



The **Calgary Foundation** recently held its fourth *In Good Company* event. Hosted by **Dave Kelly**, speakers included ATP Board member - **Tara Brister**, Co-Chairman/Director, ARC Financial Corp. - **Mac Van Wielingen**, Managing Director/Chairman FirstEnergy Capital Corp. - **W. Brett Wilson**.

The *In Good Company Speaker Series* creates a meeting place for community leaders to encourage small to medium sized businesses to engage in philanthropy and has since 2004, presented **Jim Gray, Charlie Fischer** and **Brian MacNeill**.

Dave Kelly led the lively “armchair” discussion with Tara, Brett and Mac who shared their experiences and expertise in the area of charitable giving from their perspectives as community leaders, donors and as volunteers who sit on Boards for local charities.

Tara offered this advice, “Charities need to forge relationships with donors that encompass the entire organization and the broad range of their focus, not just one person, one project.”

In discussing his community investment strategy, Mac said, “Decisions on giving are usually driven by employee’s passions. Engaging them in philanthropy is a powerful, inspirational dynamic that gives them a greater sense of meaning.”

“The marketplace is chasing talent,” added Tara. “Employees are looking for more balance in their lives and businesses who offer community involvement opportunities, will attract and retain the right people.”

Brett stated that he is “proactive” in his giving, believing in “giving while living” and is “not ashamed of the fact we use our charitable giving to market FirstEnergy.” Brett’s generosity recently led to him being featured as the Person of the Year on the cover of Avenue magazine.

All agreed, tax credits aside, developing a strategic giving plan is just as important to the sustainability of a company as developing the annual strategic business plan and there are tangible rewards for doing so.

Benefits of A Strategic Giving Plan

- allows companies to recruit and retain the best talent
- enhances community profile and reputation
- boosts employee morale, wellness and productivity
- builds a culture of leadership that strengthens the charitable sector

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