

# STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RELATIONS

# Agenda

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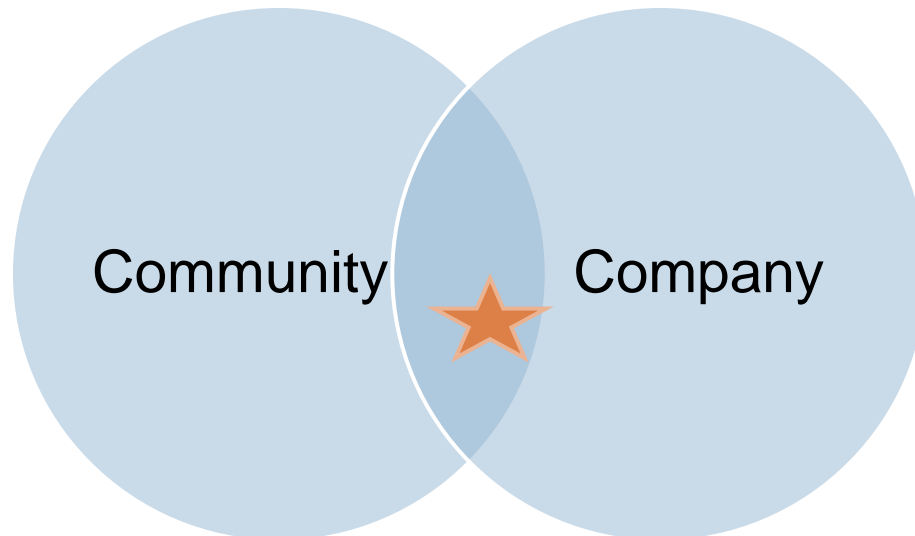
- Defining Community Relations
- What Makes CR “Strategic?”
- Benefits of Community Relations
- Case Study
- Best Practices
- Resources

# What is Community Relations?

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The methods that companies use to create and manage relationships with the communities in which they operate. A company engages in CR activities by taking an active role in the well-being of their community.

CR allows external audiences to “get to know” your company in a way separate from a product/service.



# Common Community Relations Activities

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- Cash sponsorships/philanthropy
- Employee volunteerism
- In-kind donations & pro-bono work
- Knowledge sharing (guest speaking/lectures)
- Environmental stewardship
- Memberships
- Economic renewal projects
- Sourcing practices & supply chain management
- Hiring and employee wellness programs
- Waste management & disposal
- Employee behavior
- Facilities management and maintenance

# CR has Changed Over the Years

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## Old Days

*“Balloons, Free Pizza and T-Shirts”*

- ❑ One-way
- ❑ Community Goodwill
- ❑ Added Value
- ❑ Ancillary
- ❑ “Window Dressing”
- ❑ Nice

## Today

*“Tablestakes”*

- ❑ Two-Way
- ❑ Reputation Management
- ❑ Proactive
- ❑ Strategic Business Imperative
- ❑ Required

# Typical Benefits from CR efforts

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## ***Direct to Bottom Line***

- Increased sales
- Loyal customers
- Purchasing product/service

## ***Indirect, but still benefit Bottom Line***

- Employee recruitment, retention & pride
- New business opportunities & networking
- Building/enhancing trust
- Brand awareness/building
- Relationship building to secure business related issues
  - ▣ financing, expansion, taxes, ordinances, etc.
- Community goodwill in times of crisis
- Neutral opportunities to dialogue with constituencies

# Making CR “Strategic”

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## ☑ **Preparation:**

*Doing the homework necessary to evaluate and decide which CR activities are the right ones for your company*

## ☑ **Approach:**

*Understanding that CR provides opportunity for dialogue, learning and impacts how you do business*

*Considering every external activity within your company as an opportunity for “Community Relations”*

## ☑ **Review:**

*Willingness to reflect on results of investment and make changes to improve results in the future, no matter how successful the endeavor*

# Strategic CR: Preparation

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- Decide your target audiences

*This is an internal, private discussion. Be honest with yourself and your company. It's okay to say "I want to have the governor know/like my brand" or "I want to enter the youth market."*

- Decide your objectives for each audience

*What do you want to accomplish? This helps define success and give goals to work towards. Increase sales? Grow brand? Zoning restrictions?*

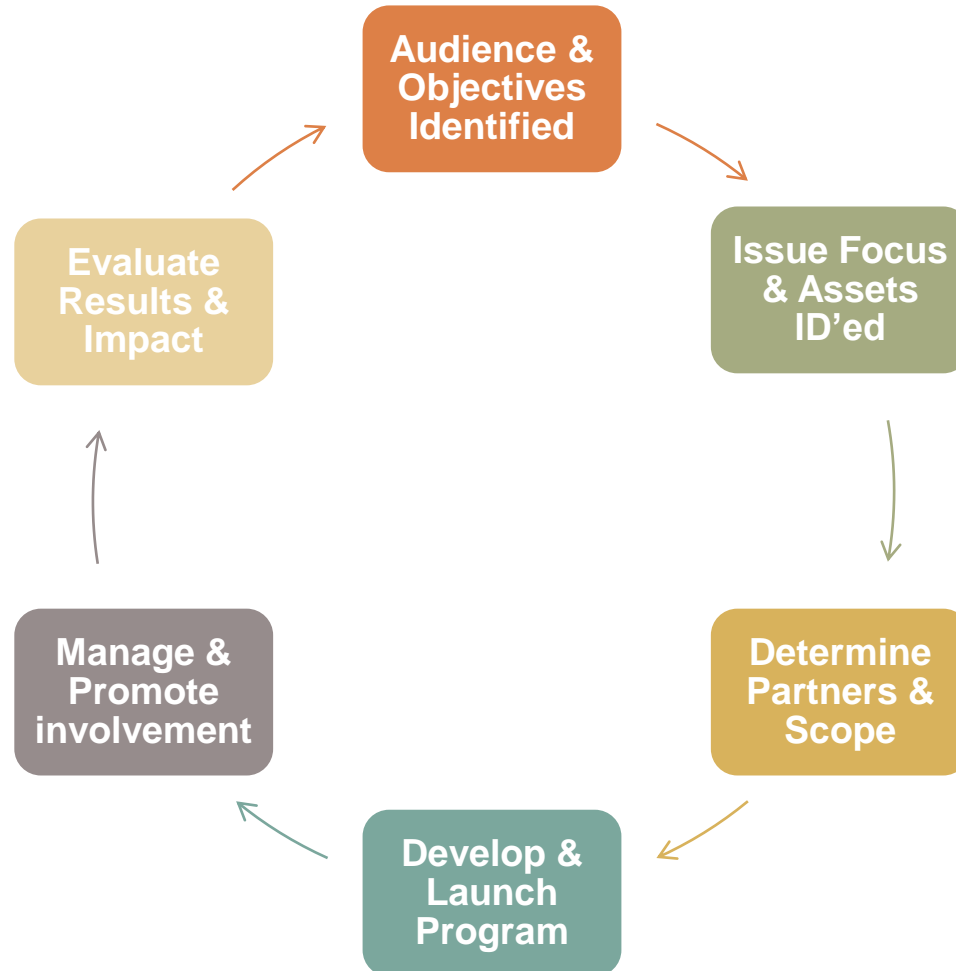
- Determine what resources that can be dedicated to the strategy

*Consider both financial and nonfinancial resources. Employee time? Warehouse space? Expertise? Free account?*

- Examine what social/community issues matter most to your business (not you)

# Implementation Chart

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# Strategic CR: Approach

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- Understand that all external interactions offer an opportunity to reinforce or weaken your company's place in the community
- Ask questions of your community & target audiences  
*What do you think? What do you need? How can my company help?*
- Successful CR programs benefit organizations beyond your company  
*Need to understand what other partners want accomplished*  
*View as any other strategic business partnership*
- Help employees & others understand their role in the program's success  
*Internal application and external communications*
- Choose a single point of contact  
*Ensures accountability and consistency*

# Does this Program...

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- Demonstrate authenticity to my audiences?
- Is it easily describable by me and others?
- Can I demonstrate results, and my company's role in achieving those results?
- Am I communicating the program to the right audiences using the right tools in a way that is genuine?
- Is the social issue that is supported, as well as any nonprofit or government partner, the right alignment for my business?

# Strategic CR: Results

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- Build in opportunities for learning and measurement
- Comfortable tracking outputs and outcomes  
*Go beyond the numbers*
- Work with partners to understand how measurement results will loop back into project improvement
- Communicate those results back to your identified audiences

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# Case Study



# Case Study: Citizens Bank NH

## □ Approach

- Citizens Bank's business strategy is built on a commitment to the 3 C's: customers, colleagues and community
- Maintain "Outstanding" rating in the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)
- Responsive to community needs – a leader in developing innovative solutions
- Locally-driven implementation

# Case Study: Citizens Bank NH

## □ Objectives

- ▣ Enhance Citizens Bank's brand/image
- ▣ Favorable press and public relations
- ▣ Build colleague loyalty and moral
- ▣ Develop third party support
- ▣ Be integral to business success

# Case Study: Citizens Bank NH

- Audiences
  - Customers/potential customers
  - Colleagues
  - Regulatory agencies
  - Government officials
  - Centers of influence
  - Media

# Case Study: Citizens Bank NH

- Champions in Action
  - Partnership with WMUR-TV
  - Highlight “unsung heroes”
  - Focus on four social issues each year
  - Leverage bank resources
  - Meaningful impact and on-going relationship with selected Champions



# Case Study: Citizens Bank NH

- Gear for Grades
  - ▣ Created in response to community need
  - ▣ Aligned with colleagues' interests
  - ▣ Engages customers
  - ▣ Locally focused



# Further Resources

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## Universities/Academia:

- Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship: [www.bccccc.net](http://www.bccccc.net)
- Georgetown University Center for Social Impact Communication: <http://www12.georgetown.edu/scs/csic/>

## Blogs:

- [www.realizedworth.blogspot.com](http://www.realizedworth.blogspot.com)
- [www.cause-nation.com](http://www.cause-nation.com)

## Web Sites:

- Just Means: [www.justmeans.com](http://www.justmeans.com)
- NHBSR: [www.nhbsr.org](http://www.nhbsr.org)
- LBG Associates: [www.lbgassociates.com](http://www.lbgassociates.com)

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# Thank You

