

Make the world a bit better in year ahead

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The New Year is upon us, and it is customary at this time to reflect and establish resolutions for what we wish to accomplish in the year to come.

Among local business leaders, New Year's resolutions probably include reaching revenue growth targets, or maybe seizing a business opportunity created by the growing economy. These goals make sense. We are, after all, responsible for the financial success of our businesses.

But if business leaders focus too narrowly on our financial goals, we risk missing an equally important goal: Ensuring that our businesses and employees are taking action to make San Antonio a better place to live and work.

So as business leaders in the area set goals for what they hope to accomplish in 2014, I challenge them to consider what we can all do to improve our community.

Fortunately, giving back to the community does not have to come at the expense of business priorities. In fact, philanthropy not only can help make San Antonio a better place to live, it can reap positive effects for our businesses, too.

As a case in point, my company, InGenesis, has taken a lead role in addressing the diabetes epidemic. Approximately 26 million people in the United States have diabetes, and about seven million of them don't even know it.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and the fourth leading cause of death in Bexar County. San Antonio's diabetic population stands at 14 percent — double the national average — and the figure is growing.

Diabetes has affected the lives of many of my employees and taken a direct personal toll. I lost my younger brother to diabetes in 2011.

My daughter, determined to do whatever she could to help the American Diabetes Association (ADA) get closer to a cure, used the occasion of her Sweet 16th birthday to raise awareness and funds. In lieu of gifts, she collected donations for the ADA's San Antonio chapter.

Her gesture inspired an annual tradition at InGenesis: Company-wide participation in the local ADA chapter's Step Out: Walk to Stop Diabetes.

Together, as the 16 Candles Team, this year alone we raised more than \$10,000 for the ADA through individual and corporate-match donations. We surpassed our fundraising goal and became the top donor team in the city by sponsoring friendly team competitions and fun activities, including get-fit week and contests for smoothie-making and best walk-day attire.

Putting community first has made InGenesis a better place to work and helped us achieve exponential growth. I found out first hand that refusing to remain on the sidelines in the fight against diabetes helps improve the community, strengthen corporate culture and achieve even greater financial success.

San Antonio relies upon its business leaders for more than just economic opportunity. I consider it my responsibility to give something back to the community that has enabled my success. So this New Year, I am renewing my own pledge and calling on other business leaders in San Antonio to be more proactive in addressing the concerns in our community.

As we all know too well, there is no shortage of issues in this region that would benefit from the involvement of the business community. Whatever issue stirs your passion, please consider joining with your employees in taking it on.

I know all too well how easy it is to become absorbed in the details of running a business and relegating to the back burner the responsibility to give back to the community.

But focusing only on profit could cause us to miss opportunities to make our region a better place for all of us. I know many of you are already contributing your fair share. This is a call to action to the few who remain on the sidelines.

San Antonio relies upon its business leaders for more than just economic opportunity. We have a responsibility to give something back to our community. In 2014, we should all work to make sure that we do.

Source: [San Antonio Business Journal](#)