



Values in Action

SIFE Partnership Profile



We've always believed our brands have the power to improve people's lives. We also fully recognize our responsibilities grow as our business grows. Considering the wider impact of our actions is a fundamental part of who we are. SIFE mirrors this and is a great fit with our company values."

– Mike Polk, president Global Foods Home and Personal Care, Unilever

At Unilever, the search is always on for opportunities that aid and align with their mission of adding vitality to life and creating a better future – for their employees, consumers, partners and the communities they serve. That's just the opportunity they have found through a partnership with SIFE and together the two organizations are demonstrating their shared values by improving lives and making the world a better place.

What began in 1996 with a small annual giving commitment has evolved into Unilever being one of SIFE's largest worldwide donors. In addition to supporting SIFE World Headquarters, Unilever makes financial contributions to the country operations in The Netherlands, as well as Egypt, Korea, Mexico, Singapore and the United States.

One Good Brand Deserves Another

Since two billion consumers use a Unilever product on any given day, how they leverage their brands is essential to the company for preserving good will with their consumers. Pairing with SIFE is a positive avenue that demonstrates globally to buy one of their brands is to help create a better future. "That is one of the SIFE deliverables, they are a way to get the message out about what you stand for," says Art Drogue, who recently retired as Unilever's senior vice president of U.S. customer development.

In the developing countries where Unilever operates, the company looks to enhance those communities through jobs, education and even health care. Supporting SIFE's similar mission to use the positive power of business to improve the quality of life and standard of living for others also promotes and matches Unilever's global reputation. "It is good to associate the Unilever brand with a quality, like-minded organization like SIFE," says Drogue.

Reinforcing a Culture of Service

A passion for SIFE is evident throughout Unilever, including the highest levels of the company. Mike Polk, president Global Foods Home and Personal Care, is a member of the executive committee of the SIFE board of directors. Jerry Brown, vice president of industry and customer development, has been involved with SIFE for nearly 15 years and serves on the board of directors. For Joe Cavaliere, senior vice president of customer development, who also serves on the SIFE board of directors, Unilever is the second company he has worked for that supported SIFE. Although retired, Art Drogue still champions the SIFE cause and remains active with the organization as a Unilever consultant. And Kees van der Waaij, chairman of Unilever Netherlands Holding B.V., serves on the SIFE International Advisory Council of Board Chairs.



Additional members of Unilever are part of SIFE team business advisory boards. Sponsoring the SIFE World Cup since the event's inception in 2001, as well as supporting a host of regional and national competitions also provides the opportunity for Unilever employees to actively participate in SIFE as judges for these competitions. In fact, Unilever often has more representation than any other company at SIFE events and their enthusiasm for judging has caught the attention of other SIFE partner companies who now look to match this passion.

"SIFE is a cause Unilever employees can rally around," says Brown. "It is impossible to be around the students, their great ideas and all the hard work they put into their projects and not walk away energized and more invigorated."

Polk agrees. "Having a hand in developing and mentoring these students is important and the right thing to do, but the amazing part is you end up getting energy from it," he says. "It is very exciting, which is why I think so many of our people are involved and want to stay connected in this way."

Planning for a Successful Future

In addition to being a part of Unilever's existing culture, SIFE has become a pipeline for the company's future workforce. Unilever finds that SIFE students are ahead of the curve and come to the company more equipped than their counterparts. This is why Unilever is now a mainstay at SIFE career and recruitment fairs. "The projects, experience and mindset these students have is relevant for today's business," says Brown. "The caliber of these students and their professionalism really raises the bar and makes them great candidates for our team." He adds: "After spending time with these students you feel good about the future and the tremendous contributions they can make, not just to Unilever, but to the business world in general."

A growing network of SIFE alumni, like Jonathan Verno, a capabilities manager in the Consumer and Customer Solutions Group at Unilever, now attend SIFE events to recruit the next generation of employees. "I enjoy recruiting, it is a great way to stay connected and it is my way of giving back to an organization that benefited me," says Verno. And Unilever is expanding its recruitment efforts through SIFE, he says. SIFE has become a significant channel for many of the company's hiring initiatives, particularly its sales internship program. Human Resources recognizes this benefit and continues to capitalize on this rich talent pool for other areas of the company. "These students are talented and ambitious and individuals who come ready to make a difference and we know they can hit the ground running," says Verno.

Opportunities Abound

Being a company built by entrepreneurs, Unilever sees it as a natural fit to work with an organization that fosters an entrepreneurial spirit in future generations. Even during the recent economic downturn, Unilever felt so strongly about their partnership and its benefits that they increased their financial contribution. They also act as a liaison for SIFE, promoting SIFE at industry events and helping to expand its donor base. However, leadership at the company believes this is just the beginning and more can be done to employ and develop their relationship with SIFE.

"For Unilever, the key to success is collaboration and we know in SIFE we have a quality partnership," says Polk. "Together we can take our business and the business world to the next level."

About Unilever

Unilever is one of the world's leading suppliers of fast moving consumer goods with strong local roots in more than 100 countries. Our portfolio includes some of the world's best known and most loved brands such as: Axe, Bertolli, Breyers, Caress, Degree, Dove personal care products, Hellmann's, Knorr, Lipton, Omo and Vaseline. We have around 163,000 employees and generated annual sales of 40 billion Euros in 2009. Visit www.unilever.com.