

Getting Involved – A Blueprint for Companies of All Sizes



Since there is no guidebook, blueprint, or “5-step plan” for having companies become positive and caring members in the community, it is certainly difficult to pinpoint an iron-clad process that companies can use to create similar community benefits to what we’ve achieved at WBM.

In my opinion, the most important thing you need to do is to care. And I mean genuinely care about people.... *all people*. Not because of how it looks, or how it will help you corporately, or because you’re tired of crime in your neighborhood...but *because they’re people*. That’s the only foundation from which you can build an impactful Community Initiative – and *it hinges on who you hire* in your own company, and what values you look for beyond the specific job qualifications. If you don’t have staff who truly believe in these values, then you will not be able to sustain your programs. You can still donate money, and spend the occasional volunteer hour here and there (and being that I am also on the Board of Directors for Care and Share Saskatoon, I can tell you that every little bit helps), but to be truly impactful in your Community, you simply need to care.

At WBM, we care deeply about children and the youth in our communities. So the time, energy, and investments that we make as a company are centered around providing opportunities for the children in our communities.

If forced to create a blueprint, here are the 5 major takeaways that I think every organization should implement to be more “human”:

Invest time, Not Money

This simply builds trust. Without the trust of the kids and parents, you will never know what will actually have an impact for them.

Listen to the Community, Especially the Kids

Once you have trust, you can talk openly with the people who actually live in these areas; and if you listen, you'll soon learn that *the kids know*, and will tell you, the honest story about the impact your donations are having, and where they're actually going.

Be an Ordinary Role Model

You don't have to encourage kids to be doctors and lawyers, or have pro athletes or celebrities come and try to motivate them...everyone knows those are long shots, even for the 'rich'. Moreover, for these kids that motivation only lasts until they go back home to the exact opposite life.

Often they have negative role models in their lives, and all they need is someone to show them that there isn't any magic required to just having a good job and being happy. I sometimes show up to the school in a suit, sometimes in jeans, but I always show up. If you always treat the kids the same then they'll realize that the perceived divide between them and 'business people' is just the clothing they wear, and that they have every right to interact with and eventually work alongside those people.

Build Your Company on People with Strong Values & Morals

You should be doing this anyway.

Place a very high level of importance on who a person is, and you will have a foundation of integrity in your staff upon which you can build a meaningful relationship with the community.

Develop Initiatives...& SHOW UP

Once you have steps 1-4 in place, you will be able to develop relevant, unique initiatives that clearly satisfy the needs of the community, and the kids; and you should have the basis for an on-going and reliable presence in the community.

But the most important part...is showing up over and over again. Don't start an "initiative" if you're just going to do it once for the recognition, or to talk about it later as "something great you did".

Investing time to listen at the beginning is critical...but if they never see you again, then you're just another undependable person in their lives who pretended to care.

Cory Bailey

Cory began with WBM in 2010 full time working in outside sales. Since then, his career has taken him into Enterprise print management, where he's very proud to currently manage and oversee the print fleets for 5 large enterprises across Canada. He also manages WBM's Community Relations initiatives, and is a proud member of the Board of Directors for Care and Share Saskatoon – which is a children's charity working with the inner city, or 'community' schools in the city.

Cory (and his dog Frankie!) is an avid fisherman and outdoorsman, and a huge Formula 1 racing fan, but concedes that his very favorite thing to do is spend time with his nieces and nephew.