

HUMAN TOUCH

‘HUMAN’ ENGAGEMENT BECOMES NEW FOCUS FOR CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

—By Holly Fisher and Steve McDaniel—

In 2016 Rachel Hutchisson, vice president of corporate citizenship and philanthropy at Blackbaud, created a presentation titled “The Era of Corporate Social Responsibility is Ending” for TEDxWilmington.

In typical TEDx Talks fashion, it was meant to be thought-provoking. Hutchisson – who’s built a 26-year career espousing the value of corporate philanthropy – doesn’t necessarily believe corporate social responsibility is actually dead. But, she very much believes it’s undergoing a much-needed change to remove some of the limitations of “corporate” philanthropy.

A lot of attention and resources are directed at the philanthropic efforts of Fortune 500 companies – the Starbucks or the Apples of the world. But, Hutchisson argues, good is for everyone and for every business –

regardless of its size.

The shift is moving away from “corporate” and to the human element – the people who actually make up these businesses – big and small.

“There’s really this broader understanding of what we call social good,” she said. “It’s how we understand that social good and good is for everyone. Companies that get too focused on ‘corporate’ and their needs are missing the boat by not thinking about the people who make up their company.”

When Hutchisson started her career more than two decades ago, people left most of themselves in their car when they arrived at work, she said. There wasn’t this intertwining of home, work, community and personal passions.

“The world has shifted,” she said. “What we

believe interweaves with what we do every day.”

Lots of people – especially millennials – are seeking out companies that care about more than just the bottom line.

“People want to have a career with meaning,” Hutchisson said. “That idea of seeking purpose has become so fundamentally important to many people in the business world.”

This concept of human social responsibility is rooted in employee engagement. Businesses can’t simply set the philanthropic agenda in the C-suite and expect all their employees to follow their lead, Hutchisson explained. That model is aging, she added.

CONDUCT A PHILANTHROPY AUDIT

To make that shift from “corporate” to “human” social responsibility, Hutchisson said

businesses of all sizes should take the time to understand what their people care about. She suggests conducting an audit of your current philanthropic efforts, including monetary donations and volunteerism.

Think about why your business supports certain organizations and causes, then survey employees to determine their passions and their opinions about your current charitable efforts.

This doesn't mean a company must abandon a cause, especially one that aligns well with the company brand, Hutchisson said. But it could mean adding some more charitable giving options and letting the employees make some of the decisions about how the business makes donations or engages in sponsorships.

Blackbaud has a portfolio of programs, including a matching gift program that gives employees the flexibility to donate to whatever cause they choose, knowing their donation will be matched. The "reward your passion" program allows employees to secure a \$500 donation for the nonprofit they support through volunteer work.

And employees are part of Blackbaud's grants program committee, deciding which organizations receive grants from the company.

SHARING THE LOVE AROUND THE LOWCOUNTRY

Another Charleston-based company that involves its employees heavily in its charitable efforts is BoomTown, creator of a real estate software platform.

Nina Magnusson's title as "catalyst" for Citizenship and Social Innovation Initiatives reflects BoomTown's desire to be a strong community partner. And the efforts of the philanthropy team – called BoomTown Love – are largely employee driven, Magnusson said.

Employees participate in such local initiatives as the South Carolina Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Be a Mentor, Meals on Wheels, Reading Partners and The Green Heart Project. BoomTown provides birthday cakes for children living at the Carolina Youth Development Center. The company also is part of the CodeON program, teaching free coding classes in Charleston's underserved neighborhoods.

And the list goes on and on.

"The lines between company, employee, family and neighborhood have blurred," Magnusson said. "In order to engage employees,



BoomTown's Quality Assurance Team software developer Tyler Fraking and CodeON student Shawn learning the basics of coding together at the Rosemont Community Center. (Photo/Provided)

it's important for them to know their company is connected."

BoomTown gives employees time to volunteer during the workday whether it's reading to school children or participating in Trident United Way's annual Day of Caring.

"We know work-life balance includes nurturing your soul," Magnusson said.

Johnson & Johnson, an insurance managing general agency firm in Mount Pleasant, is dedicated to giving back to the local nonprofit and charitable community in a variety of ways. Teresa Vaughn, the company's human resource director, leads the company's philanthropic efforts across eight offices in seven states.

She has been giving back since she was a little girl, learning about charitable work alongside her mother, a Colombian immigrant who would collect toys for orphans in the Phoenix area.

"My parents always helped others," Vaughn said. "I remember like it was yesterday going with my mother when I was about 8 to take toys to orphans who went to school in a poor, rural area outside Phoenix. We weren't well off ourselves, but my parents always were involved in collecting, fundraising and helping those less fortunate.

"Johnson & Johnson is family-owned, and part of our core value is to give back to the community," she said. "We participate in the National Day of Giving where all of our offices are closed for the day to participate in a charitable

project in their community. The company also offers a paid day for each employee to take as a volunteer with a charity of their choice."

Vaughn is busy helping organize activities such as coordinating Trident United Way donations from Johnson & Johnson employees, who had a 100% participation rate last year within the company and raised more than \$300,000. She is also on the leadership committee for Trident United Way's Women United, a group made up of women who have made significant contributions to the Lowcountry charitable community.

"Everyone can give something, whether it be time, money, mentoring or something else," Vaughn said.

Mercedes Benz Vans is in the midst of increasing its workforce and production capacity in the Lowcountry. Alyssa Bean, a communication specialist at the Sprinter van plant in Ladson who leads the company's community outreach committee, said the expanded resources will give the company the ability to enhance its existing charitable giving and employee volunteering.

"We are expanding our support for the local community," she said. "It was a corporate decision to increase those efforts at the same time we're increasing our manufacturing presence in the Lowcountry."

Mercedes-Benz has a long-term commitment with the South Carolina Aquarium and has donated a specially outfitted Sprinter



BoomTown employees' 'Running of the Bulls' team that raced in the i5k to raise money for the Charleston Digital Corridor programs in 2014. (Photo/Provided)

Van to transport sea turtles that the aquarium is rehabilitating for release back to the ocean. They also partner with Charleston Promise Neighborhood in an outreach program for underprivileged students in Title One schools and their families that includes activities related

to science, technology, engineering and math. The idea is to expose the students to career opportunities in STEM-related fields such as automotive manufacturing.

Volvo has not yet built a car or SUV at its facility under construction in Berkeley County,

but the Sweden-based automaker is already busy at work in philanthropic efforts. Stephanie Mangini, corporate communications manager, is organizing grassroots charity and volunteer efforts for the growing employee base, projected to number 500 by the end of 2017 and reach up to 1,800 for the first production phase.

"We wanted to establish a community outreach program from the outset," Mangini said. "The leadership for Volvo's U.S. operations here in the Charleston area thought it was important to get this in place even before we started production."

Mangini, who previously served a similar role at MeadWestvaco (now Ingevity), said Volvo has already established a grant program and advisory group to evaluate the best places to invest time and money within the Lowcountry charitable community. The first phase of grants has already been set and a second phase is in the final stages of the application process.

"Employee engagement is very important to Volvo," she said. "The company wants employees to give back. If an employee comes to me with a project they're passionate about, I'm going to do everything I can to help them get the resources they need to do that." **G**

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BoomTown's 'Jurassic Park Team' after running the 5k to raise money for the Charleston Digital Corridor 2017. (Photo/Provided)

GIVING BACK

CHARLESTON'S FRIENDLY NATURE SHINES

Charleston has been called the world's friendliest city. There are many reasons for that: its world-class hospitality industry; its approachable citizenry when tourists ask for directions; and, most importantly, its willingness to help those in need. The photos in this section illustrate just a few of the philanthropic and humanitarian activities and efforts that go on every day around the Lowcountry.

Without the generous financial and volunteer support of employees at small and large companies around the tri-county area, many worthwhile community outreach programs would find themselves unable to sustain their efforts. Volunteers have helped build homes in

rural and impoverished areas, stock shelves in food banks, deliver food to the elderly and infirm, raise millions of dollars for charities, teach children how to read, shelter and clothe the homeless and much more.

The Lowcountry is fortunate to have a well-developed support system when it comes to charitable giving and volunteerism, thanks to organizations such as Trident United Way, the Coastal Community Foundation, Together SC, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the S.C. Community Loan Fund and others. Their services are invaluable in organizing and sustaining major volunteer and charity efforts such as the annual Day of Caring.



Volunteers and Trident United Way staff talk with a visitor to the Finance & Food Trucks event put on by the Berkeley County Prosperity Center in April to celebrate Financial Literacy Month. The event hosted financial literacy classes on a range of topics and rewarded attendees with tickets for food from participating food trucks. Live music, a bounce house and face-painting made it a family affair. (Photo/Provided)



Johnson & Johnson employees partner with Charleston Habitat for Humanity on Trident United Way's Day of Caring in 2016. This year's Day of Caring is Nov. 17. (Photo/Provided)



Alex DeLuna and Rostina Mincey at their first day with AmeriCorps working in the Berkeley County Prosperity Center, a collaboration between Trident United Way, Palmetto Goodwill and Origin. (Photo/Provided)



Cummins employees volunteering at the Lowcountry Food Bank through a corporate work engagement opportunity facilitated by Trident United Way. (Photo/Provided)



An Eaton Aerospace employee reads to a group of kindergartners after she and coworkers drop off backpacks full of school supplies at Mary Ford Elementary in North Charleston. (Photo/Provided)



Matthew (right), an intern with Cummins, working with Trident United Way Volunteer Engagement Manager Amanda Netsch to prepare food for a hot lunchtime meal during the annual Day of Caring. (Photo/Provided)



Employees of Mercedes Benz Vans helped build oyster reefs on James Island recently. The plant has organized employee volunteer events as part of scheduled production shutdowns. (Photo/Provided)