Adobe Corporate Social Responsibility

A culture of corporate social responsibility

In 1982, Chuck Geschke and John Warnock set out to create a company that would make a difference. They founded Adobe with a socially conscious ethic, recognizing that earning corporate profits and addressing the needs of people and the planet can go together. Fast-forward several decades and that ethic is stronger than ever, woven tightly into Adobe’s values.

Today, as one of the world’s largest, most diversified software companies, we are providing solutions that transform how people engage with ideas and information. And the same passion we bring to creating award-winning software is also evident in the way we operate and how we engage with our local communities.

Adobe’s commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is deep and far-reaching. We manage our business to the highest ethical standards, and believe that community involvement is one of the most important catalysts for change; from initiatives that reduce hunger and homelessness to programs that support the environment, arts, and education.

This mindset influences our actions in many areas including community involvement, environmental sustainability, product use and innovation, commitment to employees, governance, and supply chain management. Each area is supported by a team of employees dedicated to driving best practices to improve business performance and increase transparency.

Giving youth a voice

Adobe’s belief that teens in underserved communities can “create with purpose” spurred the company in 2006 to establish Adobe Youth Voices (AYV), a centerpiece of the company’s CSR agenda. Just as Adobe technology empowers creative professionals to produce the best work possible, the same software given to youth has an equally powerful impact. Already, thousands of students from more than 30 countries have engaged in AYV to create original, thought-provoking content on topics ranging from domestic violence and eating disorders to environmental degradation and the impacts of war.

Adobe provides underserved youth with the tools to share their stories within their communities, while also giving them opportunities to build valuable 21st century collaboration and communication skills. The results are often transformative, with students earning national and international recognition for their work and amassing skills to succeed in a competitive global economy.

Recently, young AYV filmmakers in South Africa captured the harsh reality mothers face raising children alone in the township where they live. While highlighting the families’ hardships, the filmmakers also succeed in celebrating each mother’s resilience in overcoming the struggles of daily life. This short film was selected as part of Youth Producing Change, the first exclusively youth-produced program of short films at the Human Rights International Film Festival.

In the powerful film Blossoming Dreams Faded on the Railroad Tracks, ten teenage girls from Delhi bring the plight of runaways and child laborers into clearer focus. They poignantly illustrate the hardships the children face and raise concerns about their peers’ health, safety, and lack of access to education. Throughout the process, the filmmakers use newly developed storytelling and technology skills to weave together a compelling piece underscoring the need for action in their communities.

Partnering with media organizations, film festivals, and leading advocates for free expression such as MTV, PBS, The Black Eyed Peas Peapod Foundation, and others, Adobe continues to expand the venues for sharing these teens’ fresh perspectives.
Protecting the environment

Building on a history of environmental responsibility, in 2006 Adobe became the first commercial enterprise to receive three Platinum certifications under the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—Existing Building (LEED-EB) program for its San Jose headquarters. The LEED certifications validated Adobe’s commitment to environmental best practices and a healthy work environment.

More recently, Adobe achieved Platinum LEED—Commercial Interior (LEED-CI) certification for its historic San Francisco facility, which was built more than 100 years ago and withstood the 1906 earthquake. Not only is this the oldest structure on record to achieve this certification, it positions Adobe as the only company in the world to achieve four Platinum certifications.

Our efforts to minimize the company’s environmental footprint are evident everywhere. Since 2001, we have completed more than 85 energy and conservation projects at our headquarters alone, greatly reducing our dependence on natural resources. Indoor water use has decreased by approximately 38%, landscaping water use by 76%, electricity use per employee by 39%, and natural gas use per employee by 37%. And 98% of solid waste has been diverted through composting or recycling.

Adobe’s high-quality work environments integrate natural lighting, effective ventilation, non-toxic building materials, well-designed spaces, and company-supported, alternative commute programs. Because most Adobe offices are situated near public transportation, many of our employees have the option of using nearby bus routes or train and light rail stations. Commute alternatives are used by approximately 70% of our employees in San Francisco and roughly 34% of our employees in San Jose, compared to the Silicon Valley average of approximately 24% (from the City of San Jose—Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan: Draft Existing Conditions Report).

Adobe proves that what’s good for the environment is good for the bottom line. Through pioneering green initiatives costing approximately $2.1 million since 2001, Adobe has saved more than $6.2 million as of the end of 2008 and will save an estimated $1.5 million annually going forward. The result: an annual return on investment (ROI) of 121% during the first five years of the company’s efforts.

Helping customers’ sustainability efforts

The increased focus on social responsibility by companies worldwide is transforming the way many do business. Today, when companies evaluate new technologies, an increasing number not only look at ROI and other common business measurements but also at how technologies help reduce use of natural resources, minimize carbon footprints, and achieve other social responsibility goals.

Adobe’s solutions support these efforts. Our pioneering Portable Document Format (PDF) and Adobe Flash® Platform technologies have expanded ways to communicate rich content while offsetting reliance on paper-based channels and manual approaches to collaboration.

Today, the U.S. Government Printing Office uses Adobe Acrobat® and LiveCycle® ES software to streamline the distribution of government budgets to agencies, saving 20 tons of paper and $1 million over five years. For the government welfare agency in Italy, the benefits are equally impressive: 30% of service applications are now accessed online as PDF files by applicants at home and more than 800,000 agency forms are downloaded monthly. Paper use at the agency is anticipated to drop by 33% over two years. And at retailer Borders Group, the use of Adobe Acrobat Connect™ Pro for eLearning and web conferencing has reduced travel, facilities, and document printing costs by 90% and cut carbon emissions by an estimated 632,900 pounds annually.

Beyond helping customers conserve resources, we are helping drive industry dialog around “designing for social good.” In 2008, Adobe joined the Designers Accord, a coalition of designers, educators, researchers, engineers, and corporate leaders working together to create positive environmental and social impacts. As part of the coalition, Adobe is contributing to green creative design processes; ensuring our software supports those who practice them.
A "we not me" philosophy

Adobe employees are passionate individuals with unique expertise and perspectives that collectively help define how the company operates and engages with communities worldwide. Together, we are continuing to grow and evolve Adobe’s CSR programs.

The programs profiled here are just some of our CSR initiatives. In recent years, we have made more than $33 million in in-kind software product donations and conducted hundreds of trainings for youth, educators, and nonprofit agencies. Our cash contributions in 2008 exceeded $8 million to nonprofit organizations, community foundations, matched funds, and schools and universities around the globe.

As a company, we recognize that the opportunities and requirements for CSR are constantly evolving. Our goal is to continuously balance the needs of Adobe’s business and customers, while engaging with our broader communities to address critical social and environmental concerns. For more than 25 years, Adobe has been helping redefine relationships between corporations and the communities they are part of, demonstrating that financial success and CSR can go hand in hand.

For more information

To learn more about Adobe’s CSR programs, visit www.adobe.com/corporateresponsibility/.

To learn more about the Youth Producing Change program, visit www.adobe.com/cfusion/ayv/index.cfm?event=detail&ayvid=481.

To see the film Blossoming Dreams Faded on the Railroad Tracks, visit www.adobe.com/cfusion/ayv/index.cfm?event=detail&ayvid=9.