VOISIN LAW

When Corporate Social Responsibility becomes personal | 1

I am a firm believer in paying it back. However, large sweeping gestures aren't really my thing, this comes from more of a personal realisation that my education was a privilege and when I can, I should, help out. I have also never seen the fact that I am a corporate lawyer as being mutually exclusive with lending a helping hand to others or indeed providing guidance to those who are behind me in their journey who may just need some direction, albeit that the two may not always sit comfortably together.

CSR has always been part of business for as long as I can remember. However, in recent years there has been a definite change in attitude to CSR and how businesses undertake it, and that is really quite exciting. Those little helping hands, the paying it back here and there, are becoming part of the ethos and culture of a business. Customers and prospective employees are now looking for signs that businesses take their corporate and social responsibility seriously, that the values of the business meet their values. Gone are the days that a cake sale and tin rattle to raise funds for a charity are enough (albeit that these fundraising initiatives are still very important), businesses are being asked to walk the walk of CSR, to ingrain it into their values and show that they pay it back and value the society that they exist within. Staff which previously may not have mentioned their charitable activities are now expecting to be able to bring these into a work environment and equally we are seeing a desire for employees to have the opportunity not only to carry out the usual charitable activities but to also use the skills that they have acquired in their 'day job' for the greater good.

The charitable sector is also changing to meet these demands. In Jersey we are seeing more opportunities to become involved in these initiatives. I recently became aware of the twinning initiative which was introduced to me by the Jersey Community Partnership under which charities are twinned with businesses to draw on the skills of the Business. If you look there are also vast array of charities looking for practical assistance with matters that they may struggle with but are easily within someone else's skillsets and when I talk to people about this it is something they are eager to get on-board with.

Voisin, as a firm, has always wholeheartedly taken apart in a large amount of CSR initiatives (both fundraising and practical). I am constantly amazed and very proud of the steps that our staff have taken to support our chosen charities. It's good for the community but let's be honest CSR is good for business. When CSR aligns with the core values of the firm it becomes personal because people have bought into those core values. That is CSR at its best because you get more than just that 'feel good and go home' buzz. When its personal and when you get it right you get the momentum to genuinely give something back to society. I see it in our offices every day, the little things each person does, not just the large gestures and it's the little things that bring us together.