



Good deeds are great for business



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ETHICS IS A QUALITY of the heart. It's something that grows within you but isn't seen easily from the outside. For that to happen, you need to express your ethics in deeds that are visible to others. To paraphrase Henry Ford, a person who makes nothing but money is a poor kind of person.

Most people communicate their ethics at work. That's because people spend the majority of their time working. But there's another way to convey your values: through service to others. There are two reasons to get involved in volunteering. First, it rounds you out as a human being; second, it's good for your business.

The British management thinker Charles Handy suggests most people view "work" too narrowly. Instead, he thinks people should view it as a portfolio of activities: wage-based work, free work, home work (household chores), study work (educational and professional development) and gift work (charitable donations and volunteering).

Handy goes on to say that for most people, their work portfolio contains only their job. This isn't just dangerous economically — since jobs have a way of disappearing — it also is hazardous to people's mental health. People expect their job to produce all of their happiness — an unrealistic expectation. A healthier approach says to allocate your work into several diversified buckets (sound familiar?). This lowers your economic risk and increases the odds you achieve personal contentment.

So, if you're dissatisfied, consider becoming a volunteer. It will balance your life and make you a lot happier.

The other reason to volunteer is to generate exposure and goodwill for your business. Companies have been doing this for years. What's new? Americans now display

their passion for various causes on their wrists, cars and clothing. They're also supporting brands, companies, and even mutual funds that stand for something they believe in and can feel good about.

This phenomenon has sparked a lot of "cause-related marketing," where companies donate a portion of their sales to causes their customers value. According to the IEG Sponsorship Report, U.S. corporations spent nearly \$1 billion on cause-related marketing in 2004.

Now, you're not a huge corporation, so you may not want to earmark a portion of your revenue to charity. But the next best thing is to volunteer your time. Here's why:

- It tells people what kind of person you are. When prospects or clients see you volunteering in the trenches, they'll feel good about you and be more likely to do business with you.
- It gives you a competitive edge. Since a majority of advisors don't volunteer, those who do get a leg up.
- It establishes you as a community role model. And we all know what happens to role models: They get a lot of visibility and positive word-of-mouth.

So wear your ethics on your sleeve. Pick a cause you're passionate about and apply your talents to it. When it comes to ethics in action, good deeds are great for business.

i Don't miss Steve McCarty at Senior Market Expo Sept. 27-29. Visit www.seniormarketexpo.com for more information.

STEVEN MCCARTY IS A DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL ETHICS BUREAU, A MEMBER ORGANIZATION THAT GIVES QUALIFIED INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL ADVISORS A PLATFORM TO MARKET AND GROW THEIR BUSINESS ON A FOUNDATION OF TRUST. TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP, CALL (800) 282-1831 OR GO TO WWW.ETHICSHECK.COM.