

South Dakota Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Newsletter

May 2025



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Creating a Social Responsibility Program *for Your Business*

by Project Solutions Inc. Team



Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is quickly becoming a core aspect of business development in a world that cares about the values companies uphold just as much as the products and services they provide. While large corporations often dominate the headlines with their CSR initiatives, creating a social responsibility program as a small business can be a powerful way to make a positive impact on your community while adding value to your business. This article will look at some essential steps to develop a social responsibility program that aligns with your business values, engages your employees, and resonates with your customers. Whether you're looking to support local charities, promote environmental sustainability, or champion social causes, we'll provide practical tips for starting your CSR journey on the right foot.

What Corporate Social Responsibility Is and How It Can Help You

Corporate Social Responsibility is a broad term that can be difficult to define specifically. Generally, it refers to anything a company does to improve the society in which it exists, but it's typically used to refer to the programs and initiatives that companies employ to benefit their communities or their environment in ways that go beyond looking after their bottom line. This can come in a variety of forms, such as improving the environmental impact of business operations or committing to ethical labor standards that go beyond meeting regulations, but most often when people speak of CSR they are thinking of corporate giving, or monetary contributions, and philanthropy.

It's easy to see how giving money to a charity could benefit that cause, but it's important to recognize that giving isn't coming at the expense of your bottom line. In fact, companies that create CSR programs tend to see an increase in profits over time for a few key reasons. Philanthropy and giving provide good marketing opportunities. Non-profit organizations will often display the logos of companies that helped them organize events and include those sponsors in social media posts, which provides free exposure, even more so if it's complimented by material from your own company showing personal involvement. At the same time, companies that are improving their community tend to have improved brand loyalty from customers, with recent studies suggesting that many consumers are willing to pay more for products from companies that support their values or to stop supporting businesses who don't. CSR programs also tend to improve workplace conditions and increase retention rates. These factors can combine to create an increase in profits that outweighs the increase in spending.

With a clearer understanding of what CSR is and how it can benefit your business, let's look at a few ideas that will help you develop a program that fits your business.

Develop a Plan that Fits Your Business

CSR Programs are generally seen as ideas that come from the upper management of a company and reflect its goals. As a business owner, ask what types of causes align with your business, what goals you have that are related to those causes, and what types of programs your company culture can support. These factors will be different for each business, and a strong vision that answers these questions will set your program up for success. A business that sells wood sculptures might benefit more from a plan to plant trees for each product sold than one that sells air conditioning units, for example, given how much closer they are to the environmental improvement they're trying to make. A company with a small team of employees who regularly get together outside of work might benefit more from an initiative to volunteer with a local nonprofit than a business with employees that rarely see each other away from the office. Your budget for CSR is also an important factor. Helping fund large events might cost a lot of money, but matching employee donations to charities your company supports could result in a high impact at a lower cost for your business.



Create Specific Initiatives

Think of your overall CSR program as the main goal your company is trying to achieve to better its community. Initiatives are the steps your company will take to reach that goal. Initiatives should be realistic, measurable, and specific. In the early stages of your CSR program, these initiatives should be small and easy to accomplish so that simple successes can be used to improve stakeholder buy in and organizational efficiency as you work towards larger initiatives in the future that will require more investment from your team. When you develop these initiatives, there are a few useful questions to ask as a baseline to determine if they really match your goals. Ask what specific effect this initiative will have if successful, how

that effect relates to your mission, how that mission relates to your company, how it all fits into your industry, and how you can engage your employees in the initiative.

Engage Your Team

While the CSR goals of a company are generally decided by management, CSR Plans should involve your company as a whole and results will improve alongside employee buy in. Rather than simply stating goals and announcing initiatives, take the time to explain why your company is supporting the causes you have chosen, how your initiatives can make an impact, and why that impact is helpful to your staff. When developing initiatives, include methods to encourage participation. Give employees extra time off work if they spend that time volunteering, match donations made by staff towards charities your company supports, add rewards for participation and recognition for top performers. There are many ways to make employees feel valued and rewarded for the time they spend supporting your initiatives, often with little to no cost but with huge effects on your employees' happiness and your company's ability to make a positive impact.

Monitor Results

As you develop and implement your CSR program, it's important to maintain regular communication with your employees, your community, and the intended beneficiaries of your effort. Bake into your process opportunities to make sure that your goals are being met and the people involved feel positively about the work that's being done. Give stakeholders at all levels chances to suggest improvements and be flexible enough to incorporate that feedback, continually improve your process, and refine your program to best fit your company and the community it serves.

Upcoming Training & Events

May 28 **Facility Safety Excellence Through Shared Ownership: Engaging Subcultures to Drive Results**
Webinar
Wed., May 28, 2025
1:00 P.M. CT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

May 29 **Loans, Grants and Other Funding Options for Women-Owned Businesses**
Webinar
Thur., May 29, 2025
3:00 P.M. CT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 11 **OSHA First Aid Compliance: Are You Meeting the Requirements?**
Webinar
Wed., June 11, 2025
1:00 P.M. CT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 12 **How to Build a Referral Network for Your Business**
Webinar
Thur., June 12, 2025
12:00 P.M. CT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 18 **Quickbooks Training: From Desktop to Online**
BHSU – Rapid City
4300 Cheyenne Blvd
Rapid City, SD 57719
Wed., June 18, 2025
3:00 P.M. CT | Cost: \$25
[Learn More>](#)

Upcoming Bid Lettings

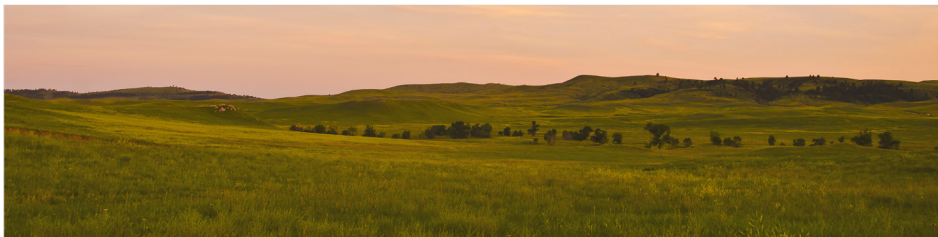
For Bid Letting on 05/21/2025

1. P TAPU(35) (PCN 08W4); Union SWPPP = 2.71 AC; PCC Shared Use Path; North Sioux City - Fm the Jct of Sodrac Dr & River Dr to the Jct of Sioux Point Rd & Shay Rd
2. P TAPU(36) (PCN 08W5); Union SWPPP = 2.29 AC; PCC Shared Use Path; Dakota Dunes - Along Sioux Point Rd fm Shay Rd to Dakota Dunes Blvd
3. P TAPR(48) (PCN 08WA); Clay SWPPP = 1.00 AC; Grading, Sidewalk and Pedestrian Ramps; Wakonda - Along 2nd St fm Nebraska St to Ohio St, along Ohio St fm 2nd St to approx 100' S
4. PH 0030(46) (PCN 09FP); Bennett, Potter, Sully, Todd, Tripp; Centerline Rumble Stripes; Various Locations in the Pierre Region
5. NH-P 0021(187), P 0023(70) (PCN 09KM, 09KU); Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Douglas, Gregory, Hanson, McCook, Yankton; Rout & Seal; Various Locations in the Mitchell Area
6. IM 0033(45) (PCN 09KT); Lyman; Rout & Seal; Various Locations in the Winner Area
7. NH-P 0031(61) (PCN 09L3); Haakon, Jackson, Potter, Stanley; Asphalt Surface Treatment; Various Locations in the Pierre Area

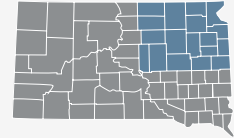
Upcoming Bid Lettings

For Bid Letting on 06/04/2025

1. BRO-B 8062(10) (PCN 08NA); Tripp SWPPP = 1.59 AC; Structure (3-9x6 CIP RCBC) & Approach Grading; Structure 4.8 E & 0.8 N of Colome on 285th St over W Br of Bull Ck SN 62-318-350 8
2. PH 0040(347) (PCN 06U5); Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington; High Friction Surface Treatment; Various Locations on the state and local systems in the Rapid City Region

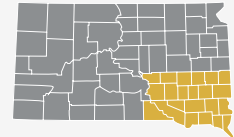


Regional Lettings



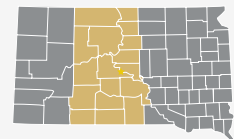
Aberdeen Region

None.



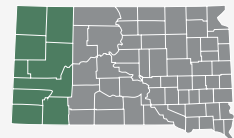
Mitchell Region

None.



Pierre Region

None.



Rapid City Region

05/22/25

1. 240-452 | i7ve | Hwy 240 in Wall | Install Curb & Gutter on Hwy 240 in Wall
2. 212-471, 034-471 & 090E-451 | i7vp, i7vq & i7vr | various locations | Ditch Cleanout at various locations in Butte & Lawrence Co.
3. 000N-451 & 014A-451 | i7vg & i7wf | various locations around Deadwood | Tree Removal, Ditch Cleanout & Erosion Repair at various locations around Deadwood

Developing a Customer-Centric MARKETING STRATEGY

By Project Solutions Inc. Team



In today's competitive market, standing out from the crowd to attract and retain customers with your products can be tough. Adopting a customer-centric marketing strategy can help differentiate your company from others that provide similar offerings by focusing not only on the products you provide, but on the people you provide those products to. This shift in focus can help your business attract new customers and retain those it already has, improving brand loyalty and boosting your bottom line. This article will explore the key elements of a customer-centric marketing strategy and offer a few practical tips that can help small businesses thrive in an ever-evolving marketplace.

What is Customer-Centric Marketing?

Traditional marketing strategies focus primarily on the products a company provides. A company that relies on traditional marketing creates advertisements that emphasize the impressive features of their products, what makes them unique, and why those exciting features make the product worth the cost they are charging. In contrast, customer-centric marketing focuses instead on the customer and their needs and explains how the company's products can help address pain points in the customers' lives. A traditional shoe company might advertise how comfortable and stylish their shoes are, while a company focusing on customer centricism might instead focus on how their shoes can help ease older customers' chronic back pain.

Regional Lettings

05/27/25

1. 016A-491 | i7vn | Hwy 16A in Keystone | Curb & Gutter Replacement on Hwy 16A in Keystone
2. 0009-451 | i7x0 | Deadwood Maintenance Yard | Subgrade Repair and AC Resurfacing in Deadwood Maintenance Yard
3. 090EF-452 | i7vf | Frontage Road near Summerset | Install Curb & Gutter on Frontage Road near Summerset
4. 085-471 & 168-471 | i7vy & i7w0 | Hwy 85 and 168 in Butte County | Asphalt Concrete Mill & Overlay on Hwy 85 and 168 in Butte County

[For listings please visit the SDDOT website's Regional Lettings here](#)



With consumers increasingly focusing on brand values and purchasing from businesses that make them feel appreciated and represented, customer-centric marketing can result in noticeable increases in profits with minimal extra investment, making such strategies worth considering for businesses of all sizes. As a small business, appealing more personally to your community can boost loyalty and engagement with your potential customers, and make current customers more likely to stick with your business when faced with other options.

How to Develop Customer-Centric Marketing Strategies

The first step to developing customer-centric marketing is to understand your customers. You need a deep knowledge of the people your business serves to be able to appeal to them personally. To develop a better picture of your customers, you might:

- 1. Monitor intent data** to determine how people find your product and what they are looking for when they do. What keywords are they searching for that lead them to your website? What problem are they having when they call your customer service line? How did they hear about your business?
- 2. Track demographic information** to understand the segments of your community to which your business most strongly appeals and what marketing strategies resonate with them. If your business appeals to multiple segments of your community, creating different profiles for each type of customer can help you develop marketing material that caters to their differing needs.
- 3. Deliver concise surveys** to obtain direct feedback and specific information about the way people who interact with your business feel after the fact. These can be very useful, but it's important to keep them short and infrequent. Asking for too much of your customers' time can become a pain point that drives them away from your business.



These are just a few options, and there are others that might be worth your time. Try to implement as many methods of information gathering as possible while minimizing the amount of extra work required of customers and use these data points to establish trends in your customer base. Understanding who is interested in your product, what drives them to your company, and how they feel about the interactions they have with your business is the vital first step in improving your customer centricism. Once you understand your customers, you can begin developing a marketing strategy that is designed with their needs in mind.

Advertise to Your Customers' Concerns

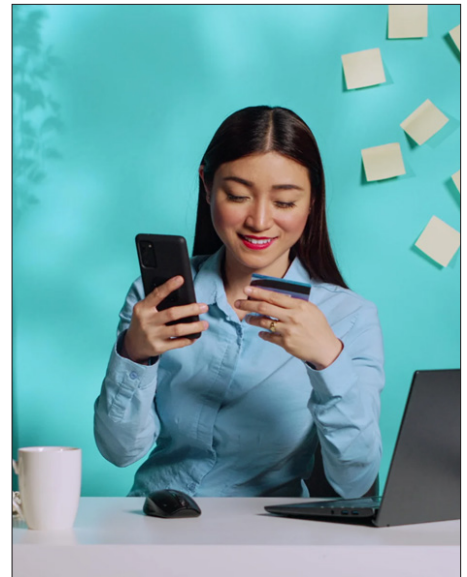
Advertisements that expound upon the greatness of your product can be effective, but customers respond most strongly to content that speaks to their problems and offers personal solutions. When developing your advertisements, focus on the customers instead of the company. Content should feel relevant to your customers' interests and needs. This can extend beyond advertisements to buy your products and into other types of content, like personal demonstrations of how to use your products once they have been purchased, which can help customers feel confident that they can trust you to take care of them after they have given you their hard-earned money.

Develop a Consistent Brand Voice

When you understand your customer base, you can develop a brand voice that caters to them. It might be fun and bubbly, or calm and formal, or something else entirely, but it needs to speak to the people you want to attract. It also needs to be consistent. If your company runs an Instagram account that's upbeat and exciting while the company website is cold and corporate, both voices will feel insincere. If your commercials are bombastic but your customer service representatives are harsh, the sudden shift in tone can make customers feel confused and unsafe. Whatever your brand's voice is, it needs to be consistent across all platforms, and customers should be able to transition between platforms without harsh changes in voice. By integrating user data that is accessible across varying methods of company-customer interaction, you can help promote the feeling that these interactions are part of a single, longer conversation with someone who cares, which encourages further engagement, especially when compared to services that ask customers to repeat their information or restate their needs over and over again.

Produce Non-Ad Content

No matter how personal an ad feels, it will always be apparent to customers that it exists to convince them to give you money. By providing informational content that doesn't explicitly advertise your products, you can position your business as an entity that cares about the wellbeing of its customers above its bottom line. Sending out informative newsletters or publishing other content that raises awareness about issues that are relevant to your industry shows that your company cares about its customers and



wants to make things better for them, even if doing that doesn't make the company money. Even though content like this doesn't explicitly advertise your products, it makes customers think more positively about your business, which makes them more likely to trust you enough to do business with you over other companies that produce less customer centric material.

Did you know?

Contractors, DBEs, and all other interested parties are invited to attend an in-person meeting prior to developing the **SDDOT Office of Aeronautics** overall DBE goal for the FFY 2026-2028. The meeting will be held in the DOT Commission room at 700 E. Broadway Avenue, Pierre, SD from 10:00 am CDT until 12:00 pm CDT on **Tuesday June 17, 2025**.

If you are unable to attend in-person there is also a virtual option. The link to the virtual option can be found on the SDDOT DBE Supportive Services website: www.sddbe.com.

Invitation to Bid

Invitation to Bid #1

Morrill Hall Tuck Pointing - South Dakota State University

Sealed bids will be received by South Dakota State University Facilities & Services, Box 2150, Brookings, South

Dakota 57007 until **2:00 PM Local Time on Thursday, May 29th, 2025**, for labor and materials for tuck pointing and masonry repair on **Morrill Hall on the campus of South Dakota State University**, OSE# R0323--29X/DEL. Bid opening to be held at South Dakota State University Facilities and Services Building Room 103.

Contractors please note: There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting at **2:00 PM Local Time Friday, May 16th, 2025**. Contractors shall park and meet on site at the parking lot east of Morrill Hall, on the campus of South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD. Each Contractor shall examine the premises and be satisfied as to the existing site conditions before submitting a sealed bid.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the office of JLG Architects 323 Demers Avenue, 2nd floor, Grand Forks North Dakota 58201. Copies of the Plans and Specifications are on file for viewing purposes at the office of Facilities & Service, at South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD 57007. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying plans and specifications for this project (such individual is hereinafter referred to as "bidder") agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. In consideration of the State of South Dakota providing such plans and specifications for the purpose of preparing a bid, bidder further agrees:

1. The plans and specifications are the sole property of the State;
2. Any copies of the plans and specifications obtained from the State or its agent, will be returned to the office of SDSU Facilities & Services immediately after the State provides notice that the bidder will not be awarded a contract, or thirty (30) days after the bid opening for the project, whichever occurs first;
3. Any copies of the plans and specifications made by the bidder will be destroyed immediately after the State provides notice that the bidder will not be awarded a contract, or thirty (30) days after the bid opening for the project, whichever occurs first;
4. If the bidder does not submit a bid, bidder will fulfill the requirements of 2 and 3 above on or before the date of the bid opening;
5. The plans and specifications are to be used only with respect to this project and are not to be used for any other project or purposes other than preparing a bid for this project;
6. The plans and specifications will not be disseminated to any person or entity for purposes other than obtaining pricing information without the express written approval of the State;
7. All information contained in the plans and specifications is confidential; and
8. Should the bidder disseminate the plans and specifications to an individual or entity for purposes of obtaining pricing information, the bidder will require that individual or entity to adhere to the terms set forth herein. The bidder, however, assumes no liability for the misuse of the plans and specifications by such third party or such third party's failure to comply with the provisions contained herein.

Should the bidder be awarded a contract for construction of the project, bidder does not need to return or destroy plans and specifications until after completion of the project.

Each bid in excess of \$50,000.00 must be accompanied by a certified check, cashier's check or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank or a 10% bid bond issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Board of Regents of the State of South Dakota.

South Dakota State University reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein.

Barry Mielke, Associate Vice President
Facilities & Services
South Dakota State University

Published twice or three times at the total approximate cost of_____.