

Community Engagement - LCBB4002

Assessment 2

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INTRODUCTION

Community Engagement could be translated quickly and simply by two words: Change and Impact. These 2 words are the principles that Kaufland promotes in Romania.

Romania is a developing country, impacted by a dark communist period and a revolution that completely changed the lives of the inhabitants and the economic situation of the country. In 2005, Kaufland, a retailer born in Germany, enters the Romanian market and begins to get involved.

Kaufland quickly became popular in Romania, observing and adapting to the needs and demands of the citizens: attractive prices, ranges of own products, products with Romanian or vegan specifics and the follow-up of the social problems faced by the population.

Involvement - in 2013, the project "Helping together" helped 14,000 children to enroll in kindergartens in 64 cities. This was the first step that Kaufland took for the benefit of the community, then going on to touch several sensitive points of society, succeeding in 2017, through collaboration with Habitat for Humanity and Big Build, to build 36 houses in 5 days for the citizens of Bacau with low incomes.

Kaufland is based on strong values and principles based on customer and employee satisfaction, thus, Kaufland gives proof of involvement and impact on the local social context. He is the creator of the "Involvement makes the difference" project, because Kaufland realized that once it entered the Romanian market, it must be responsible for the state of society. Through each of its actions, Kaufland proves, both through small actions (eg: cotton uniforms, old uniforms were recycled and transformed into sleeping bags, donated to disadvantaged environments/environmentally friendly shopping bags), visible or larger (eg: supported 167 NGOs, offering a total funding of 500,000 euros for their development - "Start NGO") is the support of the local social context.

"Involvement makes a difference" by: supporting education, sustainability, ecology, health, sports, social cases, community investments, avoiding waste and pollution, lifestyle, climate protection, recycling, avoiding food waste.

Kaufland understands the benefits of Community Engagement

Shortly after the German retailer Kaufland entered the Romanian market, it understands the importance of CE, both from the point of view of business development, as well as from the point of view of the economic and social context. Kaufland shows empathy, recognizes the needs

of the local community and realizes that CE improves and streamlines service provision and product placement. Through the numerous CE projects, Kaufland increases its social capital and strengthens collaborations with various partners.

For me, the most important projects that Kaufland has carried out are those related to education-"Olympics K" was a large-scale project that brought social, historical and ecological responsibility to Romanian schools. Through fun and interactive activities, students and teachers from many schools studied, got involved, created and developed activities with impact for the community, supported by Kaufland. Following the contests, the schools that showed the greatest involvement were awarded, and with the help of these awards, the educational units could be renovated and equipped with modern equipment, in order to create favorable conditions for study.

"In our modern environment, it is necessary to find new approaches to business community engagement for educational initiatives. Educational institutions have encouraged to provide innovative ways to support students' learning". (Mikhail Epshtein, Exploring Business Community Engagement, 2019, pp. 236)

As they are developed in ATSDR, 2020 - PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, there are 9 principles that aim at CE success and are based on an ethical and moral structure that guides the local community, present and future collaborators.

1. Purpose and Community: Every community impact project developed by Kaufland has clearly defined the purpose and the community concept.

The K Olympics were dedicated to schools and the final goal was a pleasant and modern environment in which the learning process could take place. In addition to the basic goal of this project, the "K Olympics" had the following goals that they achieved:

- the students' awareness, from an early age, of the impact of small and fun activities, but with a major impact for the present and future of the local community;
- carrying out the activities even after the completion of the "K Olympics" project;
- major and beneficial impact in fields such as: ecology, art, sport, health, first aid, environment, recycling;
- a large number of beneficiaries of the project: educational institutions, teachers, students, parents, communities saved by the activities, etc.

2. About the community: Kaufland had a clear target: education and students. In Romania, many of the students do not have the necessary conditions to study, coming from

disadvantaged backgrounds, with poor economic conditions. The "K Olympics" project comes to the aid of students and future students.

3. Establishing a relationship with the community: The forms of education were registered in the project through an online form applied by an authorized person, who was then contacted by one of the organizers or managers of the "Olympics K" project, to establish the conditions for participation and creating relationships between project partners, thus creating active relationships with the community involved. The "K Olympics" emphasized the education developed through creative art and thus the students of the participating schools expressed the "challenges of the community".
4. Mutual Respect: Kaufland offers the community the chance to actively participate for solving local problems. Kaufland identifies one of the problems of the local community: difficult study conditions in educational institutions and promotes a project aimed at sponsoring a modern study environment through the active involvement of the community, representing mutual help and respect through actions: charitable, ecological, etc. The rights and interests are respected and the well-being of the people in the community is targeted, through the mutual aid and respect.
5. Partnership with the community: As a result of the project, the sense of responsibility develops, a fact that has an impact on several levels, not only educationally, but also socially, economically, environmentally, and thus increases prosperity in the community.
6. Community diversity: The "K Olympics" project promotes integration into society and teamwork, regardless of: race, ethnicity, age, gender, language, religion. It is a project dedicated to education with the aim of responsibilities and the well-being of the community, regardless of the individual characteristics.
7. Identification and mobilization: Kaufland supports, through the "K Olympics" project, an active involvement of community members to bring about changes. Through this project, there is an exchange of resources: Kaufland provides funding for educational units and supports education, and students and teachers actively help for the change and well-being of the local community. The community mobilizes and identifies the problems, and Kaufland supports and finances. After all actions, good is created and welfare is maintained through the involvement of the community.
8. Long-term change: In 91.3% of educational units (according to the kaufland.ro report) it is considered that the local community was positively influenced by this project: partnerships, attracting students to school, improving education, relational improvements: student-parent, student-teacher, etc., increasing motivation and curiosity, beneficial acts for the community.
9. Community collaboration and long-term commitment: "Olympics K" had a large number of beneficiaries following the project: educational institutions, teachers, students, parents, communities saved by the activities, etc. Thus, in the majority of educational units, activities continued (according to the kaufland.ro report, in 96.3% of educational units). The basic principle of the "K Olympics" project was "The future lies in education".

The answer to the essential questions

Kaufland analyzed the needs of the community and identified the most important area that needs help and that has a long-term global impact, education.

The "K Olympics" project came to the aid of the educational system and was: transparent, reliable, fair. It answered the essential questions and started the project which in the end had a major impact on the local community.

Q: Which is the project?

A: "Olympics K" is a project that aims to modernize educational units, through the active involvement of the community through activities intended for the community.

Q: What is expected?

A: The quality of education.

Q: For whom?

A: The beneficiaries were in large numbers, the whole community: educational units, teachers, students, parents, communities saved by the activities, etc.

Q: When will it be done?

A: It was realized during the school year, but the project was initiated earlier in order to have time for the educational units to register for participation. The project was a large-scale one, it was initiated in 2015 and ended in 2016.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: The total allocated budget was in the amount of 2,290,000 eur, which was divided into two categories established from the beginning: 2,090,000 for 103 funded schools (TOP LEADERS - those that had the most activities) and 200,000 eur for 100 funded schools (TOP HARNICUTI - those who started the activities quickly).

Q: How is it done?

A: We work in a team, the whole community is involved, there is support, planning is carried out and there is communication. All the students from the registered schools were included in the project without barriers to participation, there was communication and team work, the final goal being achieved - better conditions for education. (NSFCE, 2020, pp.9-17)

Q: What is the expected benefit?

A: Our goal is the promotion and educational support, as well as the involvement of the authorities in the community.

What could be done differently and better?!

The CE projects initiated by Kaufland were impactful and managed to get closer to the local community through small gestures that had great results.

To increase the degree of awareness of the project, several tools could be used for a greater visibility of the project.

One of the best ways to present the project and ideas, but also to identify the problems of the local community are Public meetings - because through Public meetings there is a direct dialogue with questions and answers, causes and reasons. Through this tool, stakeholders raise issues and find solutions.

The Interview is another way of integrated involvement of the local community. By the discussion of Kaufland representatives with people face to face, by phone or in writing, they can find subjective reasons that can help an entire community.

If Kaufland had organized a Focus Group of carefully selected people, some of whom would be representatives from educational units (teachers, students), they could have touched on problems that Kaufland could not have noticed, for example: the period in which to carry out the activities.

The projects organized by Kaufland could have been more visible if they had used the forum, a procedure through which the communities could have debated the problems and uncertainties, guided by a Kaufland representative.

For a better interaction with the public, opinion polls could be used to collect information, thus forming conclusions that helped for a better development of the project.

Another way that Kaufland could use quickly and efficiently is Web Based Engagement:

- "1. To inform consumers about the company's activities, product range, services, and new arrivals;
- 2. To get feedback via e-mail and a forum;
- 3. To find new partners faster;
- 4. To operate without being limited by the local market or geography;" (Mikhail Epshtein, Exploring Business Community Engagement, 2019, pp. 196).

The most indicated method of project promotion, launch and efficiency in terms of costs, time and visibility are social networks. Kaufland should have used more promotion through social networks. Through them, they could outline the story and involve the community more. It is the most effective method and the most loved. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube are the most loved and followed platforms.

Conclusions

Kaufland is a leader on the Romanian market in terms of Community Engagement. He laid the foundations of many projects. Kaufland identified the problems, dysfunctions and tried to get involved in all areas: supporting education, sustainability, ecology, health, sports, social cases, community investments, avoiding waste and pollution, lifestyle, climate protection, recycling, avoiding food waste . Every goal proposed at the beginning of the projects has been achieved.

The slogans used were impactful and creative, Kaufland aiming to reach the public: "We help together", "Start NGO", "Involvement makes the difference".

Standard methods were used, there was a plan and a reflection. After each project and especially after the "K Olympics" project, they had a long-term effect, activities beneficial to the community were maintained and had a major impact on the development of the community. The beneficiaries were numerous and diverse, thus, following the "K Olympics" project, students, teachers, community residents and parents benefited through the prism of Community engagement.

In order to differentiate themselves, for better visibility and efficiency, the initiators of the "K Olympics" project could use many more methods to increase the degree of awareness of the project. Interviews, surveys, focus group, Web Based Engagement are just some of the tools and platforms that could have examined the needs of the local community, finding information beneficial to the project through the same methods and platforms.

I believe that if social networks had been used more for promotion and visibility, the campaigns would have been more effective, because commonthe local community could debate and communicate more easily, being offered: stories, values, desires and needs.

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