

Giving Back

Sustainability is about more than just sorting the glass from the plastics; it's also about strengthening local economies and building community. It's about respecting workers, acting ethically and treating those around you fairly. It's about giving something back. Whether you choose to participate in a fundraiser or volunteer work party, promote local artisans or simply write a cheque to a local charity, your organization can make a big difference. Listed below are a few suggestions to start you on your way.

Quick Start



Organize an employee team-building event to overlap with a community outreach program or fundraiser. For example, plant trees in local parks, assist at community shelters or join a Habitat for Humanity crew. Events such as these can boost employee satisfaction while supporting local community initiatives.

- ◆ Consider offering your staffers paid volunteer time. Make sure to reward or recognize employees for their community contribution, whether it is done through the company or on their own.
- ◆ Cross-promote community offerings by: advertising in locally owned shops and restaurants; supporting local artisans; promoting local events to visitors.
- ◆ Build the local economy by offering a mentor program, or internships, for young people. Create job opportunities for economically vulnerable local communities.
- ◆ Volunteer in your community to promote your business and build relationships. Creating a relationship with the community may lead to loyalty and commitment.
- ◆ Coordinate volunteering initiatives in partnership with other companies and local organizations.
- ◆ Move beyond philanthropy or sponsorship, and actually help build new initiatives. Partner on local or neighbourhood improvement initiatives.
- ◆ In-kind and monetary donations are important, too.
- ◆ Contribute to the community through social enterprises and independent business.

Case Study: A Lasting Legacy

Naturalist, activist and author Mary Majka is a champion of New Brunswick's nature, culture and heritage. Her volunteer involvement began when she immigrated to Canada from Poland in 1951 and continues to this day. Her list of accomplishments includes publishing a book about Fundy National Park, founding the Albert Country Heritage Trust, and co-founding several stewardship-related organizations. She was instrumental in the creation of the Machias Seal Island Bird Sanctuary and the Mary's Point Shorebird Reserve, and helped save several heritage buildings that are now important tourism sites. Mary has devoted her life to sharing her love and passion for Canada's Maritimes. Her efforts have helped draw innumerable visitors to New Brunswick, making it a beloved destination the world over.

Scenario: Labrador Skies Outfitting

As a hunting and fishing outfitter based in Gander, NL, Labrador Skies Outfitting offers its clients access to thousands of square kilometres of wilderness teeming with salmon, black bear, caribou and moose. But while their business may be in the bush, owners Terri and Greg focus their enterprise on the small communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Terri and Greg believe that young people need extra support and that their province's isolated rural towns need real opportunities to prosper. So they have launched a mentorship program aimed at young men ages 16-22. The apprentices learn about the natural environment, species identification, conservation practices, and traditional hunting and fishing techniques. After successful completion of the six-week training program, Terri and Greg offer their associates two-week internships on guided expeditions.

Labrador Skies operates as part of Newfoundland & Labrador's broader community and culture. The company is in the business of authentic, natural experiences, and the principals take this to its natural extension, drawing on the expertise of First Nations, Innu and Métis people to integrate traditional conservation principles, share traditions and teach about the area's unique cultural and natural history. In doing so, Labrador Skies preserves not only game populations, but also indigenous traditions.

On multiple levels, the company is a sustainable success story.