

Best Practices in CSR - Internal Communications

With the “Snowsteria” on the East Coast this weekend, my family got a “flurry” of important messages from work, school, sports, neighborhood, temple, and governments via text, email, telephone, intranet, traditional media, and social media. Each communication affected us on two levels: 1) Received logistical information, and subtext 2) This institution cares about us.

I thought about the social and economic impact generated by so many corporations and businesses, and the importance of sharing that with stakeholders: *here's what we do; here's why it matters; here's how you can engage*. However audience #1 must be employees. Because the world is smaller and flatter than it used to be, our own people are the front line of impact and of public opinion.

The best strategy to spread the word within a company is to incorporate messages into *every communications opportunity* possible. The break rooms, orientation & training, store & department meetings, regional events, HR calls for benefits, etc.

What we do. Why it matters. How to help.

Corporate Hartz Clients' Creative Tactics for Internal CSR Communications

Pharmaceutical holds an employee Bright Ideas *contest for ways to save time, waste, and energy with the goal of decreasing the company's carbon footprint*. Monetary rewards inspire exploration, experimentation, and suggestions. The internal e-newsletter allows employees to see the ideas, vote on their favorites, learn who won the cash, and keep up with the environmental impact of the implemented changes. Bonus: over time, non-contest-related civic volunteerism increased.

Manufacturer invests in literacy programs in its plant communities. Each quarter the CEO *sends a branded book and a letter in the mail to each employee's home*. This ensures that all family members know about the work they are doing building libraries and reading nooks, and supplying community groups with both reading material and volunteer readers and tutors for the young and the still learning.

Retailer leverages volunteer leaders in all employee engagement opportunities. Communications, especially around recognition, have made these roles coveted. All volunteers have hours tracked, but leaders can get a certain number of hours on the clock to do project management work. Annually, the CEO hosts lunch with a limited number of high-volume and high-service volunteers. There are *speeches, rewards, gifts, pictures with the CEO, and an edited video is distributed company-wide*.

Enlightened leaders know that authentic strategic environmental, social, and governance programs produce stronger companies, communities and markets. Over time, spare change leads to sea change, but much of the benefit requires telling others about it; we need people, businesses, and organizations to learn and participate. Remember: *the most important audience is already on the payroll*.