

# balance sheets

A series of information sheets for employers interested in helping employees balance their work, family, and personal responsibilities

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# balance

# Xsheets™

A series of information sheets for employers interested in helping employees balance their work, family, and personal responsibilities

The Center for  
**Work & Family**  
BOSTON COLLEGE  
CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**One Small Step** 

MIDWESTERN  
WORK-FAMILY  
ASSOCIATION  CENTER FOR  
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*Doing well and doing good are inextricably linked — they are not mutually exclusive. This blend of business and community is more than a belief, it is our guide to a successful future. Consumers are informed and want to know what a company is and what it stands for. That's why at Timberland community is part of our strategic plan."*

Jeff Swartz  
President and CEO  
The Timberland Company

*"Becoming a Company of Choice requires more than policies and programs; it demands that firms consider the impact of a and programs; it demands that firms consider the impact of all business decisions on their stakeholders."*

Bradley K. Googins  
Director  
Boston College Center for  
Corporate Community Relations

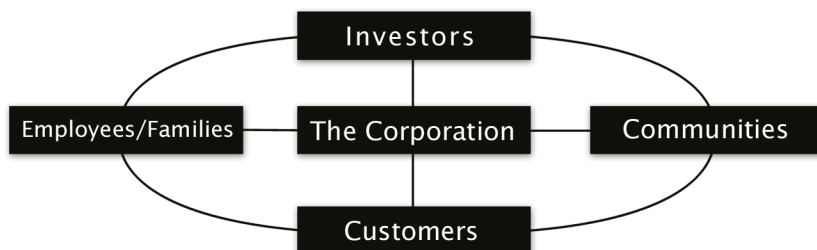
## Becoming a Company of Choice: Linking Work/Life and Community Initiatives

The Company of Choice strategy links business success to employee/family and community well-being, recognized offers a new competitive edge for conducting business in a global society.

Technological advances, increasing numbers of mergers and acquisitions, and the rise of the global economy over recent years have transformed the way business is conducted today. Our communities also have undergone dramatic changes, including decreased participation in civic and community organizations, frequent relocations and geographical separation from family members, and loss of neighborhood supports. Families, too, are experiencing changes, as the increased workforce participation of women with young children has redefined traditional family roles.

In order to remain competitive in the changing work and community climate, companies must rethink their strategies with key stakeholder groups. As "The Web of Stakeholder Relationships" illustrates, the principal business stakeholder groups - investors, employees and families, communities, and customers - are synergistically connected. Because stakeholders may be members of multiple groups simultaneously, business strategies designed for one group often affect the others. As companies reassess their stakeholder relationships, the Company of Choice strategy has emerged.

### The Web of Stakeholder Group Relationships



The Company of Choice strategy recognizes that relationships with various stakeholder groups can be strengthened through the linkage of a company's Neighbor of Choice and Employer of Choice strategies. Although both of these strategies are effective on their own, they are even more powerful when implemented in an integrated fashion. Together, the Neighbor of Choice and Employer of Choice strategies enable corporations to achieve integration and develop a consistent vision, thus furthering the accomplishment of business objectives.

This issue of the Balance Sheets  
authored by:

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## NEIGHBOR OF CHOICE STRATEGY

*A social investment strategy to manage the company's relationship with its external stakeholders in order to achieve mutual benefits, preserve the license to operate and build a legacy of trust*

Boston College Center for Corporate Community Relations

The Neighbor of Choice strategy articulates an approach for businesses to be valued in and by the community. Neighbor of Choice companies acknowledge the interdependence of community well-being and business success by striving to develop positive community relationships. **Texas Instruments, Inc.** in Attleboro, MA, for example, partners with a local shelter for abused women and their children as a way of giving back to the local community. The company provides important resources such as computers and meeting space, while employees volunteer their time by mentoring children staying at the shelter.

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## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE STRATEGY

*A strategy that recognizes human capital as a company's most valuable asset, by respecting employees and supporting them in meeting their work and family responsibilities*

Employer of Choice companies seek to attract, engage and retain employees who create their intellectual capital, recognizing that business success depends on investments in employees. The Employer of Choice strategy involves the establishment of family-friendly policies and work/life initiatives that help employees achieve a balance between their personal and professional lives. As **Baxter Healthcare Corporation** learned through a 1997 study, employees consider dignity and respect to be the foundation of a healthy work environment. As a result, the company developed a new work/life paradigm based on respect, balance, flexibility and programs (Campbell & Koblenz, *The Work and Life Pyramid of Needs*, 1997)

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## LINKING THE NEIGHBOR OF CHOICE AND EMPLOYER OF CHOICE STRATEGIES

Leading companies are beginning to connect the initiatives of their community relations and work/life departments in order to increase the impact on different stakeholders. As with other company initiatives, the support of top management is crucial. When **Columbus Regional Hospital** in Columbus, Indiana began offering childcare benefits to employees in 1999, this was seen as a trend-setting initiative in this community of 35,000 residents. Realizing the importance of the hospital's leadership role, CEO Doug Leonard promoted a dialogue with other business and civic leaders to explore ways they could implement childcare are their own organizations and collaborate to improve quality childcare for everyone in the community.

### **Reaching Out to Your Community**

- What stakeholder/community collaborations involving other employers are occurring in your area?
- Are there opportunities to partner with other employers to enhance these initiatives?
- What needs are underserved in your community?
- Which community leaders could suggest possible ways your company could address those needs?

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## MODEL PROGRAMS

**Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)** of Sunnyvale, California with 11,700 employees worldwide, partnered with the Sunnyvale school district and the City of Sunnyvale to develop the Columbia Neighborhood Center. The center, adjacent to AMD, serves the education, health and recreation needs of students and families in the community. AMD donated \$1 million toward construction of the AMD Sports and Service Center and continues to back the center through significant cash grants. AMD employees support the partnership by assisting in the classroom, helping with special events, and mentoring middle school students via email. The collaboration was designed to improve student educational performance and reduce crime in the neighborhood by providing a wide range of public and community services that otherwise would not be readily available to the

residents in the area.

When **Columbus Regional Hospital** in Columbus, IN decided to provide childcare as a benefit to its 1,800 employees, the hospital's management realized they had an opportunity to improve access to quality childcare for all members of the community. Rather than establish their own childcare center that would be restricted to the children of employees, the hospital contracted with local childcare providers for care. The hospital envisions taking the partnership one step further by supporting the childcare providers in their efforts toward accreditation.

**Eli Lilly**, headquartered in Indianapolis, IN with more than 30,000 employees worldwide, has sponsored a Science Summer Camp since 1993. The camp, administered in collaboration with the local YMCA, provides science instruction for children through modules designed by Eli Lilly employees and teachers. The camp not only gives children a fun learning experience, but also provides much-needed school-age childcare during the summer months when it can be difficult for parents to find appropriate care. Attendance at the camp is not limited to the children of employees, allowing the entire community to benefit from the program.

**Pfizer, Inc.**, based in New York, NY with approximately 45,000 employees worldwide, sponsors a program called SMART (Science & Math Are Really Terrific!). This initiative is designed to expand students' understanding of math and science and their application in today's world. Through SMART, employees who use math and science in their professional lives volunteer in local schools, often in their children's classrooms. The program furthers Pfizer's corporate goals of promoting math and science education, while improving the quality of education for all students within the community.

**The Timberland Company**, based in Stratham, NH, organizes an annual company-wide "Serv-A-Palooza" project, as part of Timberland's "Path of Service" program that gives employees 40 hours of paid time off every year to participate in community service. More than 500 of Timberland's employees participated in the 1999 Serv-A-Palooza, which focused on local schools, 20 projects in total. Several Timberland employees volunteered in the North Hampton school district by teaching classes for a day, giving teachers the opportunity to take part in the service event.

### Implementing the Company of Choice Strategy

There are several key components to consider in implementing the Company of Choice strategy at your own company.

- What types of stakeholder/community collaborations are already occurring?
- What departments are driving these collaborations? Are representatives of Community Relations and Human Resources working together to promote them?
- What is the rationale for these collaborations and how do they fit with the company's mission?
- What have been some of the benefits and results of these collaborations?
- What are the barriers to a strategic linkage between your company's Neighbor of Choice and Employer of Choice strategies? What factors may promote such a linkage?

*"As we enter the 21st century, it is apparent that corporate success increasingly depends on the development of strategies for integrating relationships with key stakeholder groups. Companies of Choice recognize the interdependence of community vitality, responsiveness to families, and the achievement of business goals."*