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Connection

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Give Back, Success Will Follow

While corporate philanthropic initiatives can make a significant and lasting impact on charitable causes, businesses that uphold philanthropic responsibilities also benefit by enhancing the company's external reputation and internal culture.

At J.H. Cohn, our legacy of community service dates back to 1919 when Julius H. Cohn founded the Firm on this business philosophy: "If you do your best to serve faithfully your community, your clients, and your associates, success will most surely follow."

More than 90 years later, this approach continues to be the cornerstone of the Firm. We value our employees as our most important asset; are committed to the success of our clients; and care about the communities in which we live and work.

Today, J.H. Cohn's charitable activities revolve around assisting children through the J.H. Cohn Foundation's Cohn for KidsSM campaign. Organizing an umbrella campaign for key supported charities allowed the Firm to combine activities into one collective effort.

In addition, with countless worthy non-profit organizations and causes, establishing a theme for philanthropy can help a business organize its approach and decide where its efforts will be concentrated. It also helps build a brand,

allowing, over time, the company to build a reputation not just for its product or services, but its commitment to the community. In choosing the theme, Michael Cohen, CPA, partner and director of the J.H. Cohn Foundation, recommends selecting a cause for which you can build broad support.



Michael explains, "We chose to focus on charities that support children to make a measurable impact on children of all ages, from young kids to college students. Our employees, clients, and friends of the Firm all share in our passion for helping kids."

In fact, at J.H. Cohn, giving back truly permeates the Firm culture. Employees embrace the notion, rolling up their sleeves and getting personally involved. This is exemplified in many initiatives, including the annual employee Bowl-A-Thon benefiting the Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Jersey. Each bowler raises donations and sponsorships from friends, family, and clients, while other employees volunteer to plan the event and help in other ways. Over the past ten years, employee Bowl-A-Thons have raised over \$1.1 million for the

Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Jersey, making the Firm the top corporate donor in the state. The New York offices of J.H. Cohn have also held Bowl-A-Thons in recent years benefiting the Metro New York and Hudson Valley chapters of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Giving back among employees goes beyond Cohn for Kids. For instance, California offices held networking events benefiting local Dress for Success chapters and an employee go-kart race that raised \$10,000 for Children's Hospital Los Angeles. In Connecticut, employees spent a day preparing for the next group of campers at the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, which provides seriously ill children with an empowering away-experience. These are just examples of the many ways offices give back to their communities throughout the year via collections, fundraisers, and events.

When a company hosts fundraising events or group outings, the community work brings employees together, building stronger teams with which to serve customers. Michael points out, "As everyone takes a step back from their busy schedules to rally behind an important cause, it makes each of us feel good about ourselves, and the company we work for."



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He advises, "To see success with your fundraising, do not undermine the significance of having well-organized events. I'm proud of our signature events—our annual golf invitational and Bowl-A-Thons—and our commitment to the quality of these events."

Companies can establish a foundation, as J.H. Cohn has, to manage its charitable efforts. Michael recommends doing so for the tax-advantaged benefits, but notes that there is an additional administrative cost to take into consideration yet emphasizes that businesses do not have wait to have a charitable foundation established to do good.

Michael's key advice: "Create a strategy that allows your business to make the greatest impact with philanthropy by focusing on charities that fit a common theme, and consider the role giving back plays in the company culture." ■



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