



CORPORATE VOICES
for WORKING FAMILIES

Business Leadership: Supporting Youth Development and the Talent Pipeline



FEBRUARY 2007

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Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention, based on information from public health authorities, as well as guidance from an advisory board of youth development experts, supports initiatives that follow a Positive Youth Development approach. Our parent communications promote positive relationships between parents and their children; our grant-making to schools and youth-serving organizations helps support positive development and healthy alternatives for kids; and our youth access prevention initiatives promote positive environments where kids do not have access to cigarettes. www.philipmorrisusa.com

Introduction

Young people ages 14 to 21 have a unique set of needs and represent the promise of the future. Too often in the past, they have been looked upon as a potential problem group; however, with the proper range of opportunities and supports, they can be an invaluable asset—to their families, their communities and to the corporate sector. Under the guidance of the Youth Transitions Working Group, comprised of corporate leaders from 12 companies as well as several content advisors, Corporate Voices is committed to identifying and promoting the corporate and public policies necessary to ensure that young people have the opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in work and in life.

This promising practices report represents some of the most innovative strategies being used by companies to support the positive development of young people. Many companies are partnering with schools and youth development organizations to help deliver real-life and hands-on learning experiences to young people. These opportunities introduce young people to new career options, give them skills training to pursue those careers, and often make them excited about more traditional academics as well. Other companies support youth through their corporate philanthropy or employee volunteer initiatives. Still others utilize special business expertise to ensure young people have their more basic needs met.

Each of these programs on its own is impressive—making a critical difference in the development of a young person and often at the same time creating benefits within a company. Taken as a whole, the promising practices highlighted in this report are inspiring in their breadth and depth. The corporate leaders who oversee these programs are deeply committed to their success because they have seen, usually firsthand, what a difference it makes when a young person is given an opportunity. They also know that creating connections with a young person builds loyalty and frequently adds value to the company.

This promising practices report is intended to demonstrate the range of ways in which companies can make and are making a difference. The term “promising practices” is used to suggest both the strong success these practices appear to be yielding, and the relatively preliminary nature of some of this work. This study was not intended to be exhaustive; nor is it meant to suggest that these practices are definitively superior to those undertaken by other companies. Instead, this report is designed to provide models for those in corporations who are exploring ways that they too can make a difference in young people’s lives. In addition, the report also contains models that, if supported with public policies at the local, state or federal level, could be taken to scale so that many more young people would benefit from the opportunities and supports provided by these companies.

“Considering the concern among our global corporations regarding the talent pipeline and the skills needed to compete in the 21st century, I think we can assume that investments and engagement by corporations in workforce development will continue to grow.”

Donna Klein, President and CEO, Corporate Voices for Working Families

Why Should a Business Get Involved in Youth Development?

Positive Youth Development and Workforce Readiness

The answers to this question vary from company to company, and they are collected in the words of corporate leaders themselves throughout this report. For some companies, youth initiatives are a response to the needs of their employees with teenage dependents. For others, a youth program initially is put in place because it is important to a CEO or other senior executive. In some companies, youth are employees, and the programs are designed to help the workforce itself. While young people are not a large segment of the employee base in every company, they are the future talent pool, and many programs are designed to help grow that pool. In virtually all instances, regardless of the particular focus of the support, companies recognize the importance of and reap multiple benefits from these initiatives: benefits to the youth involved, benefits to employees, benefits to the community and benefits to the company itself.

In this report, we have profiled a dozen companies engaged in a range of youth development initiatives. Many of these and other companies are involved in multiple youth development initiatives. Here, we have chosen to highlight particular programs that are innovative, hold promise for success, and represent a range of strategies and approaches. While we have intentionally reviewed a diverse group of practices with a range of goals, we have focused some particular attention on those initiatives designed to increase the training and skill development of young people because, based on our research as well other recent reports, workforce readiness is of growing concern to the corporate sector.

Survey Data on Workforce Readiness

In October 2006, Corporate Voices for Working Families, together with The Conference Board, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management released a landmark survey of more than 400 employers across the United States: *Are They Really Ready for Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skill of New Entrants to the 21st Century Workforce*.

The results are alarming. Less than a quarter of employers—only 23.9 percent—report that new entrants with four-year college degrees have “excellent” basic knowledge and applied skills, and important deficiencies exist among entrants at every level. The deficiencies are greatest at the high school level, with 42.4 percent of employers reporting the overall preparation of high school graduates as deficient; 80.9 percent reporting deficiencies in written communications; 70.3 percent citing deficiencies in professionalism; and 69.6 percent reporting deficiencies in critical thinking. Although preparedness increases with educational level, employers noted significant deficiencies remaining at the four-year college level in written communication (27.8 percent), leadership (23.8 percent) and professionalism (18.6 percent).

Employers report that new entrants to the workforce need not only the basic skills—reading, writing and math—but also a range of applied skills directly related to the workplace. When asked to rank skills in terms of their importance in the workplace, employers put professionalism, teamwork, and oral communication at the top of the list for graduates of high school and two-year and four-year colleges.

The Workforce Readiness Report Card for New Entrants to the U.S. Workforce contained in the report reveals a troubling trend—the very applied skills that are most important are the ones in which young people have the greatest deficiencies. For example, for high school graduates, 80.3 percent of employer respondents rate professionalism/work ethic—defined as “demonstrating personal accountability, effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, time and workload management”—as “very important.” Yet a full 70.3 percent of employer respondents report that high school graduate entrants are deficient in this area. See the opposite page for the complete report card.

The findings of this report sound a wake-up call to a business community already concerned about the potential of the future workforce. Business can and should play a role in ensuring that all young people have opportunities to develop the full range of skills they need to be successful in work and in life. In addition, preparing the next generation of workers is essential to the success of businesses and to the economic future of our country.

Business leaders must play a role in creating opportunities for young people to obtain the skills they need. Businesses can partner with schools and other organizations that work with young people in order to provide internships, job-shadowing programs and summer jobs. Businesses can encourage their employees to serve as mentors and tutors. Businesses can invest in programs at the local, state and national level that have demonstrated their ability to improve outcomes for young people. Finally, business leaders can use their expertise in innovation and management to help identify new and creative solutions.

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Workforce Readiness Report Card for New Entrants to Workforce

Assessment of new workforce entrant readiness on “very important” skills (basic knowledge and applied skills rated as “very important” by a majority of employer respondents). “Very important” skills are placed on the Deficiency/Excellence Lists if at least 1 in 5 respondents report entrant readiness as “deficient”/“excellent.”

High School Graduates

Deficiency		Excellence	
Written Communications	80.9%	No skills are on the Excellence List for new entrants with a high school diploma.	
Professionalism/Work Ethic	70.3		
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	69.6		
Oral Communications	52.7		
Ethics/Social Responsibility	44.1		
Reading Comprehension	38.4		
Teamwork/Collaboration	34.6		
Diversity	27.9		
Information Technology Application	21.5		
English Language	21.0		

Two-Year College/Technical School Graduates

Deficiency		Excellence	
Written Communications	47.3%	Information Technology Application	25.7%
Writing in English	46.4		
Professionalism/Work Ethic	31.3		
Lifelong Learning/Self Direction	27.9		
Creativity/Innovation	27.6		
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	22.8		
Oral Communications	21.3		
Ethics/Social Responsibility	21.0		

Four-Year College Graduates

Deficiency		Excellence	
Written Communications	27.8%	Information Technology Application	46.3%
Writing in English	26.2	Diversity	28.3
Leadership	23.8	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	27.6
		English Language	26.2
		Lifelong Learning/Self Direction	25.9
		Reading Comprehension	25.9
		Oral Communications	24.8
		Teamwork/Collaboration	24.6
		Creativity/Innovation	21.5

“Very Important” Skills Considered for:

High School Graduates Report Card (% very important): Professionalism/Work Ethic (80.3%); Teamwork/Collaboration (74.7%); Oral Communications (70.3%); Ethics/Social Responsibility (63.4%); Reading Comprehension (62.5%); English Language (61.8%); Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (57.5%); Information Technology (53.0%); Written Communications (52.7%); Diversity (52.1%)

Two-Year College/Technical School Graduates Report Card (% very important): Professionalism/Work Ethic (83.4%); Teamwork/Collaboration (82.7%); Oral Communications (82.0%); Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (72.7%); Reading Comprehension (71.6%); Written Communications (71.5%); English Language (70.6%); Ethics/Social Responsibility (70.6%); Information Technology (68.6%); Writing in English (64.9%); Lifelong Learning/Self Direction (58.3%); Diversity (56.9%); Creativity/Innovation (54.2%)

Four-Year College Graduates Report Card (% very important): Oral Communications (95.4%); Teamwork/Collaboration (94.4%); Professionalism/Work Ethic (93.8%); Written Communications (93.1%); Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (92.1%); Writing in English (89.7%); English Language (88.0%); Reading Comprehension (87.0%); Ethics/Social Responsibility (85.6%); Leadership (81.8%); Information Technology (81.0%); Creativity/Innovation (81.0%); Lifelong Learning/Self Direction (78.3%); Diversity (71.8%); Mathematics (64.2%)

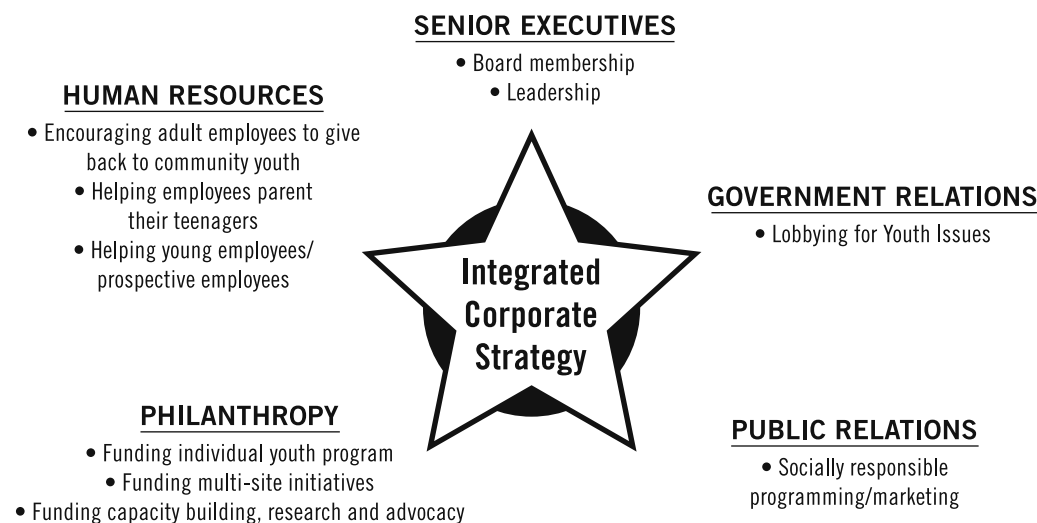
Percentages calculated from among the number of respondents to each question.

Number of respondents varied for each question, ranging from 347 to 357 for high school graduates; 351 to 360 for two-year/technical school graduates; 400 to 413 for four-year college/university graduates.

How Are Companies Making a Difference? Promising Practices

This report demonstrates that corporations are indeed taking action to help young people make positive transitions to adulthood. The range of activities underway speaks to the ingenuity and dedication of those involved. Senior executives are serving on boards and providing leadership. Human resource departments are engaged in partnerships to help train young employees and prospective employees, they are encouraging their employees to get involved with local young people, and they are helping employees parent their teenagers. Corporate philanthropy departments are funding individual youth programs, multi-site initiatives, and capacity building, research and advocacy. Communications and public relations play a role in many of the initiatives, frequently supporting work spearheaded in other departments. And a small number of companies are finding ways to coordinate efforts across functions, integrating numerous efforts to support young people with the goal of maximizing the overall impact.

The chart below, prepared by our content partners at the Forum for Youth Investment, illustrates the myriad ways in which companies can support positive youth development. It is a useful tool for companies as they explore options to start new programs and partnerships. For those companies already engaged in a range of youth development activities, it can serve as a resource to help develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to work with and on behalf of youth.



Source: Forum for Youth Investment

For purposes of clarity and organization, the promising practices profiled below are divided into categories, though in many instances a particular practice spans multiple functions in a company. For example, a program run out of human resources may also be driven by senior executive leadership, or a philanthropy initiative may dovetail with and support work being done in the public relations department. And many companies with a promising practice included in this document have multiple other initiatives underway as well. Coordination across functions within a company can be challenging for such companies, and over the next year Corporate Voices will be exploring ways to help those companies develop a strategic approach to their overall commitment to youth development.

Human Resources

Not surprisingly, we found the greatest number of promising practices within the human resources division of companies. Because human resource departments are responsible for hiring, it is the human resource professionals who know the skills that are needed for young, entry-level employees, and they are frequently the most acutely aware of the skills gap. HR professionals are increasingly concerned about a shrinking pool of highly qualified young talent; many are pursuing strategies to introduce potential future employees or clients to a particular industry, company or firm. In addition, human resource departments run employee support programs including parenting support programs and employee volunteer initiatives, both of which are linked to increased job satisfaction/loyalty and employee retention. The practices profiled below represent a range of strategies and approaches, each unique to the needs and capacities of the particular company.

Supporting Youth: Developing the Future Workforce and Strengthening Local Communities

Creating Opportunities for Urban Youth: Bank of America and Year Up

Overview

Bank of America has teamed up with Year Up to create 20 apprenticeships for urban youth in Boston. The Bank of America/Year Up partnership creates new opportunities for urban young adults ages 18 to 24 who have completed high school or received a GED.

Bank of America runs the six-month apprenticeships and provides funding to support the apprentices during the year-long program, which includes a training period as well as the apprenticeship. In addition to working with the apprentices, Bank of America employees volunteer in the Year Up program, giving presentations about work opportunities and serving as mentors during the apprenticeship. The Bank of America Foundation supports other Year Up events, such as the graduation day festivities for Year Up apprentices from more than a dozen companies in Boston.

Year Up provides an intensive six-month education program that focuses on technical training, as well as professionalism and oral and written communication. In addition to the initial training, Year Up provides ongoing support to the young people during the apprenticeship phase and after completion of the year-long program.

“If you give young people an opportunity, who might not have ever had another real opportunity, they make the most of it, and we at Bank of America benefit, too.”
 –Jennifer Petersen, Vice President, HR for Global Wealth Investment Management Technology, Bank of America

Why Get Involved

Like all strong corporate nonprofit partnerships, Bank of America decided to team with Year Up because the partnership advances multiple business needs.

“Not only are we supporting a great cause and a great organization, Year Up is training these young people to do just what we need, so this is good business too.”
–Jennifer Petersen, Vice President, HR for Global Wealth Investment Management, Bank of America

- The partnership advances Bank of America’s strong corporate commitment by creating an opportunity to give back to the community by supporting the positive development of urban youth.
- The partnership helps develop entry-level talent: Year Up trains young people in investment operations skills, and Bank of America needs entry-level support in its investment operations office in Boston.

The young people involved in the program receive multiple benefits:

- Technical training in either Information Technology or Investment Operations
- Training in critical workplace skills
- Real work experience through a six-month apprenticeship
- Educational stipend for the entire year-long program (funded by Bank of America)
- Up to 18 college credits (earned through a Year Up partnership with Cambridge College)

While the Bank of America partnership is still new, Year Up reports substantial success with the young people who have been through the program. According to Year Up, their success is their young people’s accomplishments including:

- 100% placement of qualified students into apprenticeships
- 83% student retention
- 90% of apprentices meet or exceed partner expectations
- 87% of graduates placed in full or part-time positions
- \$15/hr average wage at placement

Why it Works

According to Bank of America, the partnership works because Year Up is an experienced and sophisticated partner with a good program and both partners understand the importance of open and constant communication.

Year Up creates value for its corporate partners. It does this by understanding the human resources needs of its partners. Bank of America has a need for entry-level investment operations

Year Up is a five-year-old organization headquartered in Boston. Its mission is to provide entry-level jobs to urban youth so that they can earn a livable wage and continue their education. Since 2001, Year Up has trained more than 800 students and partnered with more than 60 corporations.

Year Up is a market-driven nonprofit. They ask “where are the jobs?” and then create apprenticeships to meet employer demand. As a result, the technical training programs have evolved as the market has evolved. In addition, because Year Up understands the entry-level demands of employers, the skills training they provide is directly matched to the needs of their corporate partners. Year Up understands that companies have multiple reasons for partnering and they market their services to companies looking to meet workforce development needs, as well as corporate citizenship and philanthropy.

Over the past two years, Year Up has expanded to Providence, Rhode Island; New York City; and Washington, DC.

For more information on working with Year Up in your community, please visit www.yearup.org or call 617-542-1533.

employees, and Year Up trains young people for apprenticeships in this area. Year Up has created a model that makes it easy for its corporate partners to participate and to accomplish their goals. Year Up provides not only the relevant technical training, but also coaches young people in basic professional and communication skills.

According to Kevin Barry, Director of New Business Development at Year Up, employers repeatedly tell him “Just give me someone who knows how to dress, speak, wants to get ahead, has technical skills, is interested in learning, and willing to work on a team.” These are the skills and traits that Year Up focuses on, and they deliver apprentices who are ready and eager to succeed in the workplace.

Hands-on management and open and constant dialogue are two other critical ingredients in this successful partnership. Bank of America and Year Up have open communication about what is working and what needs to be refined on a weekly, and if needed, daily basis. Bank of America assigns each apprentice both a manager and a peer coach, so that the company has a clear sense of how the apprentice is doing on the job. A high-level Year Up staff member reaches out to both the Bank of America managers and the young people themselves. This level of engaged oversight, coupled with open communication between the partners, ensures that young people get the support they need to succeed.

Nitty Gritty

Bank of America makes a considerable commitment, both in terms of staff time and financial resources, in order to make this partnership possible:

- Each apprentice has both a manager and a peer coach assigned to him or her. The peer coach is typically a somewhat junior Bank of America employee who can help the apprentice negotiate his or her way through the workplace. The manager is responsible for ensuring that the apprentice has enough work, and is able to do the job effectively.
- Bank of America commits \$20,000 to support each apprenticeship. The \$20,000 is paid to Year Up, which uses the funds to provide an educational stipend to the young person over the entire twelve-month program, as well as to support the Year Up training program.
- From Bank of America's perspective, the cost of the apprenticeship is a good business value because the \$20,000 they spend is slightly less than they would have to spend to get the job done through contract employees, and substantially less than a full-time college graduate.

H-E-B Career Lattice Programs

Overview

For nearly a decade, H.E. Butt Grocery Company (H-E-B) has been instrumental in supporting the development of youth by exposing them to careers in the grocery retail industry and supporting their growth and mobility within the company.

Recognizing generational differences in the process by which youth are transitioned into adulthood, and how talent is groomed and recruited to work at the company, H-E-B instituted several programs that engage youth in learning and providing essential skills and job training. Their commitment to young people extends well beyond that of a single program. Instead, they have developed an integrated lattice of programs including job shadow and career awareness programs, tuition reimbursement programs, scholarship assistance programs, skill enhancement programs, internship programs, the School of Retail Management (SORM), and the School of Retail Leadership (SORL).

Each of these programs is designed to address varying needs of individuals at each stage of development, skill level, and education. H-E-B's commitment to providing youth exposure to careers and youth development begins before the employment age (through their job shadow and career awareness programs) and continues into adulthood (through employment opportunities, internship programs, and career development programs). H-E-B leadership believes that introducing youth to career opportunities at the company is an important strategy for identifying good talent. Once individuals are hired, they have myriad opportunities for training and education so that they continue to develop and pursue careers within H-E-B. H-E-B connects the lattice of programs to attract, retain and promote employee growth to its overall success as a company.

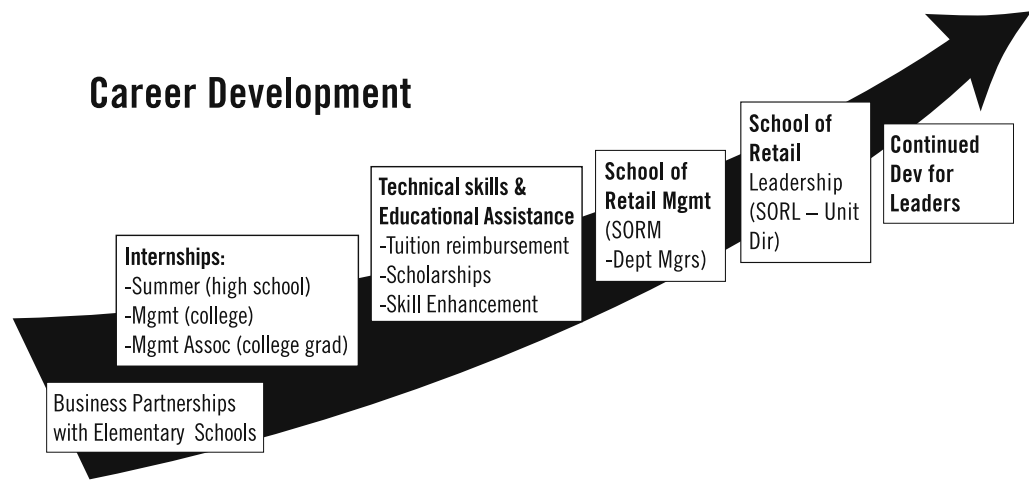
“Our ideal scenario at H-E-B is to hire a sixteen-year-old for a job as a sacker or checker; then we encourage that young person to do a summer internship where they rotate through a number of departments. Through formal programs and informal influence, we encourage them to go on to college. If they pursue a degree in a related field, they can apply for financial support for their education. They can continue to work while in school, participating in internal training programs including SORM. Highly successful college graduates can continue in our internal SORL, the training ground for the future leaders of the company.”

–Brooke Brownlow, Vice President of HR, H-E-B

Why Get Involved

H-E-B has a vested interest in promoting and supporting the career lattice programs. The programs meet the corporate needs of H-E-B by fostering new talent, while providing youth with opportunities and support to grow into promising careers.

In supporting employees' efforts to pursue higher education and enhancement of skills, H-E-B employs a more highly skilled and trained workforce. H-E-B efforts to support employee growth also lead to higher retention of employees. By encouraging and supporting internal growth of



new talent, H-E-B is also meeting its leadership needs. Ultimately, a stable and well trained workforce results in a financial return on investment.

There are also strong reasons for young people to get involved. Youth involved in the career lattice programs are exposed to a range of interesting opportunities. They can also receive financial support to pursue further education and enhance their job-related skills. H-E-B augments formal education with on-the-job training and skill reinforcement, which ensures youth are engaged in their education and have the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in the real world. In addition to the support, H-E-B also facilitates the pursuit of higher education by providing financial assistance to employees through their scholarship programs. The varying levels of upwardly mobile employment opportunities within H-E-B also encourage youth to pursue careers and grow within the company.

Why It Works

H-E-B strives to develop retail stores that meet the specific and unique needs of each community. As a result of the complex business they operate, executives understand that they cannot rely solely on external hires and are committed to the growth of internal talent. The commitment from the owner of H-E-B and its senior executives ensures the success of career lattice programs.

Senior H-E-B executives have made the investment in internal talent a high priority for the company. Therefore, they make large investments of their time and resources to the talent development programs. Senior management is intellectually invested, has an intricate knowledge of applicants to the various programs and closely reviews the profiles of selected candidates. According to Gretcha Flinn, Director of Leadership Development and Performance Solutions at H-E-B, the commitment of senior executives is one of the keys to the success of integrated training and development initiatives at H-E-B: “The owner of the company, our CEO, and the COO know the people going through the SORM and SORL programs; they attend the graduation events. These people are the future talent of the company.”

As a result of their commitment to the growth of internal talent and the success of the career lattice programs, executives support the continued evaluation and improvement of each program. In addition to the commitment of staff time, executives also commit large amounts of financial resources to the program.

Nitty Gritty

H-E-B's commitment to youth development begins before the age of employment. Recognizing a generational difference in the grooming of talent, H-E-B created school partnerships with local elementary schools. The company exposes young children to the potential employment and career opportunities with H-E-B by having employees discuss their jobs with elementary school students. The top performing students from each school are then selected to participate in a job-shadow day with the company. Through this program H-E-B hopes to engage students in learning and expose them to the possibilities of employment at the appropriate age. In addition to the school partnerships, H-E-B also created a summer internship program for high school students. The internship program includes classes on leadership style as well as on the job training through various departments and positions.

Once employed with H-E-B, employees have the opportunity to participate in tuition reimbursement, scholarship assistance and/or skill enhancement programs. Each of these programs supports an employee's pursuit of higher education or skill enhancement at local colleges and universities. Depending on the program, H-E-B provides differing amount of monetary support to the selected employees.

H-E-B also operates the School of Retail Management (SORM) and the School of Retail Leadership (SORL). SORM provides a structured program for employees to advance within the company to become department managers. The program offers a combination of classes and on the job training through several departments. H-E-B created SORL to develop store leaders. This is also a structured program that combines classes with a rotating on-the-job training. Graduates of each program serve as assistants for a number of months before assuming a position of leadership.

H-E-B continually evaluates the effectiveness of its training programs. As a result of this ongoing assessment, they have developed a new Lead Certification program, which will identify and train employees on leadership and technical skills so that they can more successfully perform their duties as a Lead in a department. This will allow them to grow into stronger Leads and potentially move into the SORM program.

“The owner of the company, our CEO, and the COO know the people going through the SORM and SORL programs; they attend the graduation events. These people are the future talent of the company.”

–Gretcha Flinn, Director of Leadership Development and Performance Solutions at H-E-B

Abbott Internships: Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

For young people in nearly every career field, Abbott is a coveted company for internships. As a global health care company dedicated to developing and manufacturing innovative health care products, Abbott offers more than 200 internships each year in a wide range of fields including engineering, science, environmental health and safety, manufacturing, quality assurance as well as information technology, finance and accounting, and general business.

This award-winning, successful internship program structures internships to provide meaningful, hands-on learning that translates to a true understanding of the challenges and opportunities of a career with Abbott. Managers at Abbott work closely with the interns to ensure that their personal and professional development opportunities are maximized during the internship, and the close personal attention yields impressive results. The reward? A full pipeline of promising young talent developed by Abbott managers. In fact, nearly 40 percent of the interns choose permanent positions within the company.

It's no accident that the internship program holds some of the best interns from around the world—Abbott actively recruits top-notch interns from more than 55 colleges and universities around the U.S., and is expanding its program internationally. The Abbott internship program also helps to increase diversity within the company; in 2006, 37 percent of the Abbott interns were minorities and 51 percent were women.

In 2006, Abbott earned recognition from *The Princeton Review* for the second consecutive year for offering the “Best Entry-Level Jobs,” due to Abbott’s rotational six-month professional development program and was named since 2003 to Princeton Review’s “Top 100 Internships.” Abbott recently ranked tenth out of 50 on *Business Week*’s inaugural “Best Places to Launch a Career,” also due in part to Abbott’s personalized internship program.

Senior leadership at Abbott supports this internship program and has articulated a goal of growing the program by 20 percent by 2008. Christi Lehner, Abbott’s Senior Director of Talent Acquisition, adds, “Our intern program creates a talent pipeline for our professional development programs, and our professional development programs supply the best talent pipeline to our leadership positions. Our interns are acknowledged contributors to Abbott’s enduring success as an organization.”

IBM EX.I.T.E. Camps Inspire Girls to Make a Difference in the World Using Math, Science & Technology

From Atlanta to Shanghai, 51 IBM Camps Around the Globe Encourage Girls to Pursue Careers in Science and Technology

Inspiring middle-school girls to make a difference in the world through math, science and technology is behind IBM's commitment for conducting more than 50 EX.I.T.E. (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Camps during 2006.

More than 1,700 girls, ages 11 to 13, took part in a variety of engineering- and science-related projects at the week-long EX.I.T.E. camps conducted across the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific, sponsored for the eighth year by IBM.

“Traditionally, girls have shied away from taking math, science and technology courses because they didn't think they could excel in them, or thought the classes were unrelated to what they wanted to do in their lives,” said Katherine Hegmann, IBM General Manager, Global Application Services, Global Business Services. “What many girls don't realize is that technology is providing opportunities for careers in virtually every field they could hope to pursue.”

As part of the 2006 program, EX.I.T.E. Campers worked in teams with IBM employee volunteers on innovation projects allowing the girls to realize the wealth of ideas and talents they possess that could make a difference in medicine, health care, agriculture, entertainment, consumer goods, environmental preservation or rescue and relief efforts. Each camp documented its innovations by creating a three-dimensional model, blueprint or presentation. The campers had a chance to present their innovations to local IBM volunteers and executives who in turn provided feedback.

“EX.I.T.E. Camps have taught us over the years that when girls are given the chance to work on these types of projects and when they meet women role models using technology to establish successful careers or to help make this a better world, they begin to see the possibilities math, engineering and science present in a very different light,” said Hegmann.

Since its inception in 1999, 85 percent of the more than 5,000 girls who participated in an EX.I.T.E. Camp indicated that they would consider pursuing an engineering or technical-related degree when they go to college. This shift in perception is critical for companies that depend on technical talent to fill key positions, in addition to being timely, as evidenced by a recent survey by the Society of Women Engineers, which indicated that 75 percent of girls ages 12 to 17 do not plan to pursue careers in math, science or technology.

Approximately 2,000 IBM volunteers, women and men, participate in the EX.I.T.E. Camps, developing, coordinating and overseeing the innovation projects, as well as web and computer chip design, laser optics, animation, robotics and working with computer hardware and software. The

volunteers also introduce the campers to a variety of IBM technologies, including TryScience.org, an award-winning website designed to make learning more fun for kids.

EX.I.T.E. Camp participants are nominated by counselors and teachers at middle schools that have an established relationship with IBM through such community outreach programs as Re-inventing Education or MentorPlace, a global program where students receive online academic assistance and career counseling by IBM volunteers. At the conclusion of the EX.I.T.E. Camps, the girls will take part in the MentorPlace program by being paired with IBM employees who will mentor them during the school year.

Deloitte & Touche USA LLP and the Next Generation Initiatives

Deloitte & Touche USA LLP created the Next Generation Initiatives to address the generational gap in their workforce and recruit younger workers to the firm. Through the Next Generation Initiatives, Deloitte supports ongoing research that includes internal and external surveys to gauge young people's expectations of employers, attitudes of their ideal working situations, and their perceptions of the ideal job. Deloitte uses these surveys to guide a communications strategy to encourage young people to think about career opportunities in accounting and to ensure that Deloitte is perceived as an attractive place to work.

The communications strategy utilizes a number of products that Deloitte has created, including:

- An Internet-based custom career building program that offers career coaching assistance and training to Deloitte employees;
- Multiplayer Occusim, a collaborative, knowledge-sharing game that educates youth about business and related ethical issues as well as opening the door for them to consider careers in accounting and business consulting;
- Life, Inc., Deloitte's career guide book for young people providing career information and guidance to middle school and high school students as well as parents and teachers;
- Business Smarts/Virtual Team Challenge, which introduces high school students to the complexities of business and helps them discover how they can use their talents, interests and skills to join the business world. This material was developed in collaboration with the *Weekly Reader*.

In addition to these resources, Deloitte markets itself and supports the development of young people also through the Future Leaders Council. Six high school and six college students have the opportunity to serve a one-year term on an advisory council to Deloitte's top leadership for talent acquisition and management. Through these efforts, Deloitte provides a range of resources and opportunities to help young people plan for their career. At the same time, Deloitte is working to improve the quantity and quality of its talent pipeline and its access to highly skilled employees.

Marriott and National Academy Foundation

Overview

Marriott, through its partnership with the National Academy Foundation (NAF), provides internships for at-risk urban youth. This school and business partnership introduces high school students to the hospitality industry and gives them an opportunity to develop job skills that are portable to any career pursuit.

Every year, Marriott provides 200 youths the opportunity to intern or gain work experience with the company. The corporate headquarters and the hotels across the country work together with NAF chapters to devise the most effective internship program. Each hotel has the flexibility to create student experiences that help develop marketable skills. Students are introduced to various career opportunities in finance, sales, event planning, banquets, rooms operations and culinary departments. They gain skills while being exposed to potential career paths in the hospitality industry.

Marriott's support of positive youth development extends beyond high school. Marriott has established a scholarship program exclusively for NAF students who are interested in post-secondary education pursuits. These students are selected from across the nation and generally are enrolled in NAF's Academy of Hospitality and Tourism. Through the use of a database, Marriott is able to communicate with students that have graduated from the Academy program. Students are kept abreast of internship opportunities, school visits by Marriott recruiters, and employment opportunities that could lead to successful careers at Marriott.

Why Get Involved

Marriott recognizes that as new industries emerge and attract young talent, Marriott will face a talent crunch in the next decade. As it looks to transition from the current workforce to the “echo boomers,” a younger generation of leaders, Marriott believes it is vital to invest in a pipeline that grooms new talent. The alliance with the National Academy Foundation and the internship program affords Marriott a concrete opportunity to support the pipeline. As a result, Marriott and the youths involved in the internships benefit from the program.

“National Academy Foundation allows us to focus on a majority-minority group that our industry lacks in senior positions.”

–Andy Chaves, National Youth Programs Manager

Youths who have the opportunity to intern with Marriott gain real work experience and have the opportunity to develop skills necessary to succeed in the hospitality industry. Marriott focuses on encouraging all students to pursue post-secondary education and develop a habit for life-long learning. They also are exposed to potential careers in the hospitality industry. NAF requires all students to complete a paid internship and complete one college-level course.

Marriott also benefits from the internship program because it is a valuable recruitment strategy that yields a sound return.

The program helps Marriott build and recruit a skilled workforce that is knowledgeable of the industry and is able to meet the demands of the company. The strong focus on urban youth allows Marriott to recruit minority youth into the industry, break down their perceptions of the industry, as well as foster diversity in its workforce at the local and national levels. The internship program also provides Marriott with an opportunity to develop and promote diversity in the leadership of the hospitality industry.

The program also helps the company and local properties foster closer ties to its communities. Currently, 80 percent of Marriott's associates reside five to ten miles from their workplace. Leaders at Marriott believe a positive community relationship is an essential business strategy. As their connection to the community increases and students become more exposed to the company, the community becomes a strong customer base.

Through establishing a strategic partnership with organizations such as NAF, Marriott maintains a highly trained and skilled workforce, increases the diversity of the workforce, and reinforces its commitment to the community, thus generating organizational benefits.

The young people involved in the program receive multiple benefits:

- Exposure to careers in the hospitality industry
- Real work experience through an internship
- Stipend during the period of the internship
- Opportunity for employment with Marriott Hotels & Resorts
- Skill development in the hospitality industry as well as finance and technology

Marriott Hotels & Resorts benefits from a quality workforce:

- Marriott obtains a skilled workforce
- Increases diversity of the workforce at the local and national level
- Increases diversity in the leadership of the hospitality industry
- Positive impact in Marriott's communities
- Valuable recruitment strategy, which yields a sound return on investment
- Contributes to higher sales rates and profit margins

Why It Works

The internship program is the result of multiple partnerships between Marriott and the National Academy Foundation and the partnership within Marriott between the local and national levels.

In the partnership between Marriott and the National Academy Foundation, Marriott functions as a liaison from the hospitality industry to the National Academy Foundation. The organizational partnership has also spurred the coordination between the local and national levels within Marriott. As a result, more than 70 managers, including corporate executives, serve on advisory boards across the country. The relationships among the organizations and within the corporation spur the growth of the internship program. The multi-layered partnership allows Marriott to expand the advisory boards by including other local industry partners. As the local advisory boards expand, the number of internships available to youth also increases.

Marriott's commitment to its interns also contributes to its success. Marriott created a database to track alumni of Marriott scholarship programs and high-potential students interested in hospitality careers. Marriott continuously communicates with these students. Marriott provides each scholarship winner with a backpack of items such as Frisbees and T-shirts. Marriott continues to track the students and communicate with them through their college relations process. In their senior year, students are invited to on-site interviews with Marriott and other industry leaders. Marriott has hired many alumni of the internship programs.

This partnership is also successful because it does not solely focus on young people but also targets educators. Marriott is an active participant at the National Academy Foundation national teacher conferences. Marriott provides teachers with professional development opportunities through workshops and panel discussions with corporate and industry leaders. Marriott also provides behind-the-scenes tours and teacher externship opportunities. These programs provide a behind-the-scenes view of the operations of Marriott and the hospitality industry. It also equips educators with current knowledge, which ultimately influences their teaching practices and the training of youth.

Nitty Gritty

Marriott's partnership with the National Academy Foundation began in 1987 on a local level with the Chamber of Commerce in New York City and Florida. At its inception, the majority of the Marriott representatives were comprised from the sales department. The sales department viewed the partnership as an opportunity for the growth of sales. However, Marriott quickly recognized the internship program was a new avenue to connect youth to the hospitality industry. The internship program allowed Marriott to not only focus on general skill building but also attract new talent to the industry as well as the company.

Marriott supports many youth career development opportunities and offers enriching work experiences during the academic year and the summer. Interns must complete 300 hours of paid work experience as required by the NAF program. In addition to the paid work experience, the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism requires all students to complete a college-level course. By partnering with colleges and universities students are able to connect their classroom learning with real work experience. For example, each year students are invited for property tours and job shadowing experiences including a visit to the Marriott Marquis in New York City.

In addition, Marriott also provides three to six externships to educators. As with the interns, the National Academy Foundation selects the teachers through a rigorous application process. The externship is a two-week program which exposes high school and college-level educators' to state-of-the-art hospitality industry practices. In the first week, educators experience the functioning of the local hotels. In the second week, educators are exposed to the work of the executives.

CVS/pharmacy's Pathways to Pharmacy stands out for its long-term commitment to young people—reaching children at a young age, and sticking with them all the way through young adulthood. The multi-stage program begins at the elementary and middle school level through career exposure and job-shadow programs. In high school, students work through a multi-faceted program including coursework, internships, mentoring, and workplace experience.

In the high school program, students are required to take specific math, chemistry and biology courses. They are also taught life skills. After the junior year of high school, students enter an eight-week summer internship where they meet with college professors, take research and development courses at local universities, and gain work experience as pharmacy assistants or technicians. Students who successfully complete the internship become certified as the highest level of pharmacy technicians. Upon graduation from high school, young people enter a two-year pharmacy apprenticeship, which combines course work at local community colleges and work experience as a pharmacist's assistant.

CVS clearly has a vested interest in recruiting the next generation of employees, and this program has proven a successful means to do just that. The Pathways to Pharmacy program has proven particularly successful in recruiting young black males. As a result it has helped CVS Corporation maintain its commitment to diversity, which is critical to its expansion strategy.

Helping Youth, Helping Recruiters: The TJX Companies, Inc., And Job Corps

Overview

The TJX Companies, Inc. is the leading off-price apparel and home fashions retailer in the U.S. and worldwide, with \$16 billion in revenues in 2005, eight businesses, and more than 2,300 stores, and ranked 138th in the most recent Fortune 500 rankings. TJX's off-price concepts include T.J.Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods, A.J. Wright, and Bob's Stores, in the U.S., Winners and HomeSense in Canada, and T.K. Maxx in Europe.

“Working with the students from Job Corps has been a very rewarding experience for us. The students attending our Job Corps classes are hungry for knowledge, want a career in retail, and really respond well to the coaching we provide. With the extra effort from our field staff, I believe we have laid the foundation for a great partnership with Job Corps.”

—Patrick Flavin, Manager of Government Programs, The TJX Companies, Inc.

TJX has developed a successful model for recruiting talented associates, while simultaneously providing valuable supports to young people in disadvantaged situations. TJX has partnered with Job Corps Region One (New England) to provide inner-city young people in five Job Corps sites the skills and opportunities they need to obtain and keep jobs in the retail industry.

Why Get Involved

The partnership with Job Corps helps TJX recruit and retain a quality workforce. The effort is run

in partnership between TJX Government Programs and Minnie Cargill, Recruitment Manager Northeast Region, T.J. Maxx. “We are looking for bright ambitious business-minded individuals that are interested in a career in retail,” says Cargill. “If we can hire the students with the right attitude, we can teach them to be successful in our stores. Reaching out to Job Corps with some extra effort has given us the opportunity to meet with some really great students that we might not otherwise have met.”

While a relatively new program, the effort is already paying off. During the start-up year more than 50 students have been hired, and several have been promoted. The retention rates of these young people have been very high to date, suggesting that this recruitment strategy provides a sound return on investment.

The partnership also advances TJX Companies' strong corporate commitment by creating an opportunity to give back to the community by supporting the positive development of urban youth.

Why it Works

According to Flavin, the partnership works because of the people involved. Minnie Cargill (affectionately called “Ms. Minnie” by the young people in Job Corps) started the program after attending Job Corps job fairs, and seeing the potential to do more. Her ability to provide leadership to the students involved is widely seen as a key element in success.

Likewise, the TJX associates who conduct the trainings—from store managers to district managers and regional staff—are vital to its success. The commitment to training is a value shared throughout the TJX corporate culture. As David Quiet, manager of the St. Albans store, puts it, “We can train anybody. That’s the goal of the company. We just want good people. We think TJ Maxx is a great growth opportunity.”¹

Nitty Gritty

Minnie Cargill runs the training program together with Job Corps staff for a couple of hours twice a week over a twelve-week period at the selected Job Corps sites. This is as an optional component young people can elect to take in addition to their regular Job Corps classes, in order to learn more real-world skills. The training program consists of store tours, training in customer services, communication skills, dress for success, job search skills, and budgeting exercises. For example, in one session, students are given a \$200 budget to select appropriate clothing for their job interviews. In another session young people conduct mock job interviews. Once adequately prepared, the students are granted real job interviews with a TJX company Store Manager.

Cargill also runs train-the-trainer sessions for Job Corps staff in more remote areas. She then assigns a local store manager or assistant manager to be the champion to take the lead role in partnering with that Job Corps site.

TJX is currently studying what elements of success are dependent on the particular participants involved (the students, staff and champions), and which are replicable. TJX is exploring replicating this program in other regions of the country. This will be accomplished by meeting with franchisees, explaining the program to them, and then working with individual directors of Job Corps sites and communicating down through the chain the value of these partnerships and how to implement them.

1. “Jobs interest goes to the Maxx,” *St. Albans Messenger*. September 8, 2004. Lee Kahrs.

Helping Employees Parent Their Older Youth

Many employers have programs designed to help parents with young children, teaching parenting skills and helping them identify and manage early learning and after-school opportunities for their children. Increasingly, companies have programs designed to help employees who need help in managing the challenges of parenting teenagers. Employees are responding, creating programs geared toward the unique needs of these parents.

IBM Supports Parents: Funding of LifeWorks Signature Initiatives

IBM recognizes its employees as its greatest asset and its goal is to be the global employer of choice. To maintain a pulse on the challenges employees are facing—both personally and professionally—IBM regularly conducts surveys to identify specific issues it is facing. Where able, it works to develop programs, internally and externally, to offer guidance in these areas.

One avenue is working in collaboration with their U.S. resource and referral provider, LifeWorks (Ceridian), in the development of Signature Initiative offerings. Each year Ceridian and IBM work together to identify the topics and materials to be developed; the recordings, kits, games, articles, and other materials are created by Ceridian and funded by IBM.

Assistance with parenting challenges has been an important topic for IBM employees. Working with Ceridian, following is a sampling of key signature initiatives that were developed in support of the concerns facing IBM employees:

Summer Jobs and Opportunities for Teenagers

Booklet, 34 pages

Each year millions of teenagers face the same question: What am I going to do this summer? Some teenagers need to work to earn money, others want a job that will help them meet people or gain experience, and still others are interested in volunteer positions. *Summer Jobs and Opportunities for Teenagers* is full of practical advice to help teenagers find and apply for a job or internship. This fun-to-read booklet guides teens through the entire process, from looking for a job or volunteer opportunity to writing a resume, going on interviews, and handling money matters. The booklet comes with a resource guide of helpful websites and books for teenagers to use in the job-search process.

Teenagers and Stress

CD, 47 minutes. (Tracks also downloadable online.)

Life can be stressful when you're a teenager. Many teens feel pressure at home and at school. They worry about grades, relationships, friends, and getting along with their parents. This 47-minute recording for teenagers offers tips and advice about how to recognize and handle stress. The recording features the voices of real teenagers talking about stress and tips and advice from Dr. Gloria Deckro, a physician and counselor specializing in stress management. On this recording

Dr. Deckro offers quick techniques for managing stress as well as a guided relaxation to help calm the body and mind. The recording comes with liner notes to help listeners explore their own stress signs and learn more techniques for coping with stress.

Talking with Your Teenager

CD, 60 minutes. (Tracks also downloadable online.)

Drugs, friends, school. How can you get your teenager to talk with you about these and other issues? On this recording, Dr. Michael Riera, the author of *Uncommon Sense for Parents With Teenagers* and several other books, offers fresh advice that will help you communicate with your teenager—about any issue. He talks about how to ask the right questions, be a better listener, and understand what your teenager is really saying. Real teenagers give advice, too, on how to get conversations going at home.

Letting Go: When Your Child Goes to College

CD, 60 minutes. (Tracks also downloadable online.)

On this recording, Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger, authors of the well-known book *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years*, offer support and advice as your child prepares to leave for college. Parents and students also discuss the struggles and joys they experienced. Their heartfelt stories and the advice you'll hear from those who have been through it will help you meet the challenges of the letting go phase—as well as appreciate the joys and rewards of seeing your child off to college.

On Your Own: Surviving Freshman Year

CD, 62 minutes. (Tracks also downloadable online.)

Nine college freshmen talk on this CD about the first year of college and what to expect. Topics include packing up and leaving home, roommates, friends, parties, pressures, studying, homesickness, staying connected with family and friends, and the lessons they learned as freshmen. Their words of wisdom will help your child adjust to freshman year. The recording comes with liner notes filled with dozens of helpful tips.

The Johnson & Johnson Company provides support to its employees with older children through the “College Coach” program. The program is a holistic support system for parents and youth in secondary schools. College Coach provides services related to post-secondary educational and career opportunities. The program is a combination of on-site workshops and a virtual learning center, which was designed to be flexible and allow working parents to access information from home. The topics of the workshops vary and explore multiple themes, such as making an academic plan for high school, the college application process, and financial aid opportunities. The virtual learning center provides an opportunity for employees and students to delve further into topics covered by the onsite workshops. They also allow students and parents to explore other topics such as alternatives to college and optimizing the changes to gain admissions to the best school.

Encouraging and Enabling Employees to Give Back to Community Youth

Employers also support employees who are interested in giving back to young people in their community. The range of ways employees get involved varies—from donating money to volunteering to providing pro-bono support to serving on boards. A number of employers have designed a range of programs to recognize, support and promote this sort of community involvement. At KPMG, for example, encouraging community involvement is a corporate priority and young people in KPMG communities are frequently the beneficiaries of KPMG's *Involve* Initiative.

KPMG: Supporting Junior Achievement Through Local Volunteerism and Fundraising

Overview

One of KPMG's core values is a commitment to its communities, a commitment which frequently extends to the young people in its communities. In order to fulfill that goal, KPMG instituted KPMG's Community Involvement Program, *Involve*, nearly 15 years ago. Rather than employing solely a "national strategy" for all of its corporate community involvement, the program enables partners and employees to devote attention to the issues they care about in their local communities. In many communities across the country, Junior Achievement (JA) and its work with youth is an area that KPMG partners and employees support by volunteering their time and raising money locally to support the organization.

In local communities across the country, KPMG partners and employees support JA in multiple ways—by volunteering time for JA in a Day, by participating in classroom consulting and teaching JA courses in their local schools, by working on the JA Bowl-A-Thon fundraisers in their communities, by being on local boards, and by raising money through the KPMG Community Giving Campaign. According to the John-Anthony Meza, Associate Director—National Community Involvement, "the relationship with JA is nationally supported and locally driven."

Involve's mission is to enable KPMG's partners and employees to live our core value—we are committed to our communities—by building a culture of corporate citizenship and creating opportunities for them to make a real and positive impact in their communities. *Involve* draws on the enormous collective concern among its people for the well-being of others. *Involve* is managed on a local level, allowing each office to focus on the needs of its community. As a result, *Involve* encompasses an assortment of initiatives as broad and diverse as the interests and concerns of KPMG's 20,000 U.S. partners and employees. http://www.kpmgcareers.com/mylife/community_overview.asp

In 2005, KPMG had dozens of teams participating in classroom mentoring, providing nearly 3,000 hours of instruction time to middle and high school students. In addition to volunteering time in the classroom, 1,200 KPMG partners, employees and friends raised \$150,000 through JA Bowl-A-Thons. Combined with other fundraising efforts, KPMG donated nearly \$240,000 to JA in 2005. Many partners have also taken leadership roles on local JA Boards. Through these various programs, KPMG exposes young people to

a range of business opportunities and helps them develop the skills needed to make the most of those opportunities.

Why Get Involved

The primary reason KPMG supports JA is that the JA programs are important to KPMG partners and employees themselves. Allowing people to pursue their own charitable commitments is important for morale, and builds loyalty to the firm. In addition, the local relationships with JA are the embodiment of the KPMG value of giving back to the community—with KPMG partners and employees teaching in schools where they work and live.

JA has a long and successful history of helping young people develop the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. Junior Achievement, through its vast network of partners and volunteers, is the largest organization dedicated to educating students in grades K–12 about entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy through experiential hands-on programs. The JA curriculum includes hands-on learning opportunities to foster skills that will be useful in the business world. The programs are also designed to help middle and high school students make decisions on the best way to prepare for their educational and professional futures.

Finally, KPMG's support of JA has the added benefit of exposing young diverse students to KPMG early in their educational experience. As the competition for high-achieving, talented young people increases, the value of this early interaction also increases. The JA in a Day program and the classroom consulting give KPMG staff the opportunity to introduce young people to the world of business. These young people may be future employees, future clients and community leaders, so developing a relationship with them early on makes good sense for KPMG.

How It Works

KPMG partners and employees are encouraged to volunteer their time in their local communities through the *Involve* program, which is supported by firm policy giving everyone 1.5 days of paid time each year to volunteer. The JA relationship has grown out of interest at the local level, and as a result the exact nature of the work varies from community to community. In many places KPMG teams participate in JA in a Day, a one-day volunteer bonanza. For example, in the greater Washington, DC, area, more than 70 KPMG volunteers participated in JA in a Day—preparing in advance and then teaching the JA curriculum in each class at a local school over an entire day. Other ways KPMG gives back include

- Partners and employees teaching various curricula, such as the *Economics of Staying in School*, to a K–12 class over 5 to 8 weeks, giving at least 1 hour a week to the students.
- Working directly with local schools, principals and teachers to meet the needs of the children in a fun and engaging environment.
- Providing countless hours of volunteer time and skills on local JA boards and committees, providing time, vision, competencies, and business networks.
- Participating in local fundraising events to assist the mission of JA, such as the JA Bowl-A-Thons, galas, auctions, etc.

Developing a national relationship allows KPMG's relationship with JA to flourish, with local coordination allowing for commitment by the partners and employees. JA is a well-run national organization making measurable impacts in local communities and schools, which makes it an easy partner. The local work provides an opportunity to fine-tune and meet the needs of the local JA chapter and the local community.



The practices profiled above represent a range of strategies employed by human resources departments at different companies. Some focus on skill building, others are intended to introduce youth to a career, and still others do some of both. Some of the practices are designed to support employees with teens, others facilitate employee volunteer programs. Despite the differences, in one way or another, each is connected to employee recruitment and retention. In most instances, companies have been able to measure and report a return on investment, measuring savings in recruitment costs, lower turnover, and higher customer service rankings, which in turn lead to higher profits.

Philanthropy

After human resources, the corporate philanthropy departments are the next most likely function to focus on youth development. Different companies employ different grant-making strategies. Some focus on funding one or more local direct service organizations, often in the community in which the company is headquartered. Others partner with an organization, providing both resources and human capital. Others fund multi-site direct service initiatives to create change in a number of locations at once. Still others make strategic investments in capacity building, research and advocacy efforts, building the field infrastructure necessary to increase the effectiveness, scale and sustainability of efforts to support youth. Below are some promising strategies currently underway.

“NPowering” Young Adults While Improving Technology Performance at Nonprofits

Accenture Supports NPower NY in Technology Training for Urban Youth

Overview

Accenture supports NPower NY in numerous ways—through executive board leadership, as a founder and funder, and at a critical moment for NPowerNY, Accenture used its professional expertise and innovation to create the Technology Services Corps (TSC). NPower NY is a non-profit dedicated to increasing the technological capacity of the non-profit community. Launched in 2002, with the support of Accenture and other business leaders, NPower NY created TSC. The ultimate vision of the TSC is to transform young people from low-income communities into CIOs of nonprofits throughout New York City.

Run by NPowerNY, with tremendous assistance from Accenture employees, Technology Service Corps is an innovative program that looks to an unskilled pool of young people and sees in them a solution to the nonprofit community’s technology gap. According to NPower NY, the mission of the TSC is “to transform youth ranging from 18 to 25 from the streets into successful geeks.”

According to NPower NY, the mission of the TSC is “to transform youth ranging from 18 to 25 from the streets into successful geeks.”

Leveraging the companies’ technology expertise, Accenture worked collaboratively with other TSC founders to develop the rigorous curriculum. Accenture plays an ongoing support role, providing leadership as well as professionals who volunteer their time to participate in the NPower NY/Accenture Professional Skills Initiative and serve as mentors to the students in the program; most recently Accenture started an internship program where TSC graduates work in Accenture’s ITS department providing technology support.

Why Get Involved?

According to Chris Wearing, Managing Director of Accenture’s New York Office and one of the founders of NPower NY, the company wanted to ramp up its philanthropy and was looking for a way to contribute more than time and money. When Accenture had the opportunity to rethink its corporate philanthropy in New York, the leadership wanted to see if by starting something new and radically different, it could have a greater impact. With that goal in mind, Accenture worked with others in the business and nonprofit communities to found NPower NY and later TSC.

One of the early strategic decisions was to focus on leveraging the company’s technology expertise. According to Wearing, “understanding the premium placed on technology skills, we wanted to create something that was more in line with our core competency in technical service while at the same time benefiting individuals and nonprofits.” In addition to utilizing Accenture’s capacity in the technology sector, the focus on technology meant that Accenture employees could also make the most of their volunteer time.

Technology Service Corps: Helping Young People Build Critical 21st Century Skills

Since 2002, over 100 kids have graduated from TSC. Following completion of the training and apprenticeship program, NPower NY helps place them in jobs where the average salary is about

\$26,000, substantially more than the \$11,000 that alumni were earning prior to TSC program. The classes are a cultural and racial mix—38 percent of the students are Latino and 46 percent are black—promoting diversity within the nonprofit technology field. In addition, nonprofits have received almost 11,000 hours of volunteer time from students, who have refurbished computers, expanded a nonprofit computer network, installed software, designed websites, and provided preventative maintenance.

“Many people suggest that programs like [Technology Service Corps] are becoming essential for young workers with few skills whose career opportunities have dwindled in the past few years. Viewed up close, the program shows it can create job opportunities and sometimes even change lives.”

—“Bridging a Digital Divide” by Kris Maher, *Wall Street Journal*, August 10, 2004

Why It Works

Accenture’s involvement with NPower NY and TSC is successful in part because the company has been able to leverage its substantial business and technology expertise to help the community and the young people who go through the program. By developing a program that builds on the company’s capacity, the initiative yields benefits to all the participants: young people get a chance to develop skills that open up a new world of opportunity, the nonprofit community gets a cadre of highly skilled, yet affordable, consultants to support their work, Accenture employees lend expertise to a great cause and feel good about their good work, and Accenture management plays a leadership role in the community.

The success of this program is also due in part to the involvement from the beginning of senior Accenture executives, which has evolved to be a layered and long-term commitment at Accen-

About NPower NY and the Technology Service Corps

NPower NY is a part of a network of independent, locally based nonprofits dedicated to putting technological know-how in the hands of other nonprofits at affordable rates. One of the challenges of the work is finding highly skilled *and* affordable IT professionals who can support the nonprofit sector. In 2001, the NPower NY leadership came up with a new strategy to address this gap and TSC was born.

The NPower NY leadership team, including Accenture executives, understood that technology is a burgeoning area of the job market. They also recognized that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds rarely pursue a career in IT because they lack the skills needed to be successful. TSC provides rigorous IT support training to low-income students with only a high school diploma or GED so that they can pursue IT careers. One of the key challenges for NPower NY is to identify students who are committed to making the most of the opportunity. NPower NY works with its nonprofit network to identify candidates who are most likely to thrive in the program.

Once the students are recruited, the short but intensive sixteen-week course includes all manner of technical training such as learning how to take apart and reassemble computers, configure a laptop, network computers, and develop websites, among many other high-tech skills. In addition, there is a concentrated focus on helping the students develop a range of soft skills including professionalism and communication, and an improved sense of self confidence.

During the last five weeks of the program students do an internship at a nonprofit. The students spend one day a week at NPower NY, where they share their experiences and get help resolving workplace and professional challenges. Accenture employees along with NPower NY staff help the interns solve difficult technical issues, build confidence and set clear expectations for professional behavior. TSC provides support and guidance to the young people once they complete the program, helping students identify job opportunities through NPower NY's extensive network of nonprofit contacts.

ture. The company supports the program financially from year to year, and makes an even greater contribution in terms of the thousands of volunteer hours donated by Accenture employees. The early involvement has also meant that the company has been able to help shape the program in such a way that the benefits to their employees are also substantial.

One of the most significant benefits for Accenture has been in the area of employee morale. Accenture employees generously volunteer their time to TSC for several reasons. First, employees understand that they are able to give “the greatest bang for the buck” in terms of their time by volunteering to teach TSC classes. In addition, employees are able build their own skills through

volunteering. Finally, the value of their volunteer time is validated by outside recognition of the value of the NPower NY and TSC generally and Accenture's support in particular. For all of these reasons, Accenture employees are proud of their work with TSC.

Finally, the relationship between Accenture and NPower NY is successful because it continues to grow and evolve. Accenture leadership remains actively involved, with Chris Wearing currently serving as Chairman of the Board of NPower NY. Accenture and NPower NY remain innovative, constantly identifying new ways to deliver technology support for greater numbers of nonprofits. Most recently, the Accenture Foundation funded Accenture employees to develop the technology needed to launch a technology outsourcing program to support nonprofits—called IT Basic. TSC graduates are now working in and supporting the IT Basic Data Center in various capacities, creating jobs for the students and technological support for the nonprofits. Wearing is excited about this latest development because from a philanthropic perspective, the return on investment is substantial. In his words, “with a single donation, the Accenture Foundation has created the capacity to provide IT support to every nonprofit in the country.”

Johnson & Johnson's Bridge to Employment

Overview

For the past decade, Johnson & Johnson, through its Bridge to Employment (BTE) program, has made learning meaningful, engaging, and relevant for at-risk youth, while connecting them to potential careers in the healthcare and health-related fields.

Bridge to Employment is a partnership among the private sector, local schools, higher education institutions and community groups. BTE partnerships are currently operating in 12 locations in the United States and abroad. To support the management and implementation of the program, Johnson & Johnson partners with the Academy for Educational Development's National Institute for Work and Learning.

Designed to meet local needs, each program is unique, offering students a variety of learning experiences, including academic enrichment activities, applied learning opportunities, career exploration, and exposure to higher education. These activities help young people build solid futures. Students enrolled in the program gain skills and knowledge through hands-on company tours, formal internships, job-shadowing opportunities, and skill-based workshops. Johnson & Johnson employees may also serve as career coaches or guest lecturers.

In recent years, community colleges and universities have become more active partners, helping students understand the importance of higher education and offering credit-bearing college-level courses, on-campus summer institutes, or teacher training. For example, Cincinnati State now offers BTE students the opportunity to enroll in classes at the university and earn up to six college credits. Another higher education partner, Rutgers University, collaborates with its local BTE site to provide preparatory courses for BTE enrollees.

Young people enrolled in the program enhance their academic skills while gaining job-related experience and skills relevant for a range of positions in the field of healthcare and health-related fields—broadly defined to include everything from doctors and nurses to scientists in pharmaceutical companies.

Why Get Involved

The BTE program is a reflection of the commitment Johnson & Johnson makes to youth and is a reflection of the company's credo to support the communities and work environments of its employees. The BTE program is also a strong vehicle for community relations, since BTE builds upon collaboration among community stakeholders. The primary motivation of Johnson & Johnson is to be a partner in the community and to be a responsible corporate citizen.

Johnson & Johnson has a long history of supporting youth development programs. Johnson & Johnson launched the BTE program in 1992 in order to reach students most at risk of academic disengagement and poor academic performance. The BTE program was designed to connect academic knowledge with practical applications and career opportunities in the healthcare field. Students discovered that learning could be meaningful, engaging and relevant.

As the healthcare and health-related fields have expanded, Johnson & Johnson has also expanded its focus on the opportunities it provides to students. Although the primary focus continues to be the engagement of students in the healthcare field, the BTE program also exposes students to a broader range of health-related career opportunities, such as chemistry, biotechnology, pharmaceutical research and development, ergonomics and engineering.

Young people involved in school-to-career opportunities like the BTE program receive multiple benefits. National data reveal that these students gain better jobs and higher wages than their peers. Students also have greater exposure to higher education and as a result have higher rates of enrollment in post-secondary education. In addition to the academic benefits, students also gain professional skills and experience. Students engaged in the BTE program gain healthcare-related skills and skill-related credentials and certificates. The BTE program partners with three independent evaluation teams to assess the impact of BTE program on students.

How They Do It

Johnson & Johnson currently supports 12 BTE sites in the United States and abroad. The first international program was launched in Cork, Ireland, in 2006, with a planned international expansion in 2007.

Each year, the company launches three new sites, providing a four-year \$100,000 grant to each site, and “graduates” three existing programs. While graduate sites no longer receive funding from Johnson & Johnson Corporate Headquarters, many have sustained themselves and continue to operate. For example, Cordis—a Johnson & Johnson local operating company in Miami, Florida—continues to operate a successful six-week summer internship program for high school students, which was developed under the BTE initiative.

The commitment Johnson & Johnson makes to the BTE program occurs on two levels, the national and the local levels.

National Commitment:

The Corporate Headquarters of Johnson & Johnson funds each local site to launch and operate the BTE program. In 2005, Johnson & Johnson revised the program’s structure and application timeline to further support the local BTE sites. As a result, grantees receive a one-year planning grant, which culminates with the submission of a full proposal, comprehensive program model and work plan.

Johnson & Johnson also funds a national technical assistance provider—the Academy for Educational Development (AED), National Institute for Work and Learning—to support and manage the BTE program. AED provides extensive technical assistance to all BTE sites, including strategic planning assistance, community needs–assessments, sustainability planning and capacity building. As part of this technical assistance effort, AED and Johnson & Johnson host an annual Alliance Building and Training Session in Washington, DC, for all the BTE team members. Johnson & Johnson covers the travel costs for two representatives from each team to attend; additional representatives are sponsored by the local operating company.

Johnson & Johnson contracts with three evaluation teams to conduct an independent evaluation of each BTE program. These annual evaluations, which identify strengths and weaknesses at the managerial, programmatic and operational levels, help Johnson & Johnson assess the impact of the program and make continuous improvements.

Johnson & Johnson encourages and supports the institutionalization of the programs by imbedding it into the infrastructure of a local school or university or a company's regular operation, ensuring its survival beyond the grant period.

Local Commitment:

One of the cornerstones of the BTE program is employee participation and engagement. The local operating companies commit employee time and collaborate with community partners to ensure the success of the BTE programs. Because each BTE program has a unique structure, the local commitments vary across each site. On average, local operating companies commit approximately 10 to 20 employees per BTE site, averaging 20 to 40 hours a year.

Each local operating company appoints a staff person to be the company representative in the partnership. These "Company Champions" come from all departments, including human resources, community relations, marketing, and R&D. Although the local companies do not provide a formal release time for their responsibilities with the BTE site, they encourage employee participation and engagement in the program. In fact, many sites have incorporated BTE involvement into employee's personal development plans and performance reviews.

Seven Key Elements of Success

(adapted from *Bridge to Employment Program a Decade of Promising School to Career Partnerships*)

1. Commitment from all partners involved

Johnson & Johnson operating companies identify the strengths and weaknesses of all its BTE partners. Based on this evaluation, the companies encourage and forge new and distinct relationships to ensure the most effective partnerships, which involve collaboration and equal participation and contribution to the program.

2. Effective management and leadership

The most effective management of BTE sites occur when the leadership rotates among a committee comprised of all community partners and sharing of the responsibilities to attain the goals of the BTE program.

3. Structured work-based learning component

The BTE initiative strives provide “contextual learning experiences,” which combines classroom instruction with work experience and students the opportunity to apply the academic concepts in the real world. It also exposes students to professional skills, careers in health-care, technology and science fields, and builds awareness of professional and educational opportunities.

4. Links and exposure to higher education

A provision of the BTE partnership is the links to local colleges and universities. The higher education partners offer a variety of services including admissions and financial aid counseling and opportunities to enroll in classes and earn credits.

5. High expectations and accountability

In order to ensure the delivery of the highest quality program work, Johnson & Johnson requires the submission of quarterly progress reports, work plans, and status reports on goals and objective. In addition, they also partnered with AED to provide ongoing technical assistance for strategic planning and implementation of the BTE initiative and capacity building support.

6. A system for evaluation and continuous improvement

Johnson & Johnson believes continuous evaluation and improvement are an important aspect of attaining the BTE goals. As a result, Johnson & Johnson conducts internal and external evaluations and utilizes them to design improvements to the program.

7. A plan for institutionalization of the partnership

Johnson & Johnson is committed to creating long-term partnerships with local communities and educational systems. As a result, Johnson & Johnson through AED provides guidance to the local BTE initiatives to institutionalize their programs and be self-sustaining beyond the life of the Johnson & Johnson grant.

Sodexo's Backpack Program: Utilizing Business Expertise to Feed Youth at Risk of Hunger

Overview

Sodexo, Inc., the leading provider of integrated food and facilities management services in North America, created its Backpack Program to ensure that students at risk of hunger in the school districts it serves have food to eat throughout the weekend. The program is based on a similar model originally developed by America's Second Harvest: The Nation's Food Bank Network. Sodexo's Backpack Program is an excellent example of a company leveraging its business expertise to support the positive physical and mental development of young people at risk.

Sodexo, with \$6.7 billion in annual revenue and more than 125,000 employees, is a large and decentralized company, so it can be challenging to develop company-wide initiatives. Like many of its most successful projects, the Backpack Program began at the local level and has expanded over time. As the program spread to other Sodexo-managed school districts, it was tailored to meet the individual needs of each community. The program, which is run at the school-district level, requires strong leadership from Sodexo managers and the enthusiasm of front-line Sodexo employees.

At the end of every week, Sodexo team members fill backpacks with child-friendly, nonperishable food items for students identified by guidance counselors or school administrators as being at risk of hunger. Although an important element of the program is that students remain anonymous, Sodexo is provided with the number of siblings residing in each home and any specific dietary requirements. This information helps Sodexo pack enough food to support not only the student but also his or her siblings over the weekend. On Friday afternoons, Sodexo employees deliver the full backpacks to the school office, where students pick them up. They are returned on Monday mornings.

Proper nutrition is vital to the growth and development of children, particularly for low-income children. According to America's Second Harvest, research indicates that even mild undernutrition experienced by young children during critical periods of growth impacts the behavior of children, their school performance and their overall cognitive development.

History and Key Elements of the Backpack Program

Recognizing that many students rely on the USDA's Free and Reduced-Priced Meal Program as their primary source of nutrition during the school week, a Sodexo manager in Rhode Island began developing a plan to ensure students who were in need also had enough food to sustain them over the weekend. From this initial idea, the manager began developing what is today Sodexo's Backpack Program.

The program is a close collaboration between Sodexo, the local food bank, and the school district administration. Early in the program's development, Sodexo realized they needed to identify a food source other than their own, which comes in quantities that are too large for a home kitchen. Sodexo recognized they could provide greater quantities and more appropriate food by collaborating with the local food bank in each community. Securing the support of the

local school district and school administrators is another critical component of the program. Sodexo managers depend on school staff to identify those students who are in need of assistance. In addition, school administrators, often guidance counselors, provide the backpack pick-up and drop-off location, which typically increases the students' comfort level with the program.

“Sodexo’s BackPack Program addresses the needs of students without making them feel alienated, which of course is the only way it can be successful.”

–Kate Wester, Public Relations Senior Manager,
Sodexo, Inc.

According to Sodexo team members familiar with the program, a key element to its success has been the emphasis on maintaining each participant’s anonymity. The backpacks, which vary in color, style and brand, are typically donated by retailers in the community. Sodexo does not publicize the locations of the program and the schools agree to help keep the program confidential.

Why Get Involved

Sodexo’s BackPack Program provides a way for the company to utilize its business expertise to help those in need in the community. Shondra Jenkins of the Sodexo Foundation has been instrumental in identifying funding sources and expanding the program. “The BackPack Program extends the mission and values of our company into the lives of our employees and into the communities we serve,” Jenkins said. “In addition, all Sodexo employees take great pride and satisfaction in knowing they are contributing to a program that truly supports children in need.” Jenkins added that the benefits speak for themselves, including improved school performance, reduced absenteeism, increased self-esteem and fewer behavioral issues.

Additional Information

Like most locally driven initiatives, the BackPack Program varies from community to community. The variations depend on the needs of the community, the parameters of the local partnerships and the capacity of Sodexo management. Nevertheless, the core elements remain fairly constant: a strong partnership between Sodexo, the local food bank and school administration.

Another constant is the commitment of Sodexo team members. In every community where there is a BackPack Program, Sodexo employees have been involved in launching it as well as donating their own time and money to get it started. Sodexo’s vendor partners have also contributed to the effort, including one company that donated over 200 cases of peanut butter granola bars. Once a program is initiated, Sodexo is fervently committed to ensuring it continues because the students and their siblings depend on it.

Given the importance of anonymity, Sodexo is careful not to publicize the program. They do not release the locations where it is active, nor do they talk to the press about the initiative. They do publicize the program internally so that it will continue to grow within the company. Currently, Sodexo has 14 school districts participating in the BackPack Program with 5 additional districts expected to start in the coming year. Sodexo estimates the program serves over 1,000 students weekly.

Time Warner: Funding Multiple Initiatives to Support Youth

At Time Warner, youth-focused philanthropy involves numerous complementary efforts including the following:

- **Time Warner College Prep Initiatives.** Recognizing that many factors encourage or hinder students from attaining higher education, Time Warner supports several after-school college preparatory initiatives. The company supports many community-based programs that work to ensure middle and high school students are academically prepared for college. They also fund community initiatives that help students navigate the college application, selection, and financial aid processes. Time Warner also partners with national and local organizations to support quality college preparation of underserved youth. As a result they collaborate with organizations such as the National Urban League and Mexican American Legal Defense Fund on the national level and the Harlem Educational Activities Fund and The After-School Corporation on a local level.
- **Time Warner Scholarship Program.** As part of Time Warner's commitment to expanding access to higher education, the company initiated a scholarship program that ensures students from disadvantaged backgrounds complete their higher education goals. Recognizing the economic challenges of completing a post-secondary education, the company designed the scholarship program to meet the unique needs of individual students. The scholarship assists students by closing the financial gap in the cost of their education.
- **Time Warner National Scholarship Initiative.** In addition to providing scholarships directly through the Time Warner Scholarship Program, the company also provides funding to several national scholarship initiatives to invest in college students around the country. Over the years, Time Warner has partnered with several national scholarship programs such as the American Indian College Fund, Hispanic College Fund, and the United Negro College Fund.
- **Time Warner Education Research & Advocacy Initiative.** Time Warner's commitment to education expands beyond direct support of students and programs. The company also funds research and advocacy to build public awareness about issues pertaining to educational inequity and barriers that limit young people from reaching their full potential. They fund research that increases the knowledgebase of best practices that ensure the college success of all students. In the 2005–2006 fiscal year, Time Warner supported research organizations such the Harvard University—Achievement Gap Initiative, Pathways to College Network, and the Public Education Network.

Other Departments

While the majority of efforts to support youth are overseen by human resources and philanthropy departments, others frequently play a critical role as well. For example, the Johnson & Johnson Bridge to Employment National Program is managed through Corporate Contributions at Johnson & Johnson Corporate Headquarters. The local Bridge to Employment efforts, however, are spearheaded through various divisions—Community Relations, Public Relations, Human Resources and Research & Development. In many companies, communications, community relations and/or public relations executives are involved in the development and implementation of philanthropic initiatives.

Senior executive leadership is a critical element of most highly effective corporate youth development initiatives. Senior leadership has been the force behind Accenture's partnership with NPower NY. The H-E-B Career Lattice Programs enjoy substantial support from H-E-B's owner. Even KPMG's *Involve* volunteer initiative, which is intentionally locally driven, benefits from the CEO's commitment to giving back to the community. Executive leadership can also take the form of board service at the local level. Many companies encourage their executives to serve on local nonprofit boards, such as Marriott executives serving on the local National Academy Foundation boards. Time Warner trains its executives in the skills needed for effective service on nonprofit boards. Upon successful completion of their training, the executives are matched to a local nonprofit board where individuals have the opportunity to apply their skills.

In addition to providing leadership within their own company, senior executives can play important leadership roles in their community and the nation as a whole. Even the best corporate programs for young people have only a limited, though clearly critical, impact on young people. In order for many of these promising practices to be taken to scale, policymakers will have to be educated about the range of initiatives that can help young people reach their full potential. Senior executives and their government relations staff are in a unique position to work with policymakers and others to call together the range of public and private groups who work on youth issues to create an overarching, aligned, strategic approach.

Government relations was the one area in which we were unable to identify promising practices, although they may exist in some other companies. Given the tremendous impact that senior executives and government relations teams could have on policymakers' views on youth and what is necessary to ensure positive youth development, this is an area of unrealized potential. Corporate Voices will be working with its partners to help build stronger connections between corporate leaders who understand the importance of positive youth development and policymakers at the local, state and national level who are responsible for creating and implementing youth development programs.

Coordinating Across Functions

Many of the companies with promising practices run multiple initiatives through various departments out of multiple locations. For these and other companies that have made a commitment to youth issues, developing a coordinated strategy that runs throughout all of their efforts can be a challenge. With myriad initiatives being driven out of multiple offices, it can be difficult to even know everything happening within a company, much less ensure that all efforts support and maximize one another. Not surprisingly, different companies have implemented different approaches to improve coordination. Some companies, such as Philip Morris USA, have worked to articulate a coordinated strategy that drives philanthropy and communications efforts focused on youth. Others, such as Time Warner, have developed a data collection tool that allows the company to monitor and evaluate all youth-oriented efforts across functions and business units. Still others, including TJX and CVS/pharmacy, rely on managers or other dedicated staff to improve coordination of youth-focused efforts.

CVS/pharmacy Regional Learning Centers

Overview

Since 2000 CVS/pharmacy has teamed up with government agencies in high unemployment communities to create a one-stop employment center through their Regional Learning Centers. The Regional Learning Centers are used as a focal point for efforts by numerous departments within CVS to help youth transition to adulthood. This commitment to aligning efforts across a number of departments makes the centers a particularly promising practice.

The Regional Learning Centers match job seekers to permanent employment opportunities at CVS/pharmacy retail stores. In addition, the centers provide specialized job training to all its new hires and upgrade training to existing employees. Although the Regional Learning Centers are not exclusively designed for young people (the ages range from sixteen-year-olds to senior citizens), they have proved to be effective at helping young people transition to adulthood.

“This model has been very effective for CVS/pharmacy. In fact, studies have shown that training at a RLC improves the key indicators, such as, profits, sales, customer service, shrink, etc. Each center averages 1,500 trainees per year. Many of these folks are incumbent workers and are moving up the ladder. Each time they get promoted they return for training.”

–Stephen M. Wing, Director of Government Hiring Programs for CVS/pharmacy

The Regional Center model is the brainchild of the government programs department team. The centers began as a way for the private and public sector to collaborate in underserved communities, where too many young people face barriers to entering the workforce. Six years ago, the first center opened in Washington, DC. It remains the largest and most comprehensive regional center in the country.

The center is a joint collaboration of the human resources department, the government programs department, and the retail stores. As a result the center plays a key role in fostering cohesion and coordination among various departments within CVS/pharmacy. The centers also have a posi-

tive impact on the community and improve CVS/pharmacy's relationship with their communities. It supports the company's efforts to become a local neighborhood pharmacy with familiar faces and personal relationships.

Why Get Involved

The Regional Learning Centers not only lead to improved relationships with local communities, but also advance multiple business needs of CVS/pharmacy. The centers increase the profit margin of the company, while providing employment and training to youth in underserved communities.

Through its support of the Regional Learning Centers, CVS/pharmacy increases the skills of its entry-level employees, improves skills and retention of incumbent employees, ensures a diverse workforce and establishes itself as a good corporate citizen in underserved communities.

CVS/pharmacy benefits from the Regional Learning Centers because they provide a high-quality, stable workforce. The training offered at the Regional Learning Centers ensures that new recruits acquire the skills that will enable them to succeed as employees of CVS/pharmacy. As a result of the preparation, employees have higher job satisfaction and the retail stores retain 60 to 80 percent of employees referred through the regional centers compared to the 30-percent retention of regular employees. The center-trained employees also have higher promotion rates. The high job performance, satisfaction and retention rate of employees are important to the overall success of the company.

The stability in the workforce also leads to higher customer satisfaction and profit margin for CVS/pharmacy. A satisfied and familiar workforce helps CVS/pharmacy achieve its goal of transforming from a chain to a neighborhood pharmacy. The stability in the workforce improves customer service. Participants in the Regional Learning Center score three times as high as their peers on service evaluations. This in turn leads to an increase in sales and the profit margin of CVS/pharmacy.

The youth involved in the Regional Learning Centers also benefit greatly. They gain valuable job-related skills, especially applied skills such as their ability to communicate with supervisors, co-workers, and customers. The centers train younger recruits on how to mediate conflicts, accept constructive criticism, and maintain responsibilities of the job. Regional Learning Center staff have learned over time that these applied skills are particularly important to career success, and are exploring ways to provide additional applied skills training to Regional Learning Center attendees. The high retention rate of Regional Learning Center-trained employees also ensures youth have access to stable employment. In addition, the Regional Learning Centers expose them to career opportunities and facilitate their upward mobility in the corporation by providing them with upgrade training. These trainings enhance the skills employees need to obtain higher positions.

Why It Works

The collaboration between the private- and public-sector partners is critical to the effectiveness of the Regional Learning Centers. The relationship has resulted in benefits for the local partners and the company. Local government agencies are instrumental in recruiting and selecting indi-

The CVS/pharmacy Regional Learning Centers benefit and meet the needs of the company, the communities, local governments and individuals.

viduals to participate in the center. In the Washington, DC, regional center, the city Department of Employment Services prescreens applicants. The department measures the applicants' skills, aptitudes, and personalities. The prescreening process ensures a good match between the applicant, the goals of the learning center, and the components of employment at CVS/pharmacy.

The CVS/pharmacy regional centers are successful due to the collaboration between the public and private sectors, and the coordination among the various departments within CVS/pharmacy.

The coordination between various departments at CVS/pharmacy is also vital to the success of the program. The learning centers function as bridge between the human resources department, government programs department, and the store operations department. CVS/pharmacy created a full-time

coordinator position at each Regional Learning Center to bring the different departments together to discuss their goals, identify intersecting areas and work together to accomplish the goals.

Regional coordinators are keenly aware that each department in a company has its own culture and language. The human resources department focuses on recruitment and training and utilizes language that prioritizes policies and procedures that govern employees. On the other hand, the store operations department emphasizes administrative needs and uses language that addresses customer

relations and sales margins. The government programs department focuses on community outreach and as a result utilizes the language of marketing and community relations. As facilitators, regional coordinators need to master each of these "languages," find common ground and communicate to each department in their own language. The success of the Regional Learning Centers is often due to the ability of coordinators to foster collaboration among several departments.

"It is a partnership and that takes building the relationship with the agency. The center provides training for each position in the store so that people learn the skills, return to their store, master the skills and then get promoted. Later, they return for training for their new positions. Good people continue to be promoted, which benefits our retention."

—Charnetta Young, Regional Learning Center Coordinator

Nitty Gritty

CVS/pharmacy operates seven Regional Learning Centers throughout the country and nine other centers are in the process of opening. All open centers are located in inner-city communities that have experienced a high rate of unemployment, such as Detroit, Cleveland, and Washington, DC. One of the central goals of the centers is to provide a partnership between the private and public sectors. As a result, the Regional Learning Centers partner with a local governmental agency; for example, the Washington, DC, Regional Learning Center is a partnership between CVS/pharmacy and the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services.

The partnerships provide a financial incentive for both the governmental agency and CVS/pharmacy. As a condition of the partnership the cost of operating the learning center is divided between both parties. Local government agencies house the regional centers and assume responsibility for the cost of the space (including rent, utilities and security) while CVS/pharmacy assumes the financial costs of training, staff and equipment. For example, the equipment in the

Washington, DC, regional center creates a mock CVS/pharmacy store and contains a photo lab, electronic checkout registers, aisles of merchandise and a pharmacy counter. On average, the cost for CVS/pharmacy of training a new employee at the center ranges between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

CVS/pharmacy commits staff and employee time to the Regional Learning Centers. The company staffs each center with a regional center manager whose responsibility is to work with the various intersecting departments of the corporation and the trainers at the center. Depending on the size and capacity of the Regional Learning Center, it may also have a center coordinator. The regional center in Washington, DC, is the largest center that CVS/pharmacy operates. The Washington, DC, regional center includes a center manager, two center coordinators, and an administrative assistant. In addition to the full-time staff that operate the Regional Learning Centers, CVS/pharmacy also has trainers for the centers. Trainers are CVS/pharmacy employees who have completed train-the-trainer programs and split their time between their training duties (often one or two days a week) and their in-store job responsibilities.

Although the centers are not directly eligible for grant funding, the centers can receive funding through their partnerships. Often, the regional learning center and the local partners seek outside funding together. A result of such collaboration is the Detroit Regional Learning Center, which was the recipient of a \$1.7 million grant from the United States Labor Department and the *President's High Growth Job Training Initiative*.

While it is clear that developing, implementing and monitoring a coordinated strategy can be a challenge in a large corporation, those companies that have found ways to improve coordination believe that it increases the benefits to young people as well as the return on investment for the companies. Given both the challenges and the benefits of coordination, Corporate Voices will be working with its partner companies over the coming year to help identify ways to improve coordination in their work to support positive youth development.

Conclusion

We began this report with the sobering findings from the recent survey on workforce readiness: According to employers, too many young people lack important work-related skills such as professionalism, communication, teamwork and critical thinking that they need as entry-level employees in today's economy. This promising practices report demonstrates that business is playing an important role in helping to create greater opportunities for young people to develop the skills they need to be successful in work—and in life. Companies partner with schools, run internship programs, encourage employees to serve as mentors in part because they recognize that developing relationships with young people builds ties to the company which can be valuable in developing the talent pipeline. While some companies have a less direct business interest driving their youth development work, all of the companies are interested in improving outcomes for young people.

Just as there are differences in the reason *why* companies work on youth issues, there are difference in *how* companies support youth initiatives. The practices profiled in this report are representative of the breadth and depth of work being done. Some companies run initiatives out of a particular department or location. Others have been able to find ways to work across departmental lines to create an integrated company-wide commitment, frequently making an even greater impact. The case studies suggest that companies are most successful when they are able to leverage their business expertise—from providing food to young people and their families (Sodexo) to developing a technology training program (Accenture).

Looking to the future role for business, it is evident that the business community has a lot more to offer. The types of sophisticated data and accountability mechanisms corporations use to align efforts by thousands of employees working in different departments toward common ends could be brought to bear on the challenge of aligning efforts in other sectors to support young people. And looking beyond the company's doors, companies can play a leadership role in a community by bringing together government officials, community and faith-based organizations and other key stakeholders to help craft a more aligned overall strategy for improving opportunities for young people. Companies can also provide leadership on the national level, on their own and through vehicles such as Corporate Voices for Working Families. These next steps—how companies improve efforts to connect across departmental lines, and how companies can support greater coordination and integration across public private systems and sectors throughout a community—will be a subject of future inquiry for Corporate Voices' Youth Transition Working Group.

We close this report on an encouraging note: Companies are rising to the challenge, putting forth an impressive array of strategies and programs to help young people transition to adulthood. We hope this report inspires still more companies to find their own way, perhaps replicating or modifying one of these promising practices, to support youth development.

Publications CD Index

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Afterschool, Youth Transitions and Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education: A Call To Action from the Business Community. Joint statement on early childhood education from The Business Roundtable and Corporate Voices. 9 pgs, March 2003.

Afterschool for All: A Call To Action from the Business Community. Consensus statement from Corporate Voices' partner companies on why America needs high-quality afterschool programs. 14 pgs, March 2004.

Business to Business Afterschool Toolkit. Booklet and DVD/CD, December 2005.

Community to Business Afterschool Toolkit. Booklet and DVD/CD, October 2006.

Business to Community Afterschool Toolkit. Booklet and DVD/CD, April 2006

Corporate Investments in Afterschool. By Vicky Banach. May 2006

Why Business Cares About Afterschool. Brochure, July 2006.

Are They Really Ready To Work? Survey of employer's attitudes toward entry-level workers' skills. By Corporate Voices, The Conference Board, the Society for Human Resource Management, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. 44pgs, October 2006.

Are They Really Ready to Work Executive Summary. 4pgs. October 2006.

Family Economic Stability

2004 EITC Toolkit. Materials and tools designed to help businesses alert their eligible employees about the Earned Income Tax Credit. December 2003.

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