



NEWS INFORMATION

Community involvement can help your business

“Working with the local community can help your business” – that’s the message from Phil Green, Managing Director at local company CBS Business Furniture.

A man who believes in action rather than talk, Phil has been instrumental in forging strong links between CBS and the local community since his appointment three years ago. “It’s important to CBS to actively engage with our local community,” says Phil. “Too often companies talk about social responsibility but don’t give of themselves personally”.



In addition to supporting selected local charities, Ascot-based CBS has also helped to pioneer a football coaching scheme for both boys and girls in conjunction with FC Bracknell. Piloted at Bracknell’s Birch Hill Primary School, the model is now being extended to other schools. Says Phil “It’s great to see the children get a real benefit from the scheme and getting out on the field with them is a real stress-buster! For the club, the scheme is a way to get more families involved and to develop their local support base.”

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Community involvement can help your business (Continued)

Supporting local initiatives is something the whole company has embraced under Phil's leadership. One such project involves general repairs and the upkeep of a local pre-school playgroup. Says Phil: "It has been a rewarding project – and a great team building exercise for us, providing a vital boost to morale in this difficult economic climate".



In addition to giving their time to local causes, CBS also believes in sharing their business expertise. On the schools front, schemes include an initiative launched with Year 6 children at a local school, offering hands-on supervision in the building of office workstations. The project was a perfect fit with the school syllabus, providing an opportunity to encourage peer collaboration and team-working. Following the success of the scheme, there are plans to roll it out to other schools.

With a number of such local schemes up and running, Phil has taken his programme to the next level by seeking to involve other companies. With the help of Connect Reading, as well as through its relationships with existing and prospective clients, CBS applies its expertise in refurbishment and relocation to put companies with furniture to give away in touch with support charity and support organisations in urgent need of office equipment. Organisations that have benefitted to date include the Stronger Together Programme; Reading Voluntary Action; Circles UK and Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers to name but a few. Comments Phil "The furniture and equipment we provide helps these organisations in managing their vital work with individuals and families. In addition to being hugely rewarding, by recycling the furniture we can help reduce landfill - something which fits absolutely with our environmental objectives as a company."

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Community involvement can help your business (Continued)

Once a match has been made, Phil personally organises the details of the transfer and makes time available in staff diaries for his employees to go in and install the furniture. “Staff enjoy doing something different and this gives them the opportunity to help others, which many of them with busy working lives would otherwise not be able to do.”

So how does CBS benefit as a business?

For CBS, engaging with its public has never been just about promoting the business. However, as Phil would be the first to point out: “At the end of the day, we are a commercial business”. The business connections that the company makes in acting as an intermediary to re-home furniture can be useful, admits Phil, but he believes the major benefit for companies is more fundamental. Speaking in an interview conducted for a Connect Reading Forum on ‘Creating Profit Through Community Involvement’ earlier this year Phil stresses:

“Our involvement in this area gives us tremendous credibility, not only within the local community but equally important, with suppliers, existing and potential customers. The confidence this builds in us as a brand is invaluable, particularly since service is a key element of who we are and what we offer. It is also a significant part of our environmental story.” He goes on to say “For our staff too, there are benefits. Taking people away from their everyday work and maybe sometimes out of their comfort zone is a challenge and tremendously motivational, something which is especially important in these difficult times. As well as being a bonding exercise, involving staff transforms them into ambassadors for the business.”

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Community involvement can help your business (Continued)

What's Phil's advice to other companies who want to get involved?

“Starting out can be difficult, especially when you haven't got the time to endlessly trawl for contacts who could benefit from your time and services. Get in touch with us if you have equipment to spare, or talk to local organisations like Connect Reading who can bring requests for help to you. It's also a good idea to talk to local schools within your borough.”

Last word from Phil: “It's tough for charities as well as businesses in the current climate, so if you are already involved in community initiatives it is important not to withdraw your support - and even more reason to get started if you are not. Together we can make a difference and you just might make valuable new business relationships in the process!”

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