



Survey shows Canadian businesses engaged in meeting community need

Still, many struggle to meet overwhelming demand for support

Calgary, February 7th 2008. Imagine Canada today released the first-ever study of the full spectrum of how businesses support Canadian communities. The survey of nearly 2,200 companies reveals that 91% provide some form of support to Canada's charities and nonprofit organizations, and that they give in a variety of ways. Fully 76% of businesses surveyed provide cash donations; 51% give goods and products; 43% provide services; 43% support or encourage their employees to volunteer; and 22% of businesses fundraise from their customers and suppliers.

The *Business Contributions to Canadian Communities* research also shows that businesses give financial or in-kind support at almost the same level as individual Canadians (94% of Canadians and 89% of businesses).

Businesses generally see the value in supporting charities and nonprofit organizations. Over 8 in ten (83%) reported that an important reason for their contributions was "because it is a good thing to do, irrespective of financial returns." Almost 9 in 10 (87%) indicated that an important reason for their contributions was because they help build strong and healthy communities, which is good for business.

This groundbreaking work is part of a multi-year study made possible with the support of EnCana Corporation.

"Many Canadian charities and nonprofits rely on support from Canadian businesses. The information revealed through this extensive survey provides valuable insight and guidance to help raise the bar on community investment," says Florence Murphy, EnCana's Vice President, Public and Community Relations.

"While earlier studies have looked solely at financial donations, ours is the first to map the full spectrum of business support," says Dr. Michael Hall, Vice President of Research at Imagine Canada, and lead author of the report. "We see that both large and small companies across *Canada* are drawing on a broad range of their assets to support community organizations. However, we believe there is still potential for businesses to increase the impact of the contributions by devoting more attention to organizing and formalizing their giving strategies. Currently, only 22% of companies have ongoing programs to organize their giving, and 8% have written policies," says Hall. "This may be one reason why so many businesses indicate that one of the biggest challenges to their contribution efforts is the difficulty they face responding to increasing requests for support."

Some types of charities seem to be more attractive to Canada's corporate donor. Causes related to children and youth command the bulk of business support (68% and 55% respectively).

Imagine Canada is a national charity with offices in Toronto, Ottawa and Calgary. We look into and out for Canada's charities and nonprofits. Our research and public policy facilitate increased philanthropy and public engagement; our tools and resources strengthen the nonprofit community. Imagine Canada's Caring Company program, Canada's leading corporate citizenship initiative, set the benchmark for business giving in Canada. The study, Canada Survey of Business Contributions to Community is available for purchase at www.imaginecanada.ca.

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