The Edge: Giving back makes smart business sense

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I’m often asked why my business supports so many local charitable organizations and how a business can balance the demands of work with the desire to help the community.

There are many ways that a business can integrate serving the community—either financially, through volunteer hours, or both. The important thing is to do something and to dedicate the resources you can to worthy causes.

So how can a business operate successfully and grow while simultaneously giving back to the community? And why should it be important to do so? Here are four reasons you should make community involvement a priority in your business:

• **Increase in employee morale.** By supporting organizations that are important to your employees, you are showing them that you care about them on a personal level.

Whether it’s sponsoring a child’s little league team or giving them time off to volunteer, you create a work environment that makes them proud to be a part of. At my company, we give
employees 12 hours a year of company paid time off to volunteer for the organization of their choice. They can volunteer for a few days at their child’s school or mentor a young person — whatever cause they have a passion for.

- **It strengthens the community.** A strong community is good for the bottom line of your business. Do you think your business would be more successful if it was surrounded by a strong, stable community? If so, then it’s time to do your part to contribute.

- **It feels good.** When you help others, it puts your own life in perspective. If you can’t afford a financial contribution, you dedicate your time. It is very rewarding to watch your efforts make someone else’s life better.

- **The “Collateral Benefit” for your business.** You’ve heard of “collateral damage,” this is the opposite of that concept. When your business takes the time to volunteer, you’ll meet all kinds of people, including individuals who may be able to help your business in the future. Or perhaps you meet someone who gives you tips on improving your business, your personal life, or gives you suggestions on how to balance family and work.

Give it a try. You’ll be amazed at the results — both personally and professionally.