



Supporting Charities Can Build Your Brand, Effect Hearts, and Minds.

During these trying times, we can lose focus on the long-term effect and value charitable organizations contribute to our nation's health, welfare, and core values.

Company charitable contributions are no longer viewed as an obligation to open up the wallet and sponsor some cause just to maintain goodwill. Smart companies have turned this former burden into a "win-win" situation by supporting worthy causes that contribute to building their brand.

While this is not exactly new, today's savvy "social marketers" have been increasingly able to use their sponsorships and charitable donations to build brand awareness, loyalty, and market share. Building "good karma" can be as cost-effective as traditional advertising and marketing, and let's not forget the halo effect on employees, their families, your company's suppliers and partners.

The secret to matching a charity brand to your brand is mostly common sense and some homework.

-Start by clarifying your business values, use your companies mission statement as a guide. See if the charity's mission statement meshes with yours.

-Identify where your customers are donating, what charities they support, and what's important to them. Choose a cause that resonates with them and your company.

-Find out if you'll be in good company.



These companies have contributed to Toys for Tots in the past.

-Choose a cause that also connects with your employees; this will yield added participation and support.

-List the criteria the charity has to meet, whether local, national, age directed, faith-based, health-specific, or humanitarian oriented.

-Does the charity offer clear transparency and accountability?



-Find the right path to give. Supplying approved, free masks during a shortage for healthcare workers could promote more brand value than giving money. If you own a local taxi company, you may want to supply senior's free transportation to Doctor appointments.

-The bottom line: do the charity's values reflect those of your company, its brand, customers, and employees.

Charities are in themselves great examples of successful branding. Chances are you know these brands.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

BBSSA is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. They served over 135,000 six- to 18-year-old kids in 2019 alone.



Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

They began in 1860 when several women in Hartford, Conn. decided to develop a positive alternative for boys who were roaming the streets. Originally called the Boys Club, girls were added to the program in 1990. Girls now make up 45% of the membership.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Toys for Tots.

Toys-for-Tots is a mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. During October, November, and December each year, Toys for Tots volunteers collect new, unwrapped toys in their community and distribute them as Christmas gifts to needy children in that same community. All told, the program has distributed more than 370 million toys to more than 173 million disadvantaged children.



Ronald McDonald House Charities.

RMHC works on programs that directly improve the health and well being of children. They are most well known for their Ronald McDonald houses that



provide a home away from home for families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at nearby hospitals, as well as scholarships and other programs.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Since its founding in 1962 by actor Danny Thomas, children from all 50 states and worldwide are treated at St. Jude. All told, St. Jude's treats some 4,300 children a year — at no cost to their families. It is the third-largest health care charity in the United States and has more than one million volunteers nationwide.



You don't have to be a fortune 500 company to reap the benefits of charitable branding.

Several years ago, my wife and I participated in the Walk for The Cure charity event, sponsored by local, small businesses and organizations. Over two hundred people gathered in Charlie Daniels Park (Mt. Juliet TN.), where we, and about 50 others wore our fundraiser cancer survivor t-shirts.

We were treated to dinner by a local restaurant sponsor and waited on by volunteers from our community. There was entertainment by local singers and a band that entertained from early afternoon till sunset. At which time, we walked around a path lit up with lantern lights bearing the names of our loved ones who died from cancer. When we passed our Mothers and Fathers names, our eyes welled up with tears. As we neared the end of the walk, the local Boy Scout Troup and military reserve members saluted us; it was a moment that we still remember. The loyalty we felt for the charity and local businesses that made this happen is indelible.

Charlie Daniels was a great Nashville Musician; he resided in Mount Juliet, TN, and was known for all the charities he sponsored, especially our military. Charlie Daniels was and even after passing is still his own over the top, life-sized brand.

Supporting charities that align with your company's heart and core values can add to your bottom line, but most importantly, shine a positive light on you and your brand.

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