

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROFILE



Institute for
Community Prosperity

Village Brewery

Raising a glass for art, culture, and community

Background

Industry: Brewery

Company Founded: 2011

Headquarters: Calgary

Legal Type: Private Corporation

Owned: Canadian Owned

Years Dedicated to Community Investment (C.I.):

Since 2011

Customer: Business to customer

Region of Focus: Calgary

Investees/ Partnerships include:

- Calgary Blues Fest
- Calgary Prostate Cancer Centre
- Calgary Marathon
- Calgary Pride Festival

Community Investment Strategy

In 2011, the idea of a community driven brewery was born by friends talking over beers. Between them, the seven friends had over 150 years of experience brewing beer but wanted to do it differently. They wanted to create a brewery that made a meaningful difference by being a good neighbour and giving back to the local community.

Village Brewery was created around the idea that “It takes a village to raise a beer. And a beer to raise a village”. True to their slogan, the company revolves around bringing community through beer and using beer to give back to the community. From the beginning, Village has given 10% of its bottom line back to the community through supporting arts and the community.¹ A large part of Village’s community investment strategy is supporting local events. Co-founder Jim Button explained that Village prefers to support small, lesser known events to help them grow and build support and to bring Calgarians together.² The company prides itself on providing both financial and time resources to its investees, preferring to work with organizations over simply writing a cheque.

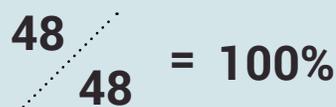
Village’s community investment strategy has been shaped and influenced by the support of its 50 Beer Barons. The Beer Barons are investors, handpicked by Village for their commitment to making Calgary a better place. Their role is to share their ideas, and to continue to improve the local community.

CI Dashboard: This dashboard is one way to illustrate how companies invest in community, providing a tool to compare across different company CI profiles. It is important to note that no category is privileged over another.

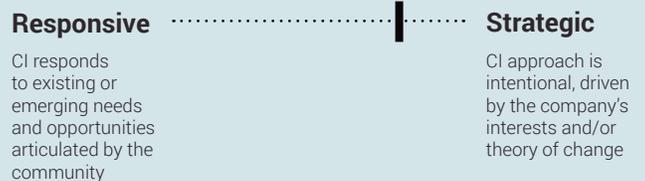
Geographic scope



CI staff ratio (Presented as percentage of total staff)



Granting or sponsorship approach



FOCUS Investment: Bringing Community Together

Issue:

The founders of Village Brewery wanted to create beer in a different way. Tired of the way things had been done in the past, they wanted to create a community minded brewery to bring Calgary together and make it a better place to live. There wasn't a specific issue the founders were trying to address, their goal was to do the right thing as a business.

Solution:

In 2014, Village Brewery turned a bad situation into a beneficial outcome for the Calgary art Community. In March of 2014, Village made the decision to recall all full growlers (1.89L beer containers) because they were reportedly leaking and exploding. After all customers were refunded and the problem was resolved, Village thanked the community for their patience by donating one dollar from every growler sold to one of three small, local theatre companies.

Although Village generally focuses its support on Calgary arts and culture, it makes an exception to fundraise for the Calgary Prostate Centre. To raise awareness and funds for the Centre, Village created the NUTraiser event. For two years, Village has created a special beer with ingredients including wheat, malt, yeast and bull testicles. Since 2013, the ballsy brew has been sold at Bottlescrew Bill's annual Testicle Festival for \$100 per pint, all money going to the Calgary Prostate Cancer Centre.³

Village directly engages the community in its beer through the Village Gardener. The idea began when one of the co-founders Tim Duffin decided to use the hops from his garden in a new batch of beer. Soon many other urban gardeners wanted their hops included as well. Today, the beer uses hops, barley and other ingredients sourced from the backyards of Calgarians. Part of the profits from Village Gardener go to towards encouraging urban agriculture by supporting local community garden associations. This year, Village is supporting seven community gardens across Calgary. Gardens that were previously supported receive \$800 and those being supported for the first time by Village are being granted \$1600.⁴

Village believes that beer has an intrinsic social value to it, bringing people together. In 2014, Village Brewery, BassBus, and YYCFoodTrucks created Circle the Wagons, an event aimed to bring Calgary communities together with good food, drinks and music. Each year, the event will be held in a different neighbourhood, partial proceeds going to the community association to improve parks, build playgrounds and generally improve the neighborhood.

Impact and Evaluation:

Village doesn't extensively evaluate and measure their impact, partly because it is a private company and partly because much of their support can't be monetized. For instance, the tasting room is also used as an art gallery for local promising artists. Like a gallery, the space gives artists to gain exposure and sell their art. Unlike a gallery, the artists keep 100% of the profits. In terms of their monetary giving, in 2014, village invested over 100,000 dollars into the Calgary community.⁵

*Learn more about Village Brewery in Community Prosperity Student Research Award recipient, Zak Ismail's paper "Brewing Innovation: Modelling Opportune Dynamics for Social Innovation in Calgary's Brewing Industry"

Endnotes

1. Village Brewery, "Community" para. 1, Village Brewery, 2015, <http://www.villagebrewery.com/community>.
2. Button, Interview.
3. Canadian Beer News, "Village Brewery Presenting 2nd Annual NUTraiser for Prostate Cancer" para. 1,3, Canadian Beer News, July 3, 2014, <http://www.canadianbeernews.com/2014/07/03/village-brewery-presenting-2nd-annual-nutraiser-for-prostate-cancer/>.
4. Button, interview.
5. Ibid.