

# Messaging Your Business Purpose and Leveraging Corporate and Social Responsibility

*Durée Ross, President & CEO, [Durée & Company](#)*

For the past 20 years, [Durée & Company](#) has established itself as a leading [public relations](#) and marketing agency in the South Florida market. Over the years, the agency's reputation for thoughtful, creative and substantial campaigns has earned it business nationally and internationally as well. President and CEO Durée Ross has built the company through her strong business acumen and deep understanding of the local community and its needs. Serving the nonprofit sector has always been a pillar in her business and representing these causes includes pro bono work whenever possible.

In this competitive market, Durée & Company uses a number of tactics to message its business purpose. The agency has amassed a sizable following on social media, so a strategy has been cultivated to merchandise the agency's successes and case studies. Understanding the power of a referral, and the number of eyes on any given post, social media has proven to be a fruitful tactic. Other tactics, including e-newsletters, thought leadership and attending events that reach a number of industries, are utilized on a regular basis. Durée has engaged in countless speaking opportunities, reaching audiences that include maritime and yachting professionals to those in the wellness and health industries, always opening new doors and participating in new conversations.

Durée & Company is always linking its **Corporate Social Responsibility** (CSR) initiatives to its business messaging

because the two go hand-in-hand. Durée believes in the philosophy that one cannot thrive without the other. It's an honor and a privilege to assist nonprofits, and Durée & Company encourage clients to do the same because they are the heart and soul of our communities. Furthermore, companies can create competitive advantages based on their social impact. In fact, 92% of consumers have a more positive image of companies that support social issues and environmental efforts, according to the Digital Marketing Institute.

When counseling clients, Durée & Company always recommends initiating a CSR program, if a client hasn't already. The most effective strategy for engagement and activation of a CSR and business purpose is twofold: to capitalize on a company's connections, resources and talents for the greater good and to share its successes through channels that resonate most with its audience.

To be effective, Corporate Social Responsibility must be done right! Brands that are leading the way are those who use their connections, resources and time to look beyond their four walls and how they can help improve their communities. So many companies are doing this well, but it's a local nonprofit that caught Duree's eye. Working to end the plastic crisis in oceans and waterways, 4 Ocean removes one pound of trash from the ocean and coastlines for every bracelet it sells.

And while it's hard to imagine that CRS has any negative impact, it's important to remember that self-serving and disingenuous efforts are almost always called out. Certain industries, because of their nature of work, also face an uphill challenge. For example, the pharmaceutical industry, which faces a lot of criticism, must work hard to establish CSR and promote it as a genuine and transparent initiative. Boeing's 737 Max catastrophe resulted in negative sentiment due to its lack of swift action and mishandling of the situation.

There are always lessons to be learned. When communicating, it's important to remember that an audience can be very broad, and there are a number of sub-audiences within your company's following. CSR can mean different things to different people. Durée & Company also understands that communication must be expertly crafted so that new does not appear to be self-serving. It's important to let others know that a company is actively involved in CSR, but the good that comes from the initiative must always be the end goal, not the company who orchestrated it. Give to give, not to get back.

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**About the Author:** *Durée Ross, who had the bold passion to launch her own PR agency, Durée & Company, at the age of 24 in 1999, has since been setting the bar for excellence in PR, serving the corporate, agency and non-profit arenas for local, national and international clients. An award-winning entrepreneur, she has been nationally recognized for her ability to manage crises, develop brand messages, protect and build brand reputations and create content for digital platforms. Leading a 10-member team of PR and marketing professionals from various backgrounds, Durée fosters diversity and inclusion in every aspect of her business. Durée & Company is a member of PR Boutiques International™, an international network of boutique PR firms. In addition, she is the winner of PR News' 2016 Top Women in PR award, which honors influential women who are driving the agenda for the industry and in their companies.*