

Three Key Approaches for Social Enterprise Entities to Partner with Fortune Most Admired Companies

Michael Wong 17 September 2015

With so many nonprofits trying to secure, enhance and/or retain partnerships with Fortune Most Admired Companies, what are some creative strategies that might be deployed? ADP is a \$10+ Billion firm which was recently recognized by Fortune for occupying the top spot in its industry category for the fifth time in the past six years. In this Q&A, Rita Mitjans, Chief Diversity & Corporate Social Responsibility Officer for ADP explains her top three suggestions for cracking the code to engage with C-Suite executives like herself. Prior to this role, Ms. Mitjans held a number of executive positions with the company including Senior Vice President, Corporate Marketing. She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School.

Q. During our graduate school study group days, your case recommendations often focused on C-Suite officers attaining business results that were expected by the Board. But with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); doesn't this deal more with a

company giving back to society versus business performance?

A. Giving back to the community is one important part, but there are other key linkages between CSR and the business. For example at ADP, our research points to the fact that employees who engage in volunteer activities are generally more engaged than their peers. And there have been numerous studies (Towers Watson, etc.) that cite findings on how higher employee engagement levels are often linked with better business performance and higher share prices.

Q. So how do you enable your employees to engage in such CSR activities and link it with the business aspects of ADP?

A. We have a visually compelling work-place giving platform that provides a simple-to-view personalized tracking of an employee's donation of not only dollars but also volunteer hours. The system provides easy-to-use functionality that allows an employee to choose those activities which resonate with his/her values and passion and also align to our CSR areas of focus. In turn, the system captures such metrics so that ADP executives have trusted data for their key performance indicators.

Subsequently, these efforts link to ADP's business operations since we're then able to include key data points that are often asked in our sales RFPs. For

example, for one of our RFPs with a Fortune 500 company, they wanted to see ADP's existing level of engagement across the various communities the company operates in and ADP's willingness to partner on initiatives in those communities. Since our employees were actively engaged in several of these areas, and we had metrics to support our activities, our Business Development team was able to confidently respond to their RFP and win the business.

Q. So, given that CSR is important for Fortune Most Admired firms like ADP, what are the top three ways to engage with C-Suite officers like yourself?

A. Whether you are seeking a grant or a job in this area -- first, invest the time to try to understand the areas of focus that best align with your target audience. Look at their published materials including a CSR annual report or presentations given (at industry seminars, etc.) that focused on particular areas and use this information to build your elevator pitch or value proposition that links back to those key themes.

Second, articulate how your proposal or skills can help the company advance its CSR priorities. Be specific and be prepared to provide proof points on how you will add value.

Finally, demonstrate your ability to measure the impact that your proposal or approach will have on the

organization and its key stakeholders. This requires that you take the time to understand the organization and the senior leader's priorities.

About the author: Michael Wong has over 25 years of sales, marketing and strategy consulting experience working directly for Apple, AstraZeneca, IBM, and Merck. His insights have been shared in publications including the Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review, Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal, and PM360. Mike can be reached at mwong@mba1990.hbs.edu.