

“How to Win the Heart of the Community Through Service”

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Businesses are essential to the life of a community—in similar ways to how bones are essential to the life of the body. The support that bones provide is invaluable to the body as a whole. However, they are also vital in other functions like enabling movement, storing minerals, and creating blood. Likewise, I believe that a good business should be a multi-functioning entity that supports the community, enables change, builds community prosperity, and creates energy and life within a community. Completing these four functions in a community can be done in a variety of practical and creative ways, but it will be ineffective without one thing: authenticity. When this crucial element combines with the four functions above, both the business and the community around it will meet harmonious growth.

A business is not usually the first part of the community you think of as a strong foundation in times of need. But small and local businesses like Auto Body Hawaii are able to be these foundations that the people can lean on because they genuinely care about those around them. The community would be most impressed, if for example, they saw the employees of a company doing volunteer work cleaning up and repairing after a disaster like the tsunami last year. This could be done by closing the business down for a day or two and making volunteer work the tasks of the employees. This would advertise in a very positive way because it would impress the community with the idea that the business values community health even more than its profits. Once the company establishes a name of trust and integrity with the people, it becomes easier to serve the community.

A business also holds the capabilities to power the change that people often look for. It should gear itself towards a particular issue or two of the community that it can help. For example, here in West Hawaii a business could lead a community-wide campaign to save water, energy, or materials. A business could also lead a campaign for a global issue. When a company is willing to back an organization of goodwill ranging anywhere from The Salvation Army to the Water For Life project, people can identify with such projects because they know they can trust them. For example, a local business wanting to support water supply in third world countries could advertise for both themselves and the project by donating an amount of its profits to Water For Life. Distributing promotional materials to the public linking itself to the nonprofit organization would enable the business to hold events or rallies

for global issues. You reach the heart of the people by serving the issues at hand—no matter if it is on a local or global scale.

Two functions of bones—mineral storage and blood creation, are interrelated to each other, just as building community prosperity and building community life are. Building community prosperity is a process that occurs naturally by the work of collective business efforts if they are fiscally successful. However, a business that serves the people realizes that creating energy and life in the community is just as important as creating wealth because without the community spirit and unity, a society remains weak. A business can bring this type of dynamism to the community by hosting events of all sorts, whether it be the annual Easter Egg Hunt, Relay for Life, Zumba Fridays, a cultural festival, or anything else. Even if these events are too large

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for a small local business to plan on its own, it can at least contribute some effort towards them

so that the community sees that the business holds a high priority on serving the community.

However, people are naturally cynical and can easily see through a business that is merely putting on a cheap scheme to help its profits. To display that a business genuinely values service towards the community, simply be a business that values people, its employees, and its customers more than anything else. I believe small local businesses like Auto Body Hawaii already have the answer to be these things for the community; they just need the faith and support to do it.