

Community-Business Partnerships

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The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership (CBP) was established in 1999. The Partnership brings together leaders from the business and community sectors to promote philanthropic giving and investment in Australia. The Partnership also advises the Government on practical strategies to foster a culture of philanthropic giving, volunteering and investment in Australia to strengthen communities.

The Partnership's focus is on identifying enablers that increase philanthropic activities; sustaining and growing volunteering participation; progressing social impact investment; and working with not-for-profit (NFP) organisations to address regulatory and social issues and promote productive approaches in the philanthropic, not-for-profit, volunteering and social impact sectors.

Sound complicated and a little overwhelming? It is far more frequent and more straightforward than you may think. Let's take a closer look.

What is a CBP?

The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership defined a community business partnership as (The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008):

A situation 'where one or more businesses and one or more community organisations, having common goals, agree to work together to share and leverage the strengths, resources, talents and knowledge of each other in ways that benefit both business and the community'.

Successful partnerships are relationships aimed at achieving goals that either partner would be unable to achieve on their own. They are collaborative, short or long-term relationships using innovative and flexible methods to achieve these goals. The concept of a socially beneficial collaboration between community and business is not a new one, and many sectors of society benefit from the sharing of skills, knowledge and resources. (Department of Social Services, 2019).

For the larger, long term partnerships, businesses and community groups need to make sure they are ready to commit both time and resources to get the Partnership off the ground. An initial self-evaluation should be conducted to work out :



- The best partnership model (stage)
- What you want out of the Partnership
- What community groups/businesses would best suit the type of Partnership you are looking for
- What you can bring to the Partnership



Summary/Quote



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In a true partnership:

- Each partner contributes to identifying the right partnership model, not just giving or receiving donations.
- There is flexibility regarding what can be given and received, and the expansion or alteration of partnership activities as the Partnership progresses.
- The business and community group takes a genuine interest in and becomes involved with the activities of their partner.
- A more strategic interaction takes place through teamwork and coordination; it is not just based on money.



Three different stages of CBP; they describe the levels of partnerships (OurCommunity.com.au, 2020a), these being:

The **philanthropic stage** largely consists of donations of money and goods to not-for-profit (NFP) organisations. The relationship is valued as it enables the company to be marketed as a caring, responsible institution and can provide credibility for the not-for-profit.

The **transactional stage** is where interactions are focused more on activities rather than just donations and where there is a two-way value exchange. The Partnership focuses on both organisations missions and strategies. This stage encompasses cause-related activities, event sponsorships and special projects.

While the **integrative stage** is where a smaller but growing number of collaborations evolve into strategic alliances that align on missions, strategies and values. People begin to interact with greater frequency, and undertake a greater number of joint activities, resulting in an increase in institutional resources. Core competencies are not simply deployed but combined to create unique and high-value combinations.



The Center for Corporate Public Affairs, 2008

The Benefits of Community-Business Partnerships

Based on principles of morality, it is a good thing to create a CBP but, what else is in it for the businesses and corporations in Partnership with NFP Organisations?

According to OurCommunity.com.au (OurCommunity.com.au, 2020b) the benefits of the CBP include:

- Staff moral and recruitment – Prospective employees, often seek out companies with volunteering opportunities, this opportunity can lift moral, increase retention and create a happier workplace in general. In turn, happier staff can increase productivity.
- Profitability – Partnerships often open up new business opportunities when the community either directly or indirectly refers a customer to you. Other members of the community who support your community initiative may choose to support your business. Ethical investors may also be more inclined to put their money into your business.





- Profile and influence – Your business will be marketed more widely if your partner displays your name and logo. Higher visibility of your business in Partnership with a community group promotes positive associations from the general public. A partnership may also increase your sway with local decision-makers and build a positive profile with current or prospective customers .
- Knowledge and skills – A partnership can inspire innovation by providing an opportunity of exchange of ideas and skills. This exposure can translate into new, fresh ideas and a new perspective on how business can be done within the company.
- “Giving Back” to the community – Businesses are essential groups of people, most of whom have values and care for the wider community. A partnership can help you and your employees feel that the effort they put in at work every day is contributing to the greater good.



One of the best known CBPs in Australia would be Bunnings and the community groups that hold sausage sizzles every weekend and Public Holiday. The small community groups can fundraise for their chosen purpose, which in turn brings people to Bunnings for their weekend feed. Bunnings also gains a positive reputation within the community and amongst suppliers and investors from this Partnership. This Partnership has also gone to the extreme of making Bunnings known worldwide for the famous Bunnings snag .

If you want to start a CBP on a smaller scale, you can get involved with NFP groups on a per-event basis to help raise funds and most importantly, awareness. Some initiative that we can all support include (HealthWorks.com.au, 2020):

- IGA Purple bra day – 22 June 2020 – Breast Cancer Awareness
- Dry July – All July – Cancer Awareness
- Jeans or Genes Day – 7 August 2020 – Children’s Medical Research
- R U OK Day – 10 September 2020 – Suicide Awareness and Prevention
- Walk to Work Day 2 October 2020 – Diabetes Australia
- Movember – All November – Prostate and Testicular Cancer, Men’s Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness

ISPL is committed to supporting the Western Australian community; this is achieved by providing access to environmental services to all, not just industry. ISPL provides up to 10 hours of pro-bono environmental work to community and not-for-profit based environmental groups in need of support, advice or assistance.

If you are in need of environmental advice or support and would like to discuss how we might be able to help, please contact Integrate Sustainability on 08 9468 0338 or enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au.

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