

Community building is good business

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Do you know what can happen when 100 Caledon business women get together?

Raise money for starters ? \$10,000 to be exact. In one hour.

Why?

For many reasons, but I would argue that we as business people need to inject ourselves into the communities we are a part of. The group that I belong to, 100 Women Who Care Caledon, decided that raising funds was one way we could contribute to the community.

Why is this type of community building important to businesses?

? You get a better understanding of the community and clients you serve/service.

? It builds corporate/team moral.

? It allows for networking and collaboration opportunities.

? It improves name and brand recognition in the community.

? It just feels great!

There are other ways to contribute. Besides raising money, the trick is to get your team involved in something that you all feel passionate about.

Earlier this year, we spent a Sunday evening chopping vegetables and making soup with a room full of strangers for Family Transition Place, a shelter for abused women and their families. We heard stories of resilience and new beginnings. We learned the value of a warm bowl of soup made by one person for another. There wasn't a dry eye in the room, and it wasn't the onions.

In quantifying the outcomes from that exercise, I would say that it humanized us to each other, strengthened our working relationships and helped us empathize better with the residents we serve.

You may be wondering how you can get started or which community group, cause or charity you should connect with. There are many ways you can get involved.

Caledon Meals on Wheels, for example, enlists members of the business community to deliver meals every March for their March for Meals.

And there are many other local charities and not-for-profits that offer opportunities for meaningful, community-focused team-building. Personally, I support Caledon Meals on Wheels as a Board Member because I care about seniors who are isolated in our community.

If you're still not sure where to devote your talent and energy, agencies such as Volunteer MBC (volunteermbc.org) can help find the right fit for you and your organization.

So why not make community building part of your 2018 business goals?