



MEDIA RELEASE

Corporate social investment initiatives made easy

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Implementing corporate social investment initiatives (CSI) is a daunting task for many South African corporates. The skills, project management and human resources needed to effectively execute a large scale sustainable CSI initiative is often not possible as the economic winter sees corporates operating with skeleton staff. So how can corporates maintain their CSI activities whilst still operating their own business?

Corporate 'cheque writing' is not a suitable alternative as a means to contribute towards the improvement of disadvantaged communities. Not only does it show a lack of interest in the CSI initiatives it serves, there is also no sustainability and accountability for the projects. Therefore, CSI initiatives should go beyond philanthropy.

Denise Behrens, the Public Affairs and Corporate Communications Manager at Peninsula Beverages (PenBev – local bottler of The Coca-Cola Company products in the Western and Northern Cape) notes to corporates looking to make a significant difference in their communities, "Like many larger corporates, we don't have the resources to designate a department or team to our CSI projects."

Over the past 60 years, PenBev has contributed to both small community projects and large 'brick and mortar' projects around the Western Cape. Behrens continues, "Peninsula Beverages takes huge pride in the various buildings we have constructed over the years. Ensuring sustainability is a must as far as our CSI initiatives are concerned. These 'brick and mortar' projects are a huge logistical operation. From identifying a community need, negotiations, implementation and project management, and ongoing reporting and maintenance work. As much as we wanted to get involved in these initiatives, we simply didn't have the capacity to take it on."

PenBev researched ways in which they could continue these projects without having the specialist skills and knowledge required to implement building projects. "Nine years ago we partnered with The Rotary Club of Newlands to help us with our vision of building or renovating one large scale community project each year. Through the expertise of The Rotary Club of Newlands who have executed many similar projects over the years, we have been able to realise the dreams of eight local communities by building or renovating edu-care and day care centres, school classrooms and development centres. We also have three more projects in the pipeline this year," says Behrens.

The Rotary Club of Newlands has assisted PenBev by vetting possible projects with background checks to ensure it is a viable and sustainable option. They have also project managed each initiative and reported back after completion, as well as regular post-project checks to address any maintenance issues. By operating with complete transparency, both parties are able to maintain a firm hand on the projects and their outcomes.

Wybe Meinesz, President of the Rotary Club of Newlands comments, “We have been fortunate to work with PenBev as a corporate who cares about their CSI investments and who truly wants to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. It’s our policy to ensure that 100% of funds generated are used for these initiatives. We are looking forward to many more successful projects in partnership with them, and are in search of other corporates to assist with their CSI initiatives.”

Behrens concludes, “The Rotary Club of Newlands has made a significant difference to our projects and without their help, many of them would not have been possible. I recommend to all corporates in South Africa to call on their local Rotary Club if they too need support to realise their sustainable CSI initiatives.”

For more information about Peninsula Beverages, visit www.penbev.co.za or contact 021 936 5500. PenBev is also on Facebook www.facebook.com/PenBev.

To find out more about The Rotary Club of Newlands, visit <http://www.newlands.org.za>

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