

December 2015: Allentown Chamber

Letter from the President:

Charles Thiel, Communication Systems Inc.

This is the time of the year when we become aware of the blessings around us. The holiday season brings awareness to what is most important: family and friends.

As business people, we have so much to be thankful for. I am sure that your business, in some way, is expressing their thanks by the giving of time and resources to our community.

Today's culture and climate embraces this larger view towards the bottom line. Corporate Social Responsibility (as it is known) has become a moniker for this strategic philosophy that businesses invest in the "greater good."

Corporate Social Responsibility is great for everyone: Business, Associates, Buyers, Environment, Community and so much more.

A recent example of Corporate Social Responsibility is REI's decision to close their stores on Thanksgiving and Black Friday. I love their message. "REI stores are closing on Black Friday. The outdoors, and the website, are always open. #optoutside" It may not make sense to the accountants who look at that bottom line for those two days or that week. But the bottom line is no longer seen as just quick and easy math, but rather a broader expression of revenues, costs, investments and profits.

We have many businesses in Allentown who are making an impact in our community. Some are making that impact quietly, by simply buying a pair of sneakers for an underprivileged teenager. Others are establishing programs to provide educational and housing opportunities that would not be available without the business community.

Undertaking socially responsible initiatives is truly a win-win situation. Not only will you and your company appeal to socially conscious consumers and employees, but you'll also make a real difference in this world.

As we approach this New Year, what is one way in which you, as business owner, professional or associate, can impact your world? You may not have the authority to change your entire organization, but you are the leader of you and can affect change beginning there.