

What Can the Business Community Do?

Leaders in business have many opportunities to promote good character in the workplace, in the homes of employees and in the community. One simple way is to consciously increase positive messages about the importance of good character in the workplace and the home. Another is to systematically reduce or eliminate negative messages that tend to undermine commitment to “The Six Pillars of Character.” There are Five Vehicles for Influence:

1. EMPLOYEE HIRING, TRAINING AND PROMOTION

- Prominently and explicitly include character considerations in recruiting materials, during interviews and in the hiring decision.
- Assure that none of your products and services undermine character-building.
- Include positive messages about volunteerism, positive parenting and celebrating CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in advertising, billings and other mailings.
- Distribute positive parenting kits and offer classes to customers and vendors.
- Become a Project Partner of national, state or local character development projects.
- Provide in-kind and loaned executive contributions to national or local character development programs.
- Support the work of the Institute for Character Development throughout the state of Iowa.

2. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Use internal communication channels to create a family-friendly environment that overtly prizes positive role-modeling in work, in the home and in the community by encouraging volunteerism, mentoring and active character-building parenting through:
 - Internal newsletters
 - Mailers
 - Workplace postings
 - Electronic bulletin boards
 - Cafeteria table tents
 - Positive Parenting kits and classes

3. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- In communicating with customers, vendors and others, consciously communicate and model encouraging and affirming messages about character and ethics.
- Advertise and market only in a manner that honors the values embodied in the Six Pillars of Character.
- Assure that none of your products and services undermine character-building.
- CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in advertising, billings and other mailings.
- Distribute positive parenting kits and offer classes to customers and vendors.

4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

- Become a general partner of local character development committees and task forces by providing general support.
- Become a Project Partner of national, state or local character development projects.
- Provide in-kind and loaned executive contributions to national or local character development programs.
- Support the work of the Institute for Character Development throughout the state of Iowa.

5. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Use public outreach structures to encourage and incorporate character development mentoring and support.
- Use corporate influence to stimulate educational and youth-serving organizations to become active in character development programs.
- Use corporate influence to encourage business organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Business Round table, conference boards and other companies) to support character development programs in their communities.

Action Ideas for the Business Community

- Adopt your CHARACTER COUNTS! and display them in your business.
- Establish Community Service Awards recognizing citizenship, leadership, service, and exemplary character.
- Be proactive in teaching ethics and establishing expectations for ethical behavior in the business community and community at large.
- Set up the expectation that your business will be an organization of character.
- Provide training in CHARACTER COUNTS! for your employees.
- Encourage and affirm the display of good character in you employees, especially youth.
- Provide ½ day a month for employees to go into schools to work with children (paid release time).
- Identify business leaders who can effectively share their personal “character story” – struggles and successes – with students and/or the media.
- Highlight the importance of character in business ads, on billboards, commercials, etc.
- Utilize the Six Pillar language in business meetings and in communication with employees and customers.
- Your financial contribution can also help us with educators across the state, providing them with the training and resources they need to do their jobs more effectively.

Adapted from The North Carolina Center for Character Education, Inc.