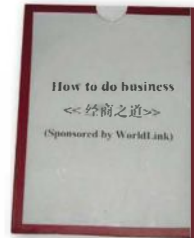


Getting more than you give



Drake's 7 Dees focuses on helping neighbors—in its own backyard and abroad. BY MARISA PALMIERI

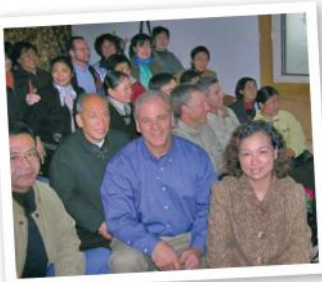
For Drake Snodgrass, owner and CEO of Drake's 7 Dees, corporate giving has three vital components: employees, community and self-improvement. It's his vision to weave all three together to benefit everyone involved. Thus far, he's had impressive results.

Why is service such a focus for Drake's? "We do it, first of all, because I believe in giving back and helping people," Snodgrass says. "We do find, though, that there's a

huge benefit for our company and the people who are part of our company in doing things for others out of love."

Opportunity to make a difference has presented itself over the last decade and a half, as the Portland, Ore., neighborhood where Drake's has been located for more than 50 years has experienced decline. Once a safe area to raise a family, it has since faced crime, drugs and gang-related activities. Wanting to be a part of the solution, Snodgrass has gotten involved with two nearby organizations, the Good News Community Health Center and the Salvation Army, which are working to provide free or low-cost resources for community members.

"The Good News Community Health Center is having a huge impact on the community," Snodgrass says of the 5-year-old, volunteer-run nonprofit clinic that's provided medical, mental and oral health care for nearly 4,000 uninsured people per year. Patients pay just \$10 per visit. The company helped design and install the clinic's landscaping, and Snodgrass has served on, as



Drake Snodgrass (center in blue) with Chinese business ethics students. Above right: a workbook created by Snodgrass and other ethics instructors.

well as chaired, the board. "We've helped grow it from the beginning to what it is today," he says, adding that the healing garden his firm created for the facility's mental health patients was a particularly special project. Snodgrass also has served on and chaired the board of the Salvation Army of Gresham, Ore. The organization provides services for 60 kids daily.

"Many times we'll do something as a company and we'll pay our people to do it, and they understand the company's donating their time," he says. "But people experience that feeling, and the company gains more in employee dedication and loyalty than it would ever take in wages to help out a nonprofit."

Similarly, Snodgrass says giving back breeds more giving back. "We all do things, whether we like to admit it or not, that are motivated by the feeling you get from doing it," he says. "It's such a great feeling that you do more of it."

For businesses looking for a way to begin a stewardship effort, Snodgrass says you just have to believe it's the right thing to do and find an opportunity. You often gain useful business skills, he adds, such as learning how to run a meeting, observing how people interact and gaining the opportunity to "get the heck out of your own business and come back fresh."

He adds, "It doesn't take much time, and you'll find you get more from giving than you ever give." LM

AT A GLANCE

Company: Drake's 7 Dees
Headquarters: Portland, Ore.
CEO: Drake Snodgrass

SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Good News Community Health Center**—company provides ongoing landscape maintenance and installation services, such as creating a healing garden. As a board member and chair, Snodgrass expanded the volunteer board and purchased a facility.

▶ **Salvation Army of Gresham, Ore.**—as a board member and chair, Snodgrass led a capital campaign that raised more than \$1 million and built a new facility.

▶ **China business ethics mission trips**—from 2005-2008 Snodgrass recruited and led three annual trips of professionals to teach business ethics to multinational corporations' middle management teams and college graduates.

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