

PRNews

THE BOOK OF
**CSR &
GREEN PR**
STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Editor, Seth Arenstein
sarenstein@accessintel.com

Editorial Director, Steve Goldstein
sgoldstein@accessintel.com

Graphic Designer, Erin Gately
egately@accessintel.com

Group Content Manager, Richard Brownell
rbrownell@accessintel.com

Assistant Content Manager, Mark Renfree
mrenfree@accessintel.com

Managing Editor, Guidebooks, Ian Wright
iwright@accessintel.com

Director of Marketing, Laura Snitkovskiy
lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com

Assistant Marketing Manager, Rachel Scharmann
rscharmann@accessintel.com

Publisher and VP of Marketing, Amy Jefferies
ajefferies@accessintel.com

SVP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz
dschwartz@accessintel.com

Chief Operating Officer, Heather Farley

President & CEO, Don Pazour

Group Subscriptions — Laurie M. Hofmann,
lhofmann@accessintel.com

Additional Copies & Article Reprints —
Contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295;
info@wrightsmedia.com



Published weekly by Access Intelligence, LLC
9211 Corporate Blvd, 4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Client Services:
Phone: 888.707.5814 · Fax: 301.309.3847
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:
40 Wall Street, 50th floor, New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212.621.4890 · Fax: 212.621.4879

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Foreword

Dear reader:

Dynamic corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability programs are among the best ways a company can improve its reputation and influence long-term success. The benefits to business that a good CSR or green program can bring are almost incalculable. With a strong effort in both of these increasingly important areas of business, companies can engage with and improve the lives of people in their communities, employees, stakeholders and the public at large.

Creating and executing good CSR or green programs can be challenging. Engaging with your community, organization and public audience in a consistent, respectful way is crucial, especially if your CSR program deals with a sensitive or politically charged topic. Likewise, a good CSR strategy requires executing on a blueprint that integrates business goals, CSR strategies as well as clear and focused communications.

No matter how successful your CSR program is, it must have a clear vision of success that delivers real, quantifiable business results. What good is a CSR program if no one knows about it? That being said, advertising your “do good” attitude too much can come across as exploitative. Your CSR program reporting must provide facts and celebrate achievements, but it must feel genuine and forthright, too.

Increasingly, companies are focusing on green issues and sustainability concerns. The public demands that companies have resource-friendly action plans. Companies with such plans in place and that know how to communicate about them stand the best chance of long-term success.

Communicating your CSR or green program is the focus of this book. Our authors span a variety of disciplines and backgrounds—from agencies, corporations, nonprofits and academia—bringing you the latest strategies on how to create and communicate CSR and green efforts. In more than 30 articles, these experts present hard-earned wisdom on topics ranging from cause marketing to social media to human rights and philanthropy communication.

I thank the contributors to this Guidebook who so eloquently shared their ideas, tips and best practices. And I want to thank you, the reader, for taking time to learn more about CSR and green PR. We think that the world, and the companies that help run it, will be better off for it.

Sincerely,

B. Greene

Brian Greene
Editor, *The Book of CSR & Green PR Strategies & Tactics*

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JetBlue's Reputation Soars: Communicating With Company, Crewmembers and Community

By Tamara Young

Corporate social responsibility has been evolving for quite some time, moving from pure philanthropic efforts to a fully engrained way of doing business. Today, companies most respected for CSR listen to the needs of their customers and employees, making responsible practices a core part of their brands, products and customer experience.

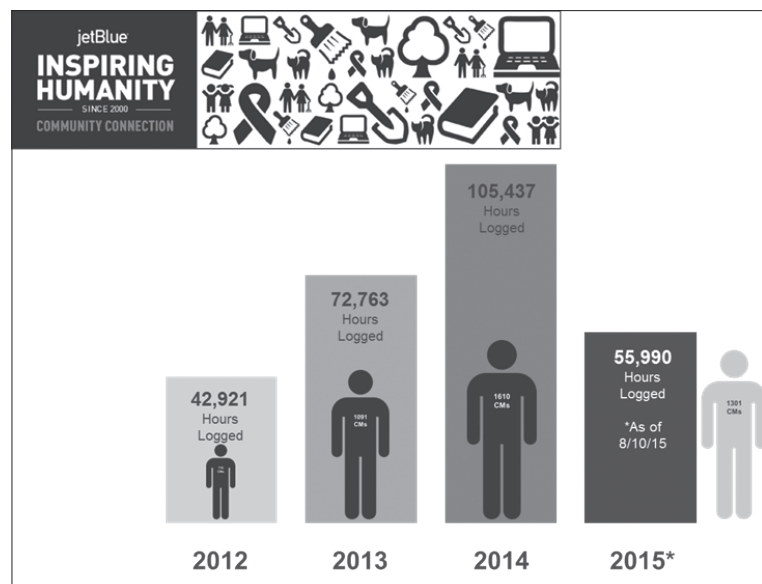
In JetBlue's early years, its CSR programs didn't always resonate with customers or within communities. With so many causes worthy of attention and support, JetBlue tried to support everything that was brought to its attention, and in turn its CSR effort was stretched thin. It failed to make the impact it was seeking. Why? It was not listening to stakeholders.

As the airline began to grow rapidly, and its route network included an even broader range of communities, JetBlue decided it was time to reevaluate and reassess its CSR programs. It needed to do CSR in a "blue" way. Approaching JetBlue's 10th birthday in 2010, CSR and Communications teams regrouped to revamp the CSR platform to one that resonated with the community, which in turn created customer loyalty and engaged employees.

In 2012, JetBlue reached out directly to customers, crewmembers and the more than 70 commu-

nities it served at the time to hear what was most important to them. With what it termed its "CSR 2.0" strategy, the airline shifted its philosophy to determine and meet specific needs within the communities it served. As it fine-tuned its CSR approach, key stakeholders helped guide this new direction. The results were more meaningful CSR programs and some of the most engaged customers and crewmembers of any industry.

While many companies may be hesitant to take a public stance on hot topic issues, those that stand for something tend to create stronger bonds and loyalty with customers.



JetBlue crewmember service and volunteerism hours

Positive public perception and recognition for JetBlue's CSR platform has not come easy. There were some key insights along the way. Here are five tips that may be helpful as you create or re-evaluate your CSR communications strategy.

1. Stand for something.

While many companies may be hesitant to take a public stance on hot topic issues, those that stand for something tend to create stronger bonds and loyalty with customers. Think **Patagonia**, **Chipotle**, **TOMS** and **Target**. Chances are you know of these brands and may even model your CSR and communications efforts around their innovative and successful framework.

Customers want to feel the love. **Edelman's** second annual Brandshare Report says nine of 10 consumers want meaningful relationships with brands, while only 17 percent believe companies are delivering. As part of JetBlue's CSR 2.0 revamp, it scaled its responsibility platform to focus on: youth and education, community and environment. It surveyed a cross section of customers and found that 74 percent saw youth and education as a priority for support from their favorite brands.

Although JetBlue was founded with social responsibility and service as part of its mission, the airline continues to have an internal debate on CSR communications—providing service for a greater good (and no attention) because it's simply the right thing to do versus sharing CSR stories.

2. Have an opinion.

While customers may not always agree with your stance,

most will appreciate a company that acknowledges current issues. In 2013, JetBlue took a public stand against The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which discriminated against same-sex couples. In 2014, it extended its support for transgender individuals by including gender reassignment surgery in its U.S. medical plans.

As a result, its commitment to creating a great place to work for LGBT crewmembers was recognized in the **Human Rights Campaign's** 2015 Corporate Equality Index, where the company achieved a perfect score of 100. In this case, taking a stand was important to crewmembers, who in turn shared their appreciation of their employer with others.

3. Take risks.

While risks are, well, a gamble, the outcome often outweighs the wager. Flying people to destinations is JetBlue's core business. When it decided to introduce the first new uniforms in its 14-year history, however, it took a risk and ventured into new territory—sustainable fashion.

When looking at the possibility of getting rid of more than 10,000 uniforms, simply



In 2014, JetBlue saved 18.5 tons of fabric from going to landfills and recycled old uniform into chic messenger bags.

throwing away 18.5 tons of fabric was not in line with JetBlue's mission of inspiring humanity. As the company brainstormed what to do with this fabric, the main goal was to minimize the use of landfills. JetBlue took a risk with a new partnership to put them to good use. It connected with local bag maker **Manhattan Portage** and came up with a new way to combine fashion and travel with responsibility. On Earth Day, JetBlue launched a fashion-forward, recycled bag collection made from these uniforms, aimed at aviation enthusiasts who wanted to carry a piece of the airline's history. The bags literally flew off the shelves and sold out in less than one week.

4. Highlight successes, own up to failures.

Although it has had much CSR success,



Singer/actress Victoria Justice partnered with JetBlue on the Soar with Reading literacy program.

JetBlue would be remiss not to admit its failures. A success: in 2015, as part of its annual Soar with Reading program reading initiative, it implemented an innovative pilot program to distribute free children's books via vending machines in southeast Washington, D.C., one of the largest book deserts in the country. The airline admitted, though, its 2013 program wasn't quite as successful.

JetBlue CSR 2.0

Brands that have a firm place in customers' minds do more than state their brand promise; they live it. JetBlue is on a mission of inspiring humanity. Although as of this writing, the airline has 17,000 crewmembers and growing, it remains relatively small in terms of U.S. airlines. Yet people (and media) in cities it doesn't service follow the brand and have an affinity for it. The biggest factor that contributes to JetBlue's brand loyalty is corporate social responsibility and brand engagement

- **Be social:** JetBlue is the fifth largest airline in the United States, yet it continues to be a leader in the social media space.
- **Innovate:** Despite claiming just five percent of the U.S. domestic market, Jet Blue outpaces other brands its size in terms of our social media presence, the respect it drives within the industry and in customer service.
- **Originate:** JetBlue has the most Twitter followers of any major U.S. airline—1.96 million and growing. Then again, JetBlue always has been adventurous. It was the first airline in the U.S. to utilize Twitter.

Brands that have a firm place in customers' minds do more than state their brand promise; they live it.

After assessing that year's results, it found it fell short of the original goal to engage 100,000 online votes from customers over three months via an online call to action. Forced to reevaluate, it realized the call to action was too complicated. In 2013, it asked customers to help donate \$500,000 worth of books to kids in need by telling JetBlue where they would like to travel with the storybook characters and to share information for a chance to win a scholarship. Customer feedback showed that they weren't as interested in receiving something for themselves as

they were with improving their communities. Therefore, they did not participate, and JetBlue fell short of its goal. The airline learned a key lesson—when engaging customers to act, keep it simple, quick, fun and local.

5. Utilize your best asset—your people

While most external communications strategies focus on media attention and social engagement, we all know getting ink for positive corporate initiatives is very difficult. At JetBlue, many of its most recognized efforts began with crewmembers. In fact, crewmembers began several key initiatives at a grassroots level that later bubbled up to corporate.

Crewmember stories that highlight a direct impact on customers or other crewmembers are the stories that resonate with media and appeal to and engage followers on social. One example is the Blue Horizons for Autism program. These unique air travel practice events for families touched by autism provide a relaxed setting. This allows them to be better prepared for future travel. The program



JetBlue and Autism Speaks partnered for the first annual Blue Horizons for Autism event in 2013 at JFK International Airport in New York.

started with crewmembers as a volunteer initiative. The crewmembers wanted to better understand and serve the needs of this growing community. Crewmembers saw more and more children struggling in the airports and families that were unable to board planes because of their child's reactions. One practice session for local families turned into an annual event. It then went regional and ultimately became a full program.

Crewmembers with children on the autism spectrum were very vocal as well. They wanted the company to do something for this cause that was personally important to them. JetBlue's benefits package didn't line up with its external actions, as it didn't cover autism treatments and therapies. Acknowledging that disconnect and listening to employees, the airline began covering autism treatments in June 2015.

Now, social responsibility and service are key assets that JetBlue's talent team seeks in recruiting. It knows that engaged and happy employees lead to higher retention rates. It lowered turnover for 18 to 25 year olds in 2015 by 8 percent year-over-year and 4 percent among those 56 years and older. CSR is becoming increasingly more important to millennials, as more than 88 percent seek employers with strong CSR programs, according to a **PricewaterhouseCoopers** report.

Simply providing a service or product is no longer enough. External audiences expect, demand and deserve more from the companies they support. CSR is often the deciding factor when customers are making purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies must stand for something and listen to what's important to customers. The coveted media attention and social engagement will follow. **PRN**

Tamara Young is manager of corporate communications at JetBlue Airways.

A Multi-Platform Approach to Generating Awareness in Stakeholder Communications

By Christine Mackin

In the rapidly evolving and increasingly complex world of community relations and CSR, the common thread among the most effective and best-known corporate programs is their ability to define key audiences and communicate to them a significant, engaging story.

At **Time Warner Cable (TWC)**, the approach to stakeholder communications offers innovative best practices that any organization seeking to generate awareness, relevance and impact for its CSR initiatives can replicate.

Sharing the story of TWC's community work with 55,000 employees and 15 million customers is not an easy task. The TWC community investment team successfully shares the story through internal and external platforms utilizing its colleagues in corporate communications, strategy, PR, social media, internal communications and content creation to keep its work highly visible and relevant amongst key audiences.

TWC focuses on five key stakeholder groups: company leadership, rank-and-file employees, customers, nonprofit partners and government officials. The community investment team tailors specific tools and tactics to procure maximum visibility and engagement for each group.

Creating Buy-In Among Company Leaders

The goal is to ensure that leaders at the local and national level are engaged in TWC's

key initiatives from conception through execution and analysis of results. Providing the resources necessary for TWC leaders and cross-functional partners to successfully champion the company's initiatives and provide a forum for feedback at every stage of the process is the key to positioning CSR as critically relevant to meeting business goals and moving the company forward.

The first step in informing and rallying TWC executives around a new project is to circulate a one-page event brief as soon as the initial details can be described. Event briefs answer who, what, when, where and why of every CSR project, from Earth Day cleanups to charitable walks and diversity events. The briefs are circulated weeks or months before an event occurs and prior to all details of the project being solidified. This invites buy-in and feedback from company leaders from each project's earliest planning stage.

Upon completion of a project, colleagues in the field circulate a one-page event recap to TWC executives and cross-functional partners. These recaps compile pictures, media metrics, volunteer numbers, key messaging and third-party feedback in a simple format, offering easy talking points about community investment and CSR successes. Indexed by region or a philanthropic interest area, the monthly or annual collection of recaps serves as a comprehensive record of TWC's learning and successes.

At the corporate level, the team develops monthly dashboards that demonstrate visu-

ally the impact of community investment and CSR programs. Regularly reported metrics include media clippings, documented social media reach, volunteer participation, charitable contributions by region, updates on local and national projects, and examples of how community projects are driving sales for commercial and media sales groups.

Engaging Rank-and-File Employees

While company leaders may set direction and tone, employees evolve the mission and values and bring them to life. TWC believes its employees are its best ambassadors. The two best tools for keeping them informed and engaged are Channel You, the Intranet, and TWC Connects, a volunteer platform.

TWC's Intranet, Channel You, is the conduit that delivers company information directly to employees in a one-stop shop that is visually appealing. This makes Channel You the ideal tool to promote TWC's CSR strategy and accomplishments. In 2015, TWC utilized Channel You to celebrate the one-year anniversary of a successful partnership with **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**, tapping 18,000 TWC technicians in 29 states to help search for abducted children. TWC employees are proud of their work keeping kids safe and appreciated learning about the collective breadth and reach of the program. Effective promotion of CSR initiatives, such as the AMBER Alert program, resonate and bring a great sense of pride to the employee base.

Customers arguably are TWC's most important stakeholders.

To help make volunteering at TWC easier and more accessible, the team introduced TWC Connects, a first companywide vol-

unteer portal, to our employees in 2014. Its goal is to foster community pride, engage and empower employees through TWC-sponsored and team building events and track individual, department and company results for robust storytelling. Regular email blasts about the latest volunteer opportunities draw employees to the site, where they can manage their participation in TWC-sponsored volunteer opportunities or by suggesting new areas of involvement. Since introducing the tool, volunteer numbers have skyrocketed and, for the first time, there are regular waiting lists for employee-sponsored volunteer programs.

Inspiring Customers, Present and Future

As with any business, customers arguably are TWC's most important stakeholders. TWC prides itself on finding unexpected ways to educate and engage customers about the company's community investment and CSR programs.

In 2014, TWC launched an image campaign and dedicated website, MakingConnectionsthatMatter.com, to highlight the company's impact in communities it serves. A variety of employee- and customer-focused platforms from public service announcements that run on TWC's airwaves to employee-focused blogs direct stakeholders to the site. Stakeholders can peruse the site to learn how TWC is evolving the customer experience, how its philanthropic initiatives are making a difference or what the latest sustainability successes look like. Interspersing customer successes with progress reports on its CSR initiatives help to drive the message that these programs are critical to TWC's business. This also has been another great way to tell the TWC story.

TWC has found **3BL Media**, a paid distribution service, to be a powerful tool to distribute CSR sustainability and energy-related

messaging to journalists and key bloggers who focus on community investment and CSR work. For TWC, syndication to thousands of journalists and editors and through multiple social media feeds means sharing new touchpoints with customers and creating a wealth of opportunities for the company's CSR efforts to shine. With everything going on in a complex industry and core business, this tool and related planning are an effective way to consistently promote CSR programs and keep them top of mind for influential media and, in turn, TWC customers.

Providing Unparalleled Value to Nonprofit Partners

As a media company, TWC is able to offer community partners valuable publicity assets and opportunities for cross promotion, in addition to a robust grant making program. A 2014 partnership with the **Dallas Arboretum** to promote its August Dollar Days discount showcases several of the promotional assets that the company is able to offer.

As a cable provider, TWC can offer partners public service announcement screen time and production services. For the two months leading up to the Arboretum's August Dollar Days, TWC leveraged PSA inventory across its Dallas cable channels and scheduled 700 thirty-second spots promoting the partnership and discounted admission to the park. The screen time and production services provided were worth nearly \$40,000. Comparable media buys typically are cost-prohibitive, given nonprofits' meager ad budgets.

The company created a statement insert mailer to build additional awareness of August Dollar Days with Dallas-area TWC subscribers. It was inserted into all Dallas residential billing statements. The ad reached 252,265 customers, promoting Dollar Days and serving as a coupon for free lemonade.

Of course, TWC took advantage of conventional PR and social media tactics to promote the partnership, including heavy earned media promotion, inclusion in all print ads that the Arboretum purchased for the event and creating a large branded welcome wall so every visitor to the park during August would learn about the strong partnership. But TWC found that the most effective assets it brought to its nonprofit partner were also the most creative and most unique to the cable industry. I challenge others in the field to look at potential assets beyond the usual tactics.

Creating Multiple Touchpoints for Government Officials

The cable industry is highly regulated and, as such, TWC's ability to create and sustain strong relationships with elected officials is critical to the company's success. TWC crafts opportunities to build relationships with government officials into every local CSR program.

Each time TWC offers a local CSR event, it invites a public official to make a statement. The team provides a description of the event that can be used in the official's press release or newsletter. The team offers elected officials the opportunity to be quoted in TWC's external media distributed at store openings or job fairs to underscore the company's role as an economic driver in the area.

Keep the universe small and the messaging simple.

When possible, TWC finds unique ways to showcase its work on a public official's turf. An example is when TWC trained **Girl Scouts** to serve as junior lobbyists, promoting the importance of TWC-sponsored education initiatives at a daylong event in the rotunda of the Wisconsin Capitol. As expected, state

senators and assembly members found it impossible to decline invitations from Scouts from their own districts, and they delighted in the opportunity to award their guides a badge recognizing their service. The Girl Scout Council was appreciative of the opportunity to boost their girls' civic participation, and TWC appreciated their willingness to help tell the company's story.

Communicating Your Message

There is a limit to the number of stakeholder groups you can reach. My advice:

keep the universe small and the messaging simple. Zero in on each group's unique needs and think about how your program can meet them in surprising new ways. Ask yourself if each group can articulate what your CSR programs are achieving and how those achievements can help your company to meet its goals. That's the true test of an effective stakeholder communication program. **PRN**

Christine Mackin is manager, community investment, at Time Warner Cable.