In August Town, Jamaica, gunmen eagerly recruit boys right out of high school. At 21, Leon Reid, was soft-spoken, shy, and prone to violence. He was suffering from a respiratory illness, which interfered with his ability to work, and for which he could not afford treatment. He completed a three-day course through Sutherland’s Computer Training Center, earning Microsoft’s digital literacy certification, and then apprenticed in Sutherland’s human resources department. He obtained medical treatment and now works on one of Sutherland’s client accounts. “It feels good to be able to take care of my family and support them,” Leon says. “My parents couldn’t do any better for me or my siblings, but this job at Sutherland has made my life easier and I like coming to work every day.”

Corporate responsibility is a many-faceted approach to doing business. It is about taking steps to create a positive culture and environment for the business, and taking responsibility for protecting the rights and well-being of its stakeholders, and for the effect that the business has on the world.

Great organizations take corporate responsibility on as a necessary part of doing business and clearly define, articulate, and implement the strategies to this effect. The impact of the right endeavors can be life changing, creating a feel-good environment for both current and future employees, investors, and clients.

At Sutherland, our efforts to help aspiring workers like Leon, aligns with our goals to have a positive impact on our workplace, the environment, and in the communities where we operate.

Dan Lang, senior vice president of customer relations for Sutherland, says that sitting on boards of organizations that are doing the heavy lifting and writing checks is entry-level corporate responsibility. He says, “At Sutherland, we want to be a great company, known for doing good. Corporate responsibility is not an afterthought, nor should it be, but rather a foundation for the way a business conducts itself.”
We provide a safe, fair, healthy, and welcoming workplace

Great companies treat their employees, partners, vendors, and service providers fairly, openly, and ethically. They are socially responsible in areas such as fair pay, equal opportunity, and other non-discriminatory policies. They provide a healthy work culture where employees are valued, challenged, respected, and protected. Spread over 60 sites in 19 countries, Sutherland drives a culture that respects everyone’s contributions, perspectives, and experience. We embrace the rich diversity that is created within our offices, reflecting different ways of seeing things and achieving solutions.

More and more, prospective employees are looking to align themselves with businesses that maintain like values. Fifty-one percent of employees won’t work for a company that lacks strong social and environmental commitments, and among millennials (aged 27-35), that percentage is higher still, with two thirds sharing that sentiment. When employees feel they are working for a company that does great things, beyond just trying to make a dollar, this sense of purpose brings everyone together and leads to happier and more productive working environments.

At Sutherland, we want our employees to have one balanced life, where they can keep their personal interests going strong while working in a job that suits their lifestyle. We recognize that all the remarkable things that make our people who they are, make us who we are. Their aspirations and the things they do outside of the office shape the culture of our workplaces around the world.

Great companies chose to align with other great companies. Current and prospective clients want fair treatment, too. And many want to align with companies who take corporate responsibility seriously in all its aspects: workplace, community, and environment.

While organizational, or B2B buying, is often more rational and less emotional than consumer, or B2C buying, those who are making the purchasing decisions are still human beings who want to make a decision that they feel good about.

We respect and aid the communities in which we operate

Sutherland’s goal is to “impact one life for every employee.” This was demonstrated when one of its employees enrolled her son in the Rochester NY-based Champion Academy. Shon Bogar Jr. wasn’t an at-risk or troubled high school student, but his grade-point average (GPA) was 1.2, his school attendance was average, and he had little interest in anything outside of sports. After participation in the Champion Academy, an extreme mentoring program which is supported in part by Sutherland, Shon graduated on time with honors, had perfect attendance, and a 3.72 GPA.

1 “2016 Cone Communications Employee Engagement Study.” Cone Communications | Cone | Cone PR | Cone Inc | PR Agency | Boston | NYC. www.conecomm.com/research-blog/2016-employee-engagement-study.
2 https://championacademyroc.org/
Sutherland’s Dan Lang personally met with Shon’s former principal for his transcripts, obtained a recommendation letter, and gave Shon a tour of Sutherland’s Jefferson Road (Rochester, NY) facility, where he was welcomed as the first member of its apprentice program. He was shown every function of the business, met its team members, and learned how they got where they are today. The next stop for young Shon and Lang was a meeting with the Rochester Institute of Technology to meet with the admissions office and tour the campus. Shon’s story is not unique, except for the level of involvement by Sutherland. “In one day,” says Lang, “Sutherland connected many dots for him, and we did it in typical Sutherland style. As a team, we are all investing in his future and the future of ten other apprentices in a direct, hands-on manner. Our goal is to secure college admission and a potential scholarship placement for all our apprentices and to ensure they have the critical life/work skills they will need for life.”

Great companies respond when people are in critical need of assistance due to natural or man-made disasters or an assault on their liberties, livelihoods, or freedoms. As an example, after hurricane Harvey, Airbnb responded with a disaster response tool for property owners to list their available, free properties for storm victims.

Employees from many of our facilities in India contributed to improving their community by participating in efforts to provide clean drinking water and access to toilets for school children. Sutherland volunteers have established reverse osmosis plants for clean drinking water at primary schools. Inspired by their efforts, one of our clients sponsored a reverse osmosis plant for another school.

When we establish a new office, we use an existing, often vacant building, rather than building a new one, because it is better for the local economy and environment. Sustainability is very important to us.

We take environmental action seriously

There are myriad ways in which a company, especially one coming to a developing country lacking in governmental safeguards, can damage the land, water, wildlife, and natural resources. Even if a company’s waste is not toxic, it can still be a burden on the planet, filling up the landfills, outgassing, and warming the planet.

Proctor & Gamble is taking the zero-waste challenge seriously, committing to send less than 0.5% of its manufacturing waste to landfill or incineration without energy recovery by 2020, which the company says will account for 95% of the waste it produces.3
As a process transformation company, Sutherland rethinks and rebuilds processes for the digital age by combining the speed and insight of design thinking with the scale and accuracy of data analytics. We have been helping customers across industries from financial services to healthcare, achieve greater agility through transformed and automated customer experiences for over 30 years. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland employs thousands of professionals spanning 19 countries around the world.

Corporate responsibility is how Sutherland operates

Whether a company addresses the needs of the community, its employees, or the environment, or, a combination of all three, these initiatives must be an integral part of the company and its culture, not add-ons.

Sutherland has been doing business this way from the beginning. We may be quiet in reporting our good deeds, but it’s simply because doing good is part of our DNA. We care about our employees, communities, and planet. It’s what great people do, and by extension, what great organizations do. The larger the organization, the more potential it has for having a positive impact on people, communities, and the environment.

At Sutherland, we’re doing our part, striving to “impact one life for every employee” and exercising good business practices that we believe are contagious.

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