



SQUARE CUBE

Social Impact Consulting and Coaching

Maximizing the Positive Impact of Community Engagement

We are seeking to work with you to create the antithesis of the cartoon on our webpage, repeated below as a reminder.

Often companies determine that they will engage with community organizations and projects as a team building exercise. The intentions, to improve communication, provide a common platform of experience, to share a common goal and to allow different team members to shine as they show skills and qualities that may hitherto have been hidden. These intentions do not always get realized.



Sometimes there are practical business drivers to the decision to engage. For example, enhancing local awareness of a company, supporting the development of a positive reputation in the community and sometimes

engagement is simply seen as a way to put something back into their community.

Sometimes community engagement underperforms. For example, when the organization or team have availability it may not be convenient for the non-profit, or when the team or organization brings certain expertise that the non-profit organization may not need at that time. Sometimes insufficient preparation has been put into the event so it becomes a commitment that has varying levels of participant engagement or the team does not really fully appreciate what it is the non-profit is doing.

Square Cube wants to work with you so that compassionate community engagement is never underwhelming and is an organizational and team development activity *par excellence*.

We have offered an overview of the three stage process of building a Compassionate Community Engagement on the website. Just to re-cap here:

1. Preparation - exploring values and beliefs, exploring the value of cultivating compassion within the business, tools of developing compassion, developing a focus for compassionate community engagement and creating tools to talk about and plan the engagement
2. The Compassionate Community Engagement itself. This may be your organization’s current focus in the community; a Square Cube Pairing Partnership or working on a project or problem.
3. Debriefing and working with the learning from the Compassionate Community Engagement. What can be brought back into the business ? What value can be added ? Want to continue with Compassionate Community Engagement because it adds to the organization’s community - how might that be shaped and what metrics might be developed for its success ?

As part of the preparation phase working with Square Cube or alone your business might want to explore these self-coaching questions and prompts.

1. In what area do you want to make an impact ?

It might be helpful to think about a specific area of impact or legacy that you want to make. While it’s exciting to be all things to all people, it’s overwhelming and will not create an impactful community engagement project. The area may be selected on the basis of its alignment with your products or services. This may have more resonance for your employees and it may have added benefits of helping you think more laterally and creatively about those services or products.

Areas where you might want to make an impact could include:

Area for Impact	Examples
The Environment	Working with an environmental non-profit to extend its reach. Working on a particular local beauty sport or area that has become problematic, tackling drought, erosion, pollution, lack of wildlife habitat
Health	What do you want to contribute to health and

	well-being ? Work on an issue eg. land mines, poor eyesight, unpottable drinking water overseas or something closer to home ? Closer to home could include obesity in young people and lack of safe play or sports areas; lack of benches for older people to take walks and be able sit down
Social Justice	
Social Welfare	
Education	Something for children, or for adults who have missed an aspect of formal education. Funding for a staffed homework club. Providing accommodation or resources for a literacy project.
Transport	Helping people access services, employment and other opportunities that may be difficult without a public bus or vehicle. Creating cycle paths, community cycle projects, linking people with technology at home
Technology	

2. How do you want to be known within the community ? or What do you want the community to be saying about your business ?

These questions may best be addressed by thinking about:

- What are the company’s values ?
- What are its beliefs about itself
- What are its beliefs about its community ?

Your thoughts about legacy and impact will align with your values and business mission and probably also align with the products and services that you already produce. There is no reason for Compassionate Community Engagement to be at a tangent to what you do. For example, a work party to paint or garden may not have the same meaning for your colleagues as creatively harnessing the power of what you are already producing or doing.

3. What applications are there within your community for the services or goods that you produce ? How might applying these creatively produce significant positive social and or environmental impacts ?

For example, an air conditioning manufacturer or service body may decide that they want to install/service a number of air conditioning units to ensure that older people or those with disabilities who find it harder to get to cooling stations or public places where there is air conditioning do not suffer in extremes of high temperatures

A bakery may decide to produce some extra items or to donate surplus items to homeless populations.

4. Working with the mission and values of the organization, how is it that you would like to engage with your community ?

5. What groups within your community are you most concerned about ?

For example, youth, older people, women, people at risk of eviction or homeless, children under school age, veterans etc. ?

- How does a focus on a particular group resonate with your employees or the products or services you create ?
- How does the focus on a particular group resonate with the your company's values or mission ?
- How does a particular group reflect needs within the community you want to be known for supporting ?
- How does your company stepping in meet needs not addressed through local non-profits or add to those efforts in a unique way ?

6. How would you like your compassionate community project impact your bottom line in terms of the sales of your products or services ?

Think for example of TOMS and We and the ways in which people will buy product because many will not only like and want the product but also have a commitment to the idea that their purchase leads directly to the donation of product to communities in need.

7. What opportunities would you like your Compassionate Community Engagement have for:

- Your employees
- Your leadership
- Your reputation locally/within your communities of influence
- Your ambitions for your legacy and impact
- The added benefits to your organization:
 - improved communication,
 - development of a common language

- development of multiple points of leadership within the organization, experiencing a surge of enthusiasm for the goods or services produced as a result of a rebooting how employees and potential purchasers look at and recommit to them

These are some starting questions. Working with Compassionate Community Engagement gives your business a chance to be or to become more of a force for good, through creative and lateral thinking and partnership building in the community. Done well Compassionate Community Engagement will generate many benefits for your business, its staff and leadership.