

A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK TO ASSESS CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP STRATEGY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

As companies begin to rethink citizenship programs in light of COVID-19, they will need to take a fresh look at a landscape which has been drastically altered, both by the health crisis itself and by its economic and community-level repercussions.

Below, we outline a series of key questions that provide a practical framework for assessing and adjusting your citizenship strategy.

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IS YOUR FOCUS THE RIGHT ONE?



With its unprecedented health and economic consequences, COVID-19 has dramatically changed the state of social needs in every corner of the globe. To understand if your strategy is still on point, it's important to take a step back and assess the landscape within which you operate, to better understand the current and future needs of your stakeholders and your communities. Consider the following questions:

How have your stakeholders been impacted?

- ✓ Who are your key stakeholder groups and how have they been impacted by COVID-19?
- ✓ Externally, what challenges are your communities and customers facing?
- ✓ Internally, how have your employees been impacted? How have the priorities of business units changed?

Are you addressing the greatest social needs?

- ✓ Where are needs the greatest/the most severe? Are you reaching the communities and/or populations which have been disproportionately impacted? Are you including diverse voices in your needs assessment?
- ✓ How will these needs change within the next year? In three to five years?
- ✓ Given how the landscape has changed, are you seeking the right outcomes? Should you adjust or expand the outcomes you seek?

Where do you have the greatest opportunity to support recovery?

- ✓ Within this new landscape, where do needs align to your business assets and expertise?
- ✓ Where are there commonalities in needs across your various stakeholder groups?
- ✓ What skills or expertise can your employees use to make a difference and support your partners?

HOW CAN YOU TAKE LESSONS LEARNED TO BUILD RESILIENCE FOR THE FUTURE?



This crisis has magnified fault lines in our social systems which must be addressed. It has also created opportunities to do things in new and better ways. Once you have the basic focus of your strategy in place – the core outcomes you seek to achieve – consider these questions to ensure you capture lessons learned from COVID-19 to help build a better, more resilient future.

Are you proactively addressing equity?

- ✓ Are there stakeholders who were disproportionately impacted?
- ✓ Did the first wave of relief miss certain populations (e.g., youth without access to technology for virtual learning)? How can you design and implement programs to specifically target these groups and remove barriers?
- ✓ Whose perspectives should you solicit to design more effective and inclusive programs?

How can you maintain a sense of shared purpose within your business?

- ✓ What adaptations did your company make to support immediate COVID-19 relief? Should any be continued?
- ✓ Maintaining a sense of urgency to address social challenges, how can you leverage products and services, or business infrastructure and operations to drive impact?
- ✓ How can you use your “corporate voice” – your communications platforms and advocacy channels?

Where can you foster collaboration?

- ✓ Can you fund collaborative efforts among nonprofits addressing the same cause? Or among organizations addressing different but interconnected issues within a community or for a target population?
- ✓ What tools, technology or research needs can you fill to support the efforts of an array of partners and facilitate coordination?
- ✓ Look in the mirror. Who can you work with to deliver greater impact, including other companies which may share your goals?

Are you empowering your nonprofit partners?

- ✓ Have you asked your partners how their strategic plans have changed and what their greatest needs are?
- ✓ Are you providing flexible, long-term funding wherever possible?
- ✓ Are your reporting expectations reasonable?

How does this intelligence plug into your revised social impact strategy?

The questions above are intentionally adaptable – they could be answered as part of a formal strategic plan refresh, or they could guide a fairly high-level “temperature check.” Regardless of the depth of your assessment, the insights you gather should inform your actions and your strategy for moving forward.