



PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

Episode 107: Paying It Forward: Why Giving Back Matters

Guest: Larry Altman

This is Prove It. A podcast for impatient business owners, overwhelmed marketers, and PR practitioners with no time for podcasts. In just 10 minutes they answer 3 questions and offer proof of what's working in marketing communications today. Here's Debbie Albert, President of Albert Communications.

Debbie Albert (DA): Welcome! This episode is a little different because it's not about marketing communications tools, Google AdWords, or anything that you might think of as strictly business related. But it really is. I'm speaking today with Larry Altman, a seasoned executive who now spends his time giving back to the community. He's also a good friend of mine. Over the years Larry has worked for both for-profit companies and non-for-profit organizations, but he has always had a passion for serving the community. So, Larry welcome to "Prove It!"

Larry Altman (LA): Thanks Debbie, thank you for having me.

DA: We're going to ask you three questions. And then ask you to prove the value of giving back. Although most of us know, or I hope most of the listeners know, that giving back provides its own value. So, let's just jump into it. I want to start asking questions because you are so committed to the community and in so many different ways.

So, my **first question really is can you talk about trends in community involvement for businesses and if you see that it's on the rise, or is it staying the same, or hopefully it's not decreasing.**



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LA: Well I see it as increasing and some of my research, so to speak, is anecdotal because I'm out in the community and I'm doing so many things where I volunteer at several different organizations there's no shortage of volunteers.

Many are individuals but so many come from companies, small, medium and large. And I also did a little bit of research just to back that up. I just wasn't making things up out of my head from my experience. There's something called the [Civic 50](#). And these are the 50 largest companies who do give back in the country. And sales have to be a billion dollars or more, so these are very, very large companies. But I noticed in the last couple of years, each year there's been more than 10 million volunteer hours, almost two-billion dollars in employee time contributed to communities around the country from these Civic 50 companies. What I've noticed is that people are giving back and I think because one reason, I think we're sort of at a crossroads, you know, businesses feel like they have to offer these opportunities because there's not as many government dollars for, private funding can't do it all, so companies get behind it, they pay it forward, they realize the value of donating time and talent and for a lot reasons, it helps staff, and it certainly helps the communities that are being benefitted.

DA: That's great, so you answered the second question. That I was going to say **why is it increasing?** And Larry, you actually did do your homework I see. You had some real statistics to share with us today. So, if you are in a community, you and I are both in the Greater Philadelphia area, so when we know that, for instance, Comcast has Comcast Cares Day. And they have thousands and thousands of volunteers all over the country doing things. Is it because, if you're then deciding between Comcast and one of its competitors you might say, "*Oh I remember them working in the community.*" You know it gives people almost like a soft feel good, maybe not a direct advertising, but a soft feel good that they just know about?

LA: I totally agree with that. I think engagement now, it's a big part of the mix of what corporate's culture is and I think you're missing the boat if you are a company and you



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don't say to your employees or your prospects, hey, this is what we do every month, twice a month we go to XYZ, or this food pantry, or like you said Comcast Cares.

They're all over the community and they give their employees different options and I think because we're now at a stage where so much has, the important things are experiential, they're not just oh, did I just get an extra buck an hour on my paycheck, it's now how do we engage. Maybe because people aren't all working in offices together, there's people that work from home, or there's people from far flung offices across the world and now it's an opportunity to get people physically close to each other and then when they're done helping the community, or building a house, they get together and they talk about what they've done, not just what a great spreadsheet we just put together in the accounting office. It goes far beyond that.

DA: Right.

LA: I think it's really important, those are the connections that people are looking for.

DA: You know it's funny because we talked in other episodes about how when you say to someone, "Google it," how that's changed marketing, and when you said about things being experiential, to me, you hit the nail on the head because even when you go on Amazon, you know, it says, "*Welcome back Debbie! Based on what you bought before you might like this...*"

Everything now is based on experience and a real understanding of the customer and what they need and I don't think we would be saying anything that would offend anyone by saying the news today is so hard to listen to that no matter what side you're on that, you know when you say there's no shortage of volunteers it warms my heart. I mean that is the greatest thing you can hear because there's so much good going on in the world - in spite of what you might see on TV.



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LA: I agree. There's such a divide now and people were once species like let's all get together and when we do that to help others, you know it's all relative, of course, there's always groups of people and animals and things who need our help and so often we just don't bridge that gap and work commonly to help others, we're really going to be very divided as a species, quite frankly. I think it is great when you go out and see these groups volunteer at different places, and the local zoo, groups from large companies come and they have the boots on and they're going and doing maintenance or another place where they come 50 strong they're in there and they're helping pack goods, food and clothing and housewares in need who, quite frankly, could be our neighbors we just don't know about the people in our communities.

And then to hear them chat about it and feel so good about it. And I know it carries over when they go back into their offices and they have that extra bump of feeling good. And I think that's where it does tie back into how can this help, or how does this help in marketing? Because if you don't offer these opportunities you're definitely going to be on the minority side and you're not going to have the same, really get the same quality of employee who wants to give back and who is looking for a place that has culture. That's part of how we get corporate culture by giving back, by doing for others. By paying it forward, I know I use a lot of clichés but the one I like to use a lot is "Virtue is its own reward."

Of course, if you do good work, it all comes back to help you as a person, you as a company, and it's stuff we can do without, but it is uplifting to see how many people are out there helping others through their company initiatives.

DA: And I think we can agree that there could be thousands and thousands and thousands more of us doing more as well.



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LA: Yes, I think we... there's always room for more, but I love seeing the trend where it's going in the right direction for so many different reasons.

DA: A lot of the millennials who are entering the workforce now -or whatever the generation we're up to - they insist on it, so companies really do need to offer this. So, let me get to the Prove It point.

The podcast is called **Prove It; Can you give us an example of a company that committed itself to the community and really benefitted from it, either in tangible or non-tangible ways?**

LA: I certainly can, and it's funny you mentioned millennials because the company that I've talked to and seen in action was a company in the Philadelphia area, it's an affiliate marketing company called [Gen 3 Marketing](#) and they come a couple of times a month to an organization called [Mitzva Circle Foundation](#) and they're a small organization, maybe 50 to 75 employees, and every month they have 30 - 40 people come and they take over the place and they break into small groups and they do great work.

So that's what they do during the day. I was talking to Andy Campos who is the CEO there and he and his partner we talk about what's so important now. Why do you do this? And we talked about experience and about, although it's hard to quantify in terms of retention, keeping their employees, he knows it's there because he sees his employees bring in families for other times to Mitzva Circle and not just the times when they're expected to be there or when they choose to be there.

But on weekends or other times and then they get involved. We talked about millennials and they do expect it Debbie, you're right. They aren't as impressed by an extra bump in their paycheck, they don't mind it, they wouldn't turn it down. But if you don't offer these



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things, these kids, who, let's face it, not everyone works for 40 years and gets a gold watch. Those days are long gone. You better offer something to these creative people that makes them feel like a part of something bigger. And if you don't, they'll just be cynical about your business, like what are you doing? Are you just making money? That's not enough. We want to do more, we want to give back.

DA: It's a pretty optimistic way to look at the world I mean I think that's an awesome point. You know like it's not about the money, anymore. I know when you and I were entering the workforce it was where are we going to make the next bump in our salary, next bump, next bump. And now they're really concerned about what is the company that they might go to work for doing to give back? It's beautiful.

LA: I think they all look for that and they, I think that's such a good byproduct, how companies, again they use it as part of a marketing strategy. I don't that they do or should, but the byproduct is they get happier, satisfied, well-rounded individuals to work for them. And keeping and retaining good employees is really job number one for most companies.

DA: Agreed 100% and that brings us to the end of our beautiful 10 minutes together. Thanks for being on.

LA: I'm happy to do it.

DA: I want to thank our listeners for listening to Prove It and ask you stay tuned for more episodes about issues and trends in marketing communications today and hearing proof of what works. Take care!

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