

Restaurants Tap into Cause Consumers to Drive Business

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Consumers today are “cause consumers:” they feel empowered to make a difference with their dollars. They see their wallets as the most effective way to drive change, whether that’s by making donations, buying products with a social or environmental benefit or boycotting a company that they feel has stepped out of line. Cause consumers know they have a voice, and they will use it—to share their opinions about companies’ social impact efforts or to amplify social impact messages to their own networks.

But here’s the thing: businesses can multiply and amplify their impact in ways people—even with technology—just can’t. They have reach that individuals simply don’t, and they have resources individuals aren’t likely to match. Businesses have the ability to organize fundraising efforts on a national stage.

Most importantly, consumers *want* to see businesses getting involved:

- 86 percent of Americans expect companies to do more than make a profit; they expect companies to also address social and environmental issues.
- 70 percent of Americans believe companies have an obligation to take action to improve issues that may not be relevant to everyday business operations.
- 72 percent of Americans say they feel it is more important than ever for the companies they buy from to reflect their values.

C3 has always been a strong advocate for giving back. It has seen the impact this kind of generosity has, and it’s been buoyed by the value it can bring to both those who give and the recipients. Today, many companies and brands aspire to do the same, and C3 is thrilled to be able to support them in those efforts. That’s why it launched **C3 Social Impact**, which focuses on creating brand-tailored products for a cause to increase brand awareness, raise funds, and rally customers behind a cause.

Too often, brands’ social impact efforts seem passive and invisible to the consumer. Brands are missing the chance to connect with consumers. This is a missed opportunity, especially since consumers say they are more loyal to companies that invest in social impact:

- When consumers think a brand has a strong purpose, they are 4.1x more likely to trust that company.
- 88 percent of consumers say they are more loyal to companies that support a social or environmental issue.

It’s clear—anything you can do to authentically raise awareness for your cause or social impact efforts will drive brand affinity.

The best way to both raise awareness for your cause *and* increase your customers’ brand affinity is to get them involved in your social impact efforts. They’ll feel good about giving and leave with even more positive feelings toward your brand.

Consumers aren’t just willing to buy in, they’re actively looking for opportunities to give back.

- 82 percent of consumers say they would donate to a charity supported by a company they trust if given the opportunity
- 87 percent of consumers say they would buy a product with a social and/or environmental benefit if given the opportunity

One of the most effective ways to get them involved is to invite them to purchase something tangible, meaningful and memorable—a product for a cause. These purchases can raise funds for your cause, generate revenue for your operators, bring your brand home and give your customers a memento of their donation. It’s a win-win-win! Read on to see these tactics in action.

Raising Cane’s—a C3 client—has had great success via products for a cause through their **Plush Puppy Program**. Every year, Raising Cane’s customers have the opportunity to buy themed Plush Puppies (inspired by the yellow lab that is Raising Cane’s namesake), knowing that their purchase will help promote pet welfare via donations. In fact, thanks to the Plush Puppy Program, Raising Cane’s has donated more than \$850,000 to local no-kill pet shelters and other pet welfare organizations. Satisfied customers come back year after year to expand their Plush Puppy collection, all while feeling like they’re a part of something bigger than themselves. C3 is proud to have partnered with Raising Cane’s to design and produce their Holiday Plush Puppy since 2009.

The bottom line? Doing good feels good. Your guests want to feel like they have an impact in their community, and you can provide them the opportunity to pay it forward. Customers expect businesses to put their causes front and center, and they will reward you when you do—because studies show time and time again that brands with a cause build stronger, more loyal customers.