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Trust. Integrity. Creativity.

## Five Tenets of a Successful and Sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility Program

A well-designed and implemented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy is clearly aligned with your company's mission, vision, organizational values and culture. It has top-down and cross-functional support, and it contributes to your quadruple bottom line (people, planet, profit and purpose). An effective CSR program is sustainable and creates business value by increasing your customer base, enhancing your corporate reputation, boosting employee engagement and delivering results in long-term financial gain.

Often, public issues challenges can be addressed through an effective CSR program. The first step in implementing such a program is thinking strategically about the issue or cause you will tackle and conducting an honest assessment of your business; your operating environment; the public's perception of who you are and what you do; the government's level of interest in your business and issues important to you; and the media's perception and portrayal of your business; and the priorities you are pursuing. All of these will be critical factors as you plan and implement your CSR efforts.

Here are OTM Partner's five tenets of a successful and sustainable CSR program:

### **1) Strategic and Focused Effort**

A successful CSR program must be built upon a well-defined plan with a meaningful set of tested and concrete actions. Such a plan needs to have a concise statement of objectives, clear mission and vision statements, a wide array of identified strategies that will drive home effective solutions, and a funding stream to support the implementation. Equally as important, the plan must reflect the mission and values of the organization and be fully integrated into the corporate culture.

At OTM Partners, we specialize in the development and management of nationally branded communications programs with a focus on corporate social responsibility campaigns.

Blending creativity with craft, we transform challenges into opportunities and objectives into outcomes.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is our business. Our award-winning team of CSR strategists has more than two decades of experience in the communications arena, and we understand that effective CSR programs are an essential element for succeeding in the business world today.

Whether you are looking to assess your current CSR efforts or to create a national program from the ground up, OTM Partners is the right team to help you achieve your goals.

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## **2) Top-Down Support**

A sustainable CSR program needs clear, consistent and visible support from the highest levels of the organization. Internal and external resources need to be dedicated to the initiative and an executive-level team member should be assigned responsibility and accountability for the program. To be truly effective, a CSR program needs to be embedded into every aspect of business planning, decision-making and budget processes, and it must project a positive public image of what the business is and what it does.

## **3) Partnerships and Coalition Building**

When building out your CSR program, partnering with experts and other interested parties will lend credibility to your initiative. By engaging a diverse set of stakeholders from across your industry and beyond, you will expand your reach, enhance your reputation and better position your business for future success.

## **4) Communication**

The internal and external communication pertaining to a CSR initiative is crucial. Education and outreach will establish a basic understanding of the goals of the initiative. Consistent, transparent and easily accessible messaging will convey credibility and inspire trust and cooperation among stakeholders, enabling them to unite around a common goal. These internal and external message points must be tested and expertly managed in order to ensure that a unified effort is communicated effectively to a wide array of stakeholders.

## **5) Evaluation, Auditing and Reporting**

Sustainable CSR programs must be regularly evaluated against specific and measurable long-term goals and metrics. A comprehensive system of auditing and reporting must be incorporated into the program and provide a continuous feedback loop. More importantly, this feedback must be integrated into the CSR strategy to ensure that the program is as up to date, responsive and successful as possible.

Successful and sustainable CSR programs, like those designed and implemented by OTM Partners, create a shared value with your various internal and external stakeholders. By encouraging critical and creative thought in your development process and incorporating these five key tenets, your CSR program is much more likely to achieve a sustainable and lasting impact.