnson & Johnson has been able to develop a national program with a network of blood committees that conduct more than 200 blood drives per year.

“Our employees take great pride in the fact that they fulfill their community commitment by participating in a program that literally saves tens of thousands of lives each year, and that they are encouraged by the company to do so. What better morale booster than having people feel good about doing the right thing for the right reasons?” Ms. Ragozine says.

Not many initiatives give national corporations and organizations an opportunity to demonstrate to employees their level of community commitment. Such programs help boost employee morale in a way that benefits the company’s bottom line. Blood donation programs achieve these goals with few funds and minimal time commitments.

To become a sponsor of a national program, contact Matt Granato, Director of National Programs and Marketing at America’s Blood Centers.

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4. Reaching Beyond Profit and Loss, by Nancy Shepherdson, October 2003, Continental Magazine