Contributing to Philanthropy

Some easy to follow guidelines can help maximize impact of donating time, money to charitable causes.

By DAN ROTHBLATT

As a philanthropy and nonprofit professional of more than 30 years, I know that each of us can make a difference in improving our world. Philanthropy is something everyone can do. It begins, simply enough, with a desire to help rebuild our world.

As a tumultuous 2016 comes to a close, this is an opportune time to reflect on how events have affected us, our families, and our society, and consider how we can be personally engaged in being charitable – in Hebrew the word is chesed, an act of kindness.

Here are five tips on how donors can make a difference:
- **Find causes that speak to you.** Ask yourself what you can contribute to these causes – financially, volunteering your time, or both – to make a meaningful impact. Think about acting collaboratively with friends or family members to leverage your resources with the power of collective action. Consider joining a local giving circle; addressing pressing societal issues affecting women, children and families; participating in community activities such as Big Sunday, which organizes hundreds of volunteer opportunities; or crowdfunding or other online campaigns. The viral success of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, for example, resulted in more than $100 million in contributions which made a huge impact on ALS research, services, and public awareness.
- **Embrace volunteering.** One of society’s greatest and earliest movements, volunteerism is enormously gratifying. Locally, we are blessed with a groundswell of grassroots movements, volunteerism is enormously gratifying.
- **Personal connection and focus discussed above. Next, do your homework.** Helpful online resources such as Charity Navigator give you confidence that your charitable dollars are going to the causes or areas of interest most meaningful to you and strive to make the greatest impact possible with the resources available to you. This will mean saying no to worthy organizations, but this focus can result in greater satisfaction and involvement, and will enable the charity you support to count on and benefit from your long-term involvement.
- **Understand what type of testing procedures are you implementing?**

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Recreational Pot Could Burn Employers

By HOWARD C. SAMUELS

EMPLOYERS, get ready.

Walking through your doors in a brave new world of legalized marijuana will likely be any number of employees stoned. If you ask yourselves just how pot – more pervasive and public – will impact the workplace, the short answer is: in ways you won’t like to imagine, none of them pleasant.

A frightening argument is that smoking a joint is as acceptable as having a beer at lunch. Not by a long shot.

My vantage point is unique, blending both the personal and professional. I’m an addict in recovery (for 32 years) who knows from personal experience and evaluating other addicts about the psychological downsides to using marijuana – the panic and anxiety attacks, uncontrollable anger, lack of motivation and impulse control, and stunted brain growth at younger ages. Stoned or drunk?

**Apply such unfortunate characteristics to employees at virtually any business. In essence, is there any difference in coming to work stoned or drunk?** The effect on your business is the same – the missing productivity quotient, employees lacking focus, motivation, sleep. There’s the additional soft cost of monitoring, disciplining, and even terminating, errant employees. And, if your business relates to safety products or services, what type of testing procedures are you implementing?

A frightening argument is that smoking a joint is as acceptable as having a beer at lunch. Not by a long shot. There is a key distinction about using marijuana. Although moderate alcohol consumption can be a socialization tool, the same cannot be said for pot. Getting stoned is the sole reason for using. The irony is that greater access could have a positive effect on my addiction treatment business. I don’t view that as positive. I accept the new law, but ask people to remember that trading on the message that the drug is harmless is a fool’s mission. It’s not harmless – just ask a few thousand of the permanently damaged addicts I have treated.

Understand from the get-go that any number of employees will simply want to get loaded, coast through the workday, and check out. How does one calculate this cost to business?

Howard C. Samuels is chief executive of the Hills Treatment Center in Los Angeles and author of “Alive Again.”

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