



## Facts & Fantasies about Corporate Giving

*Once you separate fact from fantasy, the way to a corporation's heart is clear.*

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

### ***Fistfuls of Dollars: Fact and Fantasy about Corporate Charitable Giving***

*By Linda M. Zukowski. 196 pages. Softcover. Earth Writes, Redondo Beach, California. Available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center, 608-274-9777.*

It's time someone separated the myths from the realities of corporate giving. Linda Zukowski has done so by surveying corporate giving offices and gleaning tips from their responses. This process validates her suggestions and makes them exceedingly valuable.

The leading fantasies about corporate giving are that you can create new programs to match available funding, expect that all important programs will be funded, and use emotional pleas effectively, Zukowski tells us. It's also vital to realize that corporate funding alone won't satisfy your funding needs and that most corporations give less than you might think.

The most important fact to remember is that corporations give out of enlightened self interest. It's essential to view corporate giving as a business transaction. Zukowski explains how to portray your organization as a solid investment. She details corporate motives for giving that you can explore with businesses in your community. These include: being a good citizen, developing influence and relationships, improving employee relations by supporting employee volunteerism, gaining recognition and brand exposure, and creating strategic partnerships.

Zukowski's research shows that corporations tend to pick financially strong organizations and non-controversial issues. They are skeptical of new organizations, which don't have the history to demonstrate uniqueness, strong leadership, and fiscal strength.

Instead of corporations giving only to those they know through social activities, relationships grow between company and nonprofit *after* initial funding. The most common linkage is through corporate employees. Zukowski offers excellent ideas on how to involve corporate employees and how they can help your organization.

The best way to attract a company's interest is by developing a positive presence in the community and a

reputation as an important service provider. You're most likely to win corporate interest if you're part of a coalition. But you should form coalitions to maximize your programs and reduce your costs, not to attract funding.

Zukowski pinpoints factors that reflect positively and negatively on a proposal. She guides you through corporate prospect research, reminding you that research is less time-consuming than preparing proposals for companies with no interest in your area.

Next she gives valuable tips about preparing your proposal. The budget is key, since these are business people reviewing the proposal, and they cull much information from budgets.

Be sure to list other funding sources committed, those you plan to approach, and those whose decision is pending. You want to show a diversity of support. Corporations rarely provide the lead grant to a project, especially if they don't have a long relationship with the organization.

The organization's leadership is increasingly important to companies seeking the best investment in charitable giving. They look for an executive director whose vision generates excitement among those connected with the organization.

Zukowski's tips are solid and helpful, and basing them on corporate giving officers' responses adds validity. It's important to note, however, that she only surveyed large corporations, the number she surveyed is small, and all are on the West Coast. Still, Zukowski uses the research well to detail the process of corporate grantsmanship expertly each step of the way. ■

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