How to start an annual charity drive

As the year comes to an end, it may be important for your business to consider participating in charitable activities.

Better yet, you should probably be thinking about corporate social responsibility and charity year-round.

Why do good?

Whether you're a broker, an agent, or a vendor or supplier, there are plenty of reasons why doing good is a brilliant idea for your business. Here are my top three:

1. **Boosting employee engagement.** Employees like working for a company with a good public image — one that is consistently in the media for the right reasons. For example, we recently competed to collect the most food for a seasonal Move for Hunger food drive. Talk about engagement! The competition was so intense that the company office was practically overflowing with diapers, razors and canned food for weeks.
2. **Improving your public image.** You can (and should!) publicize your efforts. The more you improve your public image, the more the media will be able to cover good stories about your company. So give them a reason to make your company *shine*!
3. **Improving customer perception and engagement.** Doing good is one of the easiest things to talk to your customers about. If you can engage your customers in those efforts — even better. (More on that below!)

There are so many opportunities to do good when people are moving.

People who are moving tend to throw away items that others may need. If your clients are in the middle of a move, they may want to get rid of old jackets, shoes, food and even boxes. These are all things that someone else could use!

One easy way to give back is to start an annual charity drive within your company. If you are in the real estate industry, you know many people who may have just moved or will be moving in the near future. Take advantage of this opportunity and do something good for your community!

Whether you're collecting food, toys or clothes, here are some important steps to take when starting an annual charity drive.

Pick a local group that needs help

This is the fun part! Choose what kind of charity drive you will hold (food, coats, toys or something

else) and then pick a specific organization to which your donations (physical and monetary) will go.

Some organizations you may want to consider include Habitat for Humanity, Move for Hunger and New Story.

After you've chosen an organization, contact them to talk to them about your idea and find out what type of donations would best meet their needs.

Decide how you want to collect the items

An extended drive is one of the easiest ways for you to get many donations.

You should choose one location where people can drop their items over the course of days or weeks. This is a great way to make sure people have enough time to gather all of their donations and spread the word to friends and family.

Establish a small committee

Make sure to gather some volunteers to help you coordinate everything for the charity drive.

I would suggest having an overall coordinator/leader and then three or four more people on this committee to help you with miscellaneous drive-related tasks.

Arrange the delivery

Before getting any donations, you will want to make sure you know how these items will be delivered to the appropriate charity.

Contact the organization to see whether they want these items to be dropped off or if they will be able to pick them up. Make sure you have instructions on how the items need to be sorted or if the charity will do it for you.

If you need to drop the items off, it could be a great opportunity to engage clients! For example, if a client has a pickup truck, they may be happy to help deliver all of these donations to the charity.

Get people to donate and spread the word!

Once you've taken care of the logistics, it's go time!

Send out an email or post on social media to share your amazing idea with your branch manager, fellow agents, friends and family, and ask them to help spread the word.

If your clients' children want to get involved, tell them to spread the news to their classmates (for the older crowd), or even raise some money with a lemonade stand (for the younger crowd)!

I'll leave you with a rallying cry from my favorite tennis player:

> Start where you are. Do what you can. Use what you have. – Arthur Ashe

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