

Timberland ~ Putting the boot into corporate greed

Timberland was founded in 1918 as a small company in southeast Boston by Nathan Swartz, grandfather of Jeff Swartz the current CEO, with an emphasis from the start on caring for its employees as a core company value. Angela Jameson (writing in The Times business section in May 2004) reports Swartz recalling his father telling him as a small boy 'We have to take care of each other', after inadvertently witnessing the giving of extra money to one of his workers in need.

His grandfather's ability to understand others and the challenges they face has remained a company value with a pay off in long term corporate achievements. Corporate social responsibility remains a core value of Timberland with today's company philosophy integrating investment in the community with an aim to be free of toxins, carbon neutral and using 100% renewable resources as key to the company's strategic direction. The evidence of applied EQ and how this contributes to peoples' motivation is aptly demonstrated by Timberland's workforce putting in 270,000 hours of volunteer time in 2003 to company supported community initiatives. Even when the company was almost bankrupted in 1994, Timberland's defence of community policy paid off in the long term with the loyalty shown by its staff and customers to achieve current annual revenues of \$1.3 billion (£700 million) and \$31 million in profits in the first quarter of 2004.

The EQ emphasis on awareness of others and an ethical framework of principles and values are fundamental to Timberland Corporation's approach were effectively endorsed by Jeff Swartz in his keynote speech 'Uniting value and values for business success', at the Ethical Corp Europe 2004 conference.

Further information on:

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/europe2004/printprogramme.shtml>

<http://greatplacetowork.co.uk/best/list-bestusa-2004.htm>

http://www.timberland.com/timberlandserve/timberlandserve_index.jsp

Source:

'MINDCHANGE – the power of emotionally intelligent leadership' by Jan Childs & David Pardey, published 2005 by Management Books 2000.

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