

Brokers recognise importance of giving back

Our recent research has revealed that over three quarters of brokers (76%) feel that positive contributions from their business to society are important.* We believe supporting charities and communities is a responsibility of every business, no matter what its size.



What is community investment?

Community investment is a way for organisations to look at their impact in society and give back. It's about more than making donations to charities, it's a more thoughtful approach to considering the meaningful impact your business can have on the communities in which you live and work.

Community investment should fit with your strategy:



Make sure your community investment policy fits with your company's purpose



Understand the change/impact you want to make



Measure your programme's progress to delivering your strategy

Community investment can include:



Match funding



Volunteering time and grants



Corporate partnership



Salary giving

Community investment encourages employee personal and professional growth:



Encourages team work



Provides a sense of pride and commitment



Creates a positive workplace where employees can thrive



Encourages creativity

These equal an ethical, honest and respected organisation.

What is the benefit for business?

Businesses don't work in isolation. A better understanding and stronger relationship with communities will make your business more successful and sustainable in the future. A water company which promotes good water stewardship or a food company which promotes healthy eating is ultimately creating a more sustainable future for its products and services.

How to create a community investment policy for your business

Kicking off support for your communities can actually be easier than you think. There are some simple steps to follow to make it work better for you:

1 Choosing a purpose

Of the 250 brokers surveyed, 78% told Ecclesiastical that their employer currently supports a charity. Charities are selected predominantly because they are local (30%) or because causes are close to the heart of an employee (29%) but do these relate to your business?

The best community investment programmes fit with a company's purpose, focusing on two areas:

- Your community and environment – taking a close look at the community you are based in; what are the main issues and immediate needs. How are you placed to support them? What do your employees value and how can you incorporate this into your plans?
- Your customers and partners – selecting a cause which your customers and partners are affected by or is something they think is important to support.

53% of brokers say the most common way of supporting a charity is through a company fundraising scheme.

2 Where do you put your efforts?

78% of the brokerages in our research want to make a difference.¹ The key is not to try to support a large number of causes with different initiatives. Have a focus for your community support programme, as it will provide a clear focus and you will be able to deliver far greater impact.

3 Making impact

Aside from supporting charities, the most common business contributions from brokers were work experience provision (61%), sponsorship of local sports teams (58%), and green initiatives to improve sustainability (48%).¹ But taking on too much can lead to a confused message and also false expectations from failed promises. Think about the noticeable changes you want to see and measure for your community investment programme.

4 Include your employees

Over half (54%) feel their business could do more to assist good causes or contribute to society.¹ Your employees are a major factor to the success of your programme, and their support and participation is crucial. Be sure to brainstorm your approach with them, so you settle on something you can all be passionate about. This could be round a table or via a simple questionnaire.

5 Customer involvement

71% of brokers want to give something back to customers.¹ Your customers' values are important when determining a community investment programme. You may have many different types of customers but try to think about what causes are important to them. You could offer them the opportunity to donate to your chosen charity on the purchase of their insurance.

6 Sharing your success stories

76% want to use community investment to promote the reputation of their business.¹ It is important to share your success and impact in order to build awareness and grow your programme, but remember to make sure you are always doing it for the right reasons, and not just to build your profile. It's also important to celebrate the work you are doing and share it to gather support, this can be done via:

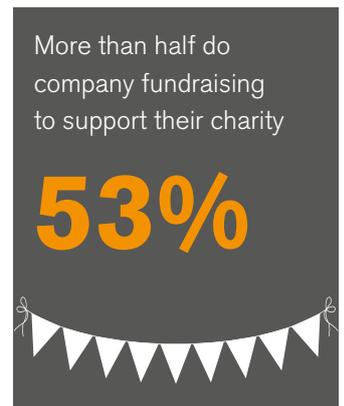
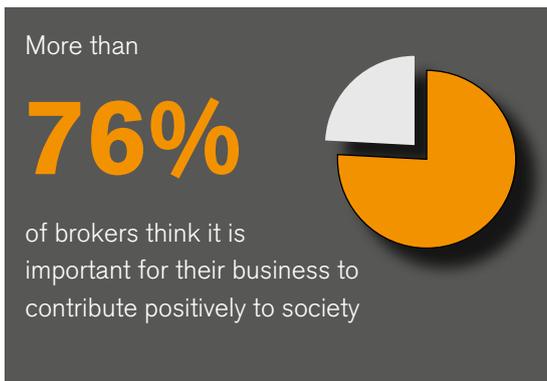
- Email to customers
- Social Media
- Local media

Two thirds of brokers (66%) agreed that charitable support was an important factor in helping financial services firms rebuild trust and change perceptions among their customers.¹ If you are genuinely committed to community investment, you are doing it well and you are not doing it just for publicity, then your business will become well known as a result even without self-promotion.

7 Honesty and transparency

Create a programme that is transparent with your employees and customers. Remember to put together a programme that can make an honest impact in the community. This will help you create a corporate social responsibility policy that fulfils your company's purpose and goals.

See our research on how the brokers surveyed felt they contribute to society:



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To find out more about Ecclesiastical's approach to community investment, **download our Impact report**. For further information visit www.ecclesiastical.com/broker



¹250 brokers surveyed, FWD search, May 2018

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