



ChangeMakers @ Work

A Corporate Citizenship Webinar Series

February 2021

DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TO VIRTUALLY ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY

When the pandemic hit, organizations had to re-imagine the ways in which they engage their stakeholders. The Home Depot Canada Foundation and its Community Investment team found new ways to engage their stakeholders in fundraising and giving back to the community.

In this webinar, the Home Depot Canada team discussed how they delivered their modified corporate community engagement program, focusing on three campaigns.

Speakers:

Gail Bradley, Community Investment Specialist
Amy Bilodeau, Senior Manager, Community Investment
Devon Montemurro, Community Investment Specialist
Kelly-Ann Dunleavy, Community Investment and Foundation Manager

The Home Depot Canada (THD) has four key initiatives:

- **Team Depot**- signature associate (employee) volunteer engagement program. Projects usually involve small renovation repairs, such as a fresh coat of paint, new fence, garden etc.
- **Homer Fund** -associate driven fundraising initiative. These funds are available to support associates during a time of great personal/family need.
- **Disaster Relief**- reserved for any community natural disaster (for example, Fort McMurray fire).
- **The Home Depot Canada Foundation** (The Foundation) -has the mandate of ending youth homelessness. Funded through two customer Point of Sale (POS) campaigns a year and vendor fundraising (Spring Gala).

Initial COVID-19 Response

The Home Depot Canada team connected with community partners to understand their needs and provide reassurance. They stayed committed to regional partnerships and provided undesignated funds to those partners, including Food Banks Canada and 111 youth-serving agencies. Home Depot Canada team launched an emergency fund open to all registered charities.

Point of Sale Campaigns Adjustments

- The Foundation holds two POS campaigns a year (one in spring and one in summer). Each store chooses a local charity to support.
- \$2 ask and 100% of funds raised go to the charitable partner.
- Due to COVID-19, The Foundation cancelled the spring campaign, but provided \$5000 to each charitable partner.

- The Summer campaign went ahead with adjustments. They emailed all customers in their database, put out a regional media release, and asked charitable partners to post on social media.
- The Foundation committed \$2000 to each store to ensure guaranteed funding and so associates did not feel pressured to solicit donations.

Internal Fundraising campaigns during COVID-19

Scoops for Youth – this August campaign supported YouthLink and encouraged Head Office associates to connect with each other.

There were three asks:

- Purchase an ice cream cone.
- Give an ice cream cone (or donate).
- Take a 'selfie' and share it on social media.

The campaign raised five times the goal.

In December, a second campaign launched called **Cocoa4Change**, which supported Black Youth Helpline.

A kit of hot chocolate was sent to the homes of all Head Office associates. The two-week campaign had a series of elements: Virtual fireside chat, virtual thank-a-thon, employee donation request and a themed fitness event.

Key Takeaways

The Home Depot Canada team would not recommend holding a campaign during December, it is too busy. There were too many asks for Cocoa4Change compared to Scoops for Youth. A shorter campaign period promotes urgency to participate.

Team Depot Adjustments

- From March to September, Team Depot paused volunteering activities while community investment colleagues consulted stakeholders to determine next steps.
- In September, Celebration of Service launched with three options to give back:
 - It provided community partners with product donations through gift cards.
 - Care Buckets. Volunteers packed hygiene or home care buckets which went to community partners focused on ending youth homelessness.
 - Office support associates participated in a thank-a-thon. Volunteers thanked a donor for their donation and thanked community partners for their front-line service.

Key Takeaways

- Associates have an unwavering interest in giving back to the community.
- Add a personal touch. Buckets had notes, which added more meaning to the donation.

Vendor engagement adjustments

The Home Depot Canada team would normally hold seven unique fundraisers a year with vendors.

- In March all in-person events were cancelled.

- The Home Depot Canada team ramped up communications to vendors to demonstrate impact and community need.
- The GiveHOPE Campaign was created for vendors to support. Simple ask: *give what you can*.
- Campaign was successful with 27% new donor retention.
- The Spring Gala will be virtual in 2021.

Key takeaways

- Keep things simple. In virtual employee fundraising, less is more.
- Consult. Understand what the community partners' needs are, prioritize them and consult across the business to get different viewpoints.
- Flexibility. Success in the COVID-19 engagement era is the ability to pivot and demonstrate true partnerships to community organizations.
- Innovation. Try new things always and do not be afraid to fail- it will lead to better fundraising and engagement strategies, and the virtual audience is more forgiving.

Audience Questions.

How did you get Senior Leadership to buy-in?

- The Senior Leadership on The Foundation board also host committees across the corporation including the steering committee on strategic planning. Collaboration has been integral.

How has the company addressed Diversity and Inclusion?

- During the of summer, Senior Leadership made an immediate statement.
- The Foundation held immediate internal consultation with stakeholders, including BIPOC.
- It is The Foundation's role to serve the most vulnerable populations.
- Home Depot Canada team has implemented D&I into hiring practices and HR practices.

How do you approach strategic planning in 2021?

Ensure that you have a plan A, B, C and D. There is more certainty in 2021 than 2020. Events will be virtual for most of the year. Projects will not roll out the same way in each province.