



Corporate Social Responsibility

*Business opportunities through
helping the community in Solihull*



A business opportunity...

A company's social and environmental credentials are becoming increasingly important in the marketplace. More and more people are looking to do business with companies that share their values and a growing body of evidence is pointing to motivated employees, innovation and skill development and enhanced reputation as just some of the reasons to get involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

This brochure contains ideas for how your company could lead on CSR locally and showcases some of the existing projects that have reaped real benefits for both business and community.

So why not do something for Solihull?

Dave Pinwell - CEO, SUSTAIN

Foreword

Both as a businessperson and through my involvement in local charities, I have seen the benefits that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can bring.

For the community, support from local businesses enables charities and voluntary groups to achieve things they would not otherwise be able to achieve – from a community garden that would have been left to ruin to specialist skills and expertise to assist an organisation through a period of change. For business, it helps to build integrity and authenticity, to underpin long-term business objectives and demonstrate true brand values.

There are hundreds of local businesses willing to release employees for local community activities. It makes good business sense, helping to develop transferable skills, motivating people and contributing to team cohesiveness.

I am now asking you to volunteer your support and help to our Solihull charities and voluntary groups. With over voluntary organisations in the borough, there are a whole host of opportunities, both large and small, where your business can make a real difference.



Sue Yates - Vice-President of Solihull Chamber of
Commerce and Chair of Pre BID Board

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility is about giving something back to the community. It is about limiting a company's social and environmental impact and taking steps to make a positive contribution to the communities in which it operates.

Moreover, it is an opportunity to be innovative and lead, to enhance brand values and demonstrate integrity in line with established business goals.

The Benefits

Engaging in CSR activities brings numerous tangible benefits to your business. Here are just a few:

enhanced reputation

44% of the British public believe it is a very important that the companies they buy from show a high degree of social responsibility*. Getting involved in a community activity demonstrates your commitment to conducting business responsibly.

personal development

Providing opportunities for your employees to volunteer enables them to develop new skills and gain experience in different arenas - accelerating their personal development.

*Little, A.D. *The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility* (2003)

employee satisfaction

Volunteering has also been shown to boost motivation, productivity and employees' sense of self worth, making it "more than just a job". Improved satisfaction is a key factor in business success*.

good PR

Most companies will recognise that doing something for the community makes a good news story. Here at SUSTAiN we will help to spread the word about the great work you are doing in the community.

team building

Working on a community project provides a team building opportunity with a real beneficiary at the end of it. A great way to motivate people and improve working relationships.

reduced waste

Donating unwanted equipment to charities or voluntary groups reduces your environmental impact and makes a real difference to the recipients.

competitive advantage

CSR sets you apart. It helps you become the employer of choice and the company people trust to do business with.



Realising solutions



A frequent request from voluntary organisations is for people with a highly specialised skill-set. St. Andrew's Church Centre, Chelmsley Wood is a prime example, where the support and dedication of its volunteers benefitted from being supplemented by some external expertise.

The expertise in question was a qualified accountant who understood the unique requirements of church finances. Solihull-based Chartered Accountant Nigel Sabell (ACA) was just the person.

From the word go, Nigel instilled a renewed sense of optimism and confidence in St. Andrews, offering leadership in financial planning to help the church centre meet the challenges ahead. Sound financial advice is providing encouragement to build a vision for the future.

Reverend Jed Fathers said: "having support from Nigel Sabell has opened up new possibilities for the centre, helping us to find new answers to old problems. We are enthusiastic about the future and hope we will be able to develop our reach into the community of Chelmsley Wood".

"St. Andrews is a great team, it's a pleasure to be part of their future vision" - Nigel Sabell (ACA), Chartered Accountant

Building a better Solihull together

With the opening of a new office at Solihull Business Park, engineering company MWH was looking for opportunities to support its local community and knit together its new team. Step forward Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, a 17th century walled garden in need of a few pairs of extra hands to help with its upkeep.

A number of employees came forward who were willing to give up their lunch times to support a community project where their skills and enthusiasm could be put to good use. This provided a natural team building opportunity and a chance for people from different parts of the organisation to come together.



To date, the team at MWH have created a new path through the grounds and a raised vegetable garden for local children to learn about food and its production.

Delme Allan of MWH comments: “this is the type of project that we enjoy. It complements our work within MWH and we prefer hands on projects where we can see the difference we have made.”



“An excellent way to build relationships for a new office” - Delme Allan, MWH

Wanted not waste



Finding good homes for 300 unwanted chairs might sound like a daunting task. But The ICC found help was at hand in the form of SUSTAiN's network of voluntary and community organisations.

The company was looking for a responsible way to dispose of unwanted furniture following a re-fit of its conference facilities. Meanwhile, volunteers at Castle Bromwich Cricket Club were undertaking a long-overdue refurbishment of its pavillion.

Thanks to a match from SUSTAiN, the cricket club received some much needed extra furniture, relieving the ICC of surplus equipment that would otherwise have gone to waste. Says SUSTAiN's Martin Clarke: "The life of these chairs will now be extended by offering them to Solihull's voluntary and community organisations where they are really needed".

Geoff Fenlon, General Manager, The ICC, said: "We are very happy to have been able to contribute this furniture to a good home rather than see it wasted. The ICC is an environmentally conscious venue, and with an impact of £2 billion on the West Midlands economy, The NEC Group is always aware of its social responsibility. I hope that there will be further opportunities to work with bodies such as SUSTAiN in the future."

"A perfect example of how both business and community can benefit" - Martin Clarke, SUSTAiN's Business Advisor

Community spaces



Here at the Ramada Solihull, known locally as 'The George' we have adopted a corporate and social responsibility package that is far more than just donations to local charities. It is about working in harmony with local voluntary organisations to offer our resources in a way that benefits both of us. A good example is the way we offer meeting room facilities at vastly reduced rates as long as community groups can be flexible on bookings to avoid peak demand periods.

There is a very strong business case for this approach. It keeps meeting spaces occupied when they may otherwise be empty, is excellent public relations for the hotel, brings people into the property to raise public awareness and instills a sense of worth and pride to the staff who are serving them. From the perspective of voluntary organisations it allows them to project a professional image and deliver value beyond the expectations of the people attending.

You may also find that this opens up sponsorship opportunities as many organisations will not want to be seen to be spending large amounts and positively encourage you to advertise the fact that you have supported them to bring their costs down.

In short - look at the products and services you can offer and consider a partnership approach to unlock the maximum benefit.



Andy Cole - General Manager, Ramada Solihull

Solihull Together

SUSTAiN is asking Solihull's businesses community to take leadership in the CSR element of Solihull Together. The Solihull Together programme aims to encourage more local businesses to support local voluntary organisations - and provides a high profile focus to do so.

Business Supporting



Through our CSR brokerage service, we can put you in touch with groups that could use your support. Our dedicated business advisor will discuss your requirements with you and match you with organisations most suited to the type of help you can offer. We will also help you to realise the business benefits you are trying to achieve.

Some of our main CSR “products” are listed on these pages. To discuss your requirements further, please get in touch - details on back page.

Team Challenge

A novel and exciting way to build team relationships. Team challenges offer employees the opportunity to support a community-based organisation with a one session activity such as refurbishing a room or clearing a garden. Why not use the project as an exercise in communication and teamwork?

Team Challenge +

Team building exercises can also be used as corporate fundraisers. A fun way to harness employees' imagination and raise funds in a tax-efficient way through SUSTAiN.

Pro Event

A basic training or instruction session in a specialist skill, set-up for several voluntary organisations with the same need.

Pro Help

Many voluntary organisations need one-off professional advice in areas such as accounting, law, business planning, quality assurance, HR, IT and marketing. Could you use your skills to benefit the community? In some cases, a one-off pro bono meeting can lead to paid professional work.

Mentor

Typically a once-a-month session offering professional expertise to oversee an organisation through a period of change. A great opportunity to transfer your skills to a new environment.

Community space

Many companies have spare office space and meeting rooms not always in use. Could these be offered to community group for free or at a reduced-cost?

Equip

Reduce disposal costs by offering serviceable equipment and furniture to voluntary organisations. Equipment that is no longer of the highest grade or specification for corporate use may still be suitable for community use. A cost-effective, environmentally-friendly solution.

Volunteer

As relationships grow individuals may wish to assist a community organisation with more long-term skilled help by becoming a volunteer or trustee. Apply existing skills into new areas and enhance personal development.

Partner

An opportunity for a company to develop an on-going relationship with a charity or community group. Such partnerships are highly valued and may provide opportunities for PR, team building and increased job satisfaction.

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SUSTAIN provides support services and
development to help Solihull's Third
Sector get FIT FOR THE FUTURE

