

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

WHY
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES
FIRMS SHOULD
DONATE THEIR
EXPERTISE





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Every professional person claims that they are time poor. Despite this challenge, there are many benefits to be gained by individuals and the firms they work for or own if they find the time to contribute their expertise to the community they live, work and earn a living in.

AT STAPLES RODWAY CHRISTCHURCH WE have a philosophy that we make a good living from the local business community that we live and run our business in. To ensure we are good corporate citizens, we believe that we should involve ourselves with the likes of charities, sports clubs, school boards of trustees and more. This involvement invariably means a role in governance, resulting in accepting positions on committees boards and other governing bodies. Given that we are accountants, this often entails acting as the treasurer or serving on the finance and risk committee.

Organisations that the Directors and staff of the Christchurch office are currently involved in include St Joseph's School Board of Trustees, Old Boys Rugby Club Committee and Finance Sub Committee, Christchurch Golf Club Board, Cancer Society of New Zealand Canterbury West Coast Division Executive Committee and Treasurer, Diabetes Christchurch, Christchurch City Mission Committee, various school PTA's, Christchurch Wine and Food Society and Canteen to name a few. There are many others and the other Staples Rodway offices also support many charities and clubs.

People choose to get involved in these sorts of organisations for many reasons. The obvious expertise that professionals bring with them is usually viewed by the organisations as financial expertise. However, given that Chartered Accountants spend a lot of our working week dealing with clients from all types of businesses, we also bring a raft of other, often less obvious, value to the clubs and charities that we support. Not only are we able to offer advice around cash flow management, Charities Services reporting and internal controls, but we also bring skills to the board or committee table, which include best practice around governance and the ability to tap into other contacts within the business community that might be of assistance to the organisation we are working with.

Externally, the tangible value we bring to the clubs and charities that we serve can be very useful. For our organisation there is hidden value, which is often not obvious or considered.

These benefits include:

- Improving our firm culture. By openly supporting our community through charitable giving of our expertise we are setting an example to the people in our organisation that it is "not all about us". This in turn serves to develop a culture where our people become externally focused towards helping the people we serve – our clients.
- Personal and professional development. By serving on Boards and Committees our people rub shoulders with people from many walks of life. These people often have other skills that are relevant to the organisation, but they will often be non-accounting based skills. Consequently, we develop personally and professionally and can take these new skills into our day job. This is of value to both us and our business clients. A good example is best practice in governance, which is an area of expertise that many of our clients are turning to us for more guidance on.
- Rubbing shoulders with other members of the community, for example lawyers, bankers and business owners. This gives us an insight into other people's expertise and helps us to grow our professional networks, which is ultimately where referrals of new work come from.
- The feel-good factor. For those who are involved in giving their expertise there is the feeling of personal well-being that helping others has on their own state of mind. They are better people for the experience.

In conclusion, we are all time poor, but giving our expertise to those who need it offers inherent value to us all in making a positive difference in the communities we live in. Find a charity or club that you are passionate about and volunteer your services – you won't regret it.

Want to know where to start? Tracy Hickman explains how you can go about providing your time and governance skills on page 2.