



Profiting From Social Responsibility

Do corporations have a moral imperative to be socially responsible? I believe they do. But even if you disagree, there's an equally compelling business rationale to practice corporate social responsibility:

» Being socially responsible enhances a company's reputation and builds its brand appeal. All else being equal, customers prefer to do business with good corporate citizens that live by the highest ethical standards.

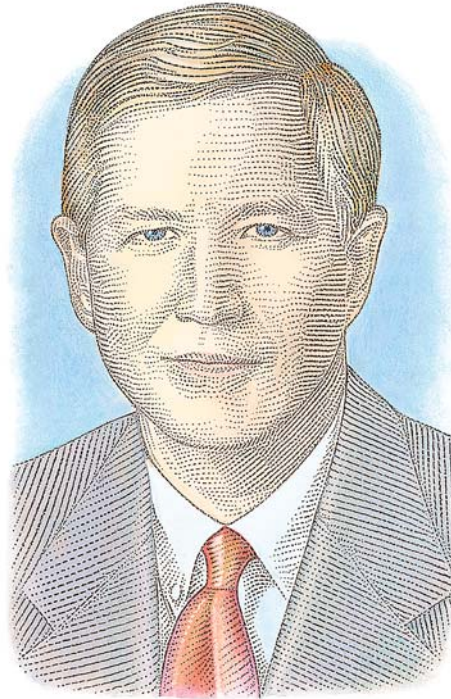
» For the same reason, socially responsible companies are better positioned to attract investors and capital.

» Social responsibility enhances a company's ability to recruit, retain and motivate employees. People want to be part of a socially responsible organization. Employers that participate — and encourage employee participation — in charitable and community initiatives foster pride in their company. That, in turn, can translate into greater loyalty, commitment and productivity.

» Finally, practicing social responsibility helps ensure regulatory compliance, strengthening the company's relationship with regulatory authorities and the communities in which it operates.

Viewed in this light, corporate social responsibility becomes less a cost of doing business than a way of operating that, ultimately, pays dividends for all of a company's stakeholders.

At CIGNA, social responsibility goes hand in hand with our business mission of providing employers with employee benefits, expertise and services that improve the health, well-being and productivity of their employees. As our branding indicates, CIGNA is A Business of Caring® and embraces and promotes national standards for quality and patient safety as keys to improving America's health-care system. We also focus on health-related programs in our philanthropy — for example, by funding studies aimed at eliminating gender and racial disparities in health care.



“All else being equal, customers, investors and employees prefer to be associated with good corporate citizens.”

In this vein, CIGNA partners with organizations such as WomenHeart to promote early detection, accurate diagnosis and education of women, helping to close the gender gap in treating heart disease. We sponsor up to 100 schools for the Healthy Kids Challenge, an initiative to combat childhood obesity by educating elementary school students about proper nutrition and exercise. We continue our long-standing support of the March of Dimes, whose efforts to reduce birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality mesh with our own emphasis on improving prenatal and maternal care.

In addition, each year we mobilize thousands of employees and their families to participate in WalkAmerica events throughout the country. We also encourage employees to seek other volunteer opportunities in their communities by making contributions in their name to any organization at which they volunteer 40 or more hours a year.

These actions spring from a set of shared values that provide context for the way CIGNA does business. The fact is, at CIGNA we take a path of enlightened self-interest, seeking prof-

its for shareholders in a manner that also benefits our other stakeholders.

As CEOs, we must never forget that we have a symbiotic relationship with the communities in which our companies operate. We need them and they need us. We should also recognize that we have a wonderful opportunity to play a role in bettering those communities. By conducting our businesses in a socially responsible manner — and thoughtfully reinvesting some of the profits in our communities — we can make a substantial, positive difference in the world around us. ▢

H. Edward Hanway is chairman and CEO of CIGNA Corporation (CI). As A Business of Caring®, CIGNA's stated mission is to provide employers with benefits programs, expertise and services that improve the health, well-being and productivity of their employees.