Philanthropy is increasingly part of “the business of business.” Workers seek employment with a community-minded company and consumers support businesses with double and triple bottom-line emphasis. Whatever your role in your company, there are simple ways to engage your corporate family in charitable activities.

Create a culture of giving in your company

Whether it’s creating a company foundation, establishing an employee matching fund, or organizing a regular activity to benefit the community, companies and their leaders set the tone for their employees by being the first to give.

Through their business and family philanthropy, the Abarcas have learned many lessons in giving, including how to give the right gift at the right time, and the importance of giving their time and their financial resources.

“We give whatever is the most helpful gift to the nonprofits,” says Adrianna. In addition to in-kind gifts of food and cash contributions, the family provides advice to directors, referrals to other resources and helps foster collaboration among the organizations.

“We have a very personal relationship with the organizations we fund,” Adrianna says. “A couple dozen groups that we fund know that they can pick up the phone and call us for a problem that needs to be solved.” This means they might pay to repair a nonprofit’s HVAC unit one day and give advice to an executive director about business strategy the next. In addition to serving as informal advisors, the siblings volunteer on a number of nonprofit boards.

Two projects that are close to Adrianna’s heart and that further their family’s legacy involve developing a school that specializes in Latin American cultures and establishing an arts complex that highlights Latino heritage. She says, “Our parents planted these seeds, and it’s my goal to make their dreams a reality in my lifetime.”

Tips for Working with Your Corporate Family

Express your corporate values through giving

Companies seeking a trained workforce may want to invest in educational programs that teach students skills needed in critical thinking, customer service, and communications work. Local and national nonprofit organizations improve literacy and technical skills, offer job training and internships, and connect students with mentors for professional growth. Forging a partnership between your company and one of these organizations yields benefits today and in the future.

Teamwork makes the best work

To engage your colleagues in charitable activities, find out what is meaningful to them. Some companies have a policy of “a day off for volunteering” at regular intervals. Others set aside money in business donor-advised funds or corporate foundations and involve employees at all levels in grantmaking decisions.