

# instinct™

Instinct is a monthly publication for clients, associates and friends of Ted Matthews.

Leading and inspiring all those who touch the enterprise  
to understand, embrace and enhance the power of your brand.

## **Funny thing, you get more for the same money.**

Every company gets tapped to contribute to charity. Customers, employees and the public all lobby for their own cause. And good for them. And good for the companies that do agree to help. Truth is, today everybody expects companies to contribute in the social responsibility arena and consequently, they expect the company to communicate what they are doing.

This then becomes an opportunity for Brand building. If a brand is what people think of you, then carefully and strategically selecting a corporate charity that perfectly reflects the Core Purpose and Values of your organization will speak volumes about your brand.



Southwest Airlines, for example, has selected a primary corporate charity - the Ronald McDonald House program, an initiative of the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities. Inspired by a pilot whose daughter stayed at a Ronald McDonald House while being treated for leukemia, SouthWest adopted the charity in 1985. Every year, the company - often referred to as "the Airline that LUV built" - sponsors LUV classic golf tournaments whose proceeds are directed to the charity. This focused approach has enabled them to make a significant impact - they have contributed more than \$6 million dollars in the past 18 years.

This approach can align all stakeholders - employees are proud of what their company does, customers feel an affinity to the company as a corporate partner, and the public can use the signals from this activity in securing the company's position as a good corporate citizen - all helping to build the brand.

## **What would the brand coach suggest?**

*Stop contributing something to every charitable organization that comes asking.*

*Giving bits and pieces doesn't allow your firm to align with anything. Further, approaching it in this unfocused way doesn't allow you to talk about the company's activities or explain your approach to corporate social responsibility. You lose an opportunity to link the charitable activity to your brand and the values of the firm in a cohesive and meaningful way.*

*Focus. Pick the cause that best reflects what you want people to think about your brand. Explain to all stakeholders your rationale and intent to really take on one cause.*

*Now you can point and speak of making a meaningful difference. When your firm is approached by other charities, you can say 'no' with pride - as you explain your focused approach.*

*And if every company did this, all 72,000 charitable organizations in Canada could save a fortune on what they spend in competitive fundraising activities and redirect it to the cause itself.*