

PHILANTHROPY AND THE ARTS...

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1. What are your thoughts, in general, on charitable giving?

Giving should be a commitment made by all who are in a position to do so. It may be regarded as a cliché but every little really does help. Giving is also very rewarding, especially if as the donor, you take the time to find out more about the organisation or project you are helping and the impact your contribution is making.

2. Is your giving personal or corporate or a combination of both?

Mine is a combination of both. My corporate giving is usually in the field of culture and arts as this is the area within which I work. My private giving is to organisations that are about people and bettering lives.

3. How do you give to charity: monetarily, your own time as a volunteer or your specialist skills?

A combination. I donate monetarily to organisations both here in Northern Ireland and globally, but my company (Type AB) is also committed to identifying one or two projects a year that would benefit from some communications guidance and expertise. At the beginning of the relationship, we spend some time with the organisation, identifying where our skills can be of benefit to them.

4. What types of causes do you favour and why?

I often favour the arts as I passionately believe in their transformative power, the sector consistently delivers with limited resources. As a society we need the arts to create safe platforms for us to discuss, debate and heal. It is not news that the arts impact positively on well-being, mental health and social cohesion but often they are the first to be cut or have resources pulled (especially during times of austerity), comparing the funding for hospital beds for example to a dance piece is not comparing like for like and it can be hard for the arts to make their case on such an uneven platform, nevertheless I think their contribution is vital if we wish to excel.

5. Are there specific charities or causes that you give to regularly? How do you choose which to support?

This year I am supporting Creative Exchange Artists Studio, a wonderful organisation who contribute to community development (using visual art as the mechanism to engage local residents), whilst supporting artists through the provision of subsidized studios. I am also on the board of Over The Hill, a music organization for older people interested in participating in, or experiencing music. They meet monthly for industry talks and performance and are currently in the middle of a long-term project using music to work with those living with dementia and other degenerative illnesses. I try to support a different local charity each year, but globally I'm pretty consistent, water, human rights and social enterprise

6. Do you believe that companies and individuals have a duty to help others? If yes, why?

Yes I do, it is important to contribute to society, to assist when able to and to lend a helping hand. Together we achieve much more.

7. What is your message to business people who may be thinking about becoming more involved in strategic philanthropy?

There is no greater reward. Don't just give, take the time to find out more about organisations or companies you wish to support. Visit them, ask for updates, this way you will see the difference your giving makes. It is also a great mechanism to engage your employees in charitable work

8. Giving Northern Ireland was set up last year to champion Philanthropy. Why do you think it is important that there is an organisation that helps businesses and individuals think more strategically about giving?

Many individuals and organisations want to give, they are just not sure how to or to whom they should be giving. Giving NI can provide advice on how giving can be beneficial to the donor as well as the recipient, they can also provide advice on different types of giving. Engaging with an organisation such as Giving NI also offers a platform for meeting like-minded people who can share their experiences and provide examples of how philanthropy with a clear business base can work for everyone.