

How Businesses Can Help Animals

Businesses and businesspersons have enormous influence throughout society. They have dramatically improved the quality of life for many millions of people by determining how various components of nature shall be transformed into human wealth and how that wealth shall be distributed. The astonishing success of our species, which owes much to business and commerce, has been hard on nonhuman animals, the beings closest to humans in being able to feel and think. Business can remain profitable and help create the world we all want to live in: one in which the suffering of human and nonhuman animals alike is minimized. Here are some of the ways businesses can help accomplish that.

Responsible Policies for Animals is glad to give presentations and provide more information on these matters.

Consider nonhuman animals in making decisions that affect them.

Think of all consequences for nonhuman animals of practices that affect them. Because businesses vary, this is different for different businesses. Avoid perpetuating notions that nonhuman animals are not worthy of consideration or are only worth considering when no expense is involved. Consider all individual animals, not only "endangered species." Help restore the traditional business ethic that profit is not the only important thing.

Favor choices that minimize impact on nonhumans over those with high impact.

As opposed to merely caring, thinking it is wrong to hurt animals, or wishing animals were not abused for human purposes, take steps that help eliminate animal suffering.

Accept responsibility as far as the business's impact reaches.

Few business managers would personally rub soap in a rabbit's eyes, but many allow products to be used in their business facilities that are cruelly tested on nonhuman animals. Most people agree the ways animals are raised for food today cruel, but most businesses still use company funds to purchase animals' flesh, milk, and eggs.

Question received notions of nonhuman animals and the human-animal relationship.

Notions that animals do not suffer, think, communicate, or experience emotions have long since been proven untrue. Same with notions that human beings evolved as "hunter-gatherers," are natural "meat" eaters, or need to kill animals to manage ecosystems. Same with notions that everything in nature, including nonhuman animals, exists for human use.

Minimize resource use.

With 6.4 billion human beings now living on Earth - 1,300 times as many as existed when agriculture began and led to settled living - there is no land-use, resource-extraction, or food-production method that does not harm animals or their homes. But plant-based foods are produced using much less water, topsoil, oil, and other crucial resources than animal products. Coal-burning electrical power plants emit mercury that turns up in the tissues of animals living thousands of miles from the nearest power plant. Entire mountaintops are being removed and dumped into river valleys for coal extraction. Oil extraction will reach its peak in the lifetimes of most people living today. Changes in human ways of life that will be necessary as oil becomes more costly and less available could devastate nonhuman animals. Keeping such basic matters in mind when making business decisions and plans can make a big difference for defenseless nonhuman animals.

Encourage clientele and businesses to minimize impact on nonhuman animals.

Offer incentives for customers to reuse bags and other containers. Bags are made from trees, oil, and other scarce resources and are transported by polluting and resource-



intensive vehicles. Thirty years ago the U.S. saw a trend toward reusing bags at stores and purchasing reusable bags that can last for decades. Reusing bags is the norm in many other European countries. It should be in the U.S. as well.

Help guide the community toward humane and away from inhumane practices.

Following the lead of many baseball stadiums that now offer delicious soy hot dogs is more humane, healthier, more ecologically sound and therefore more patriotic for picnics, Independence Day celebrations, and other events than serving those nasty old flesh hot dogs. Many other choices also can do more good than harm.

Don't support promotional or fundraising activities that include animal exploitation.

Using animals for entertainment – circuses, other traveling animal acts, zoos, petting zoos, carriages pulled by horses -- is never humane. There are always better ways – for the animals and for people and businesses. Teaching children that nonhuman animals exist to entertain people perpetuates needless animal exploitation.

Assume where animals are used and/or killed, they're made to suffer.

“Humane” slaughter is a fantasy. Humans have never exploited other animals because doing so was humane. Laws and regulations do not protect animals used in any industry. People need not be otherwise cruel or unusual to inflict pain on nonhuman animals in their jobs or to accept ideologies or attitudes that help them rationalize animal exploitation.

Assume “demand” for products or activities involving animal exploitation is created by industry and does not reflect genuine human needs.

For generations, the “meat,” milk, and egg industries produced “educational” materials used to teach schoolchildren about nutrition and health. They misinformed millions of people. “Genuine leather” isn't more genuine than any other material. Animal testing is not related to the safety of any product. It is required for biomedical products and not for personal-care or household products. The imprisonment and beating of elephants and other animals do not make “the greatest show on Earth” great; they make it inferior to more humane forms of entertainment.

Don't fear change.

Just as we should not cause significant change or disruption for the sake of change, we needn't fear change in and of itself. Everything we enjoy resulted from change. Life itself came to exist through change. There never has been and never will be a time without significant change. Working together to ensure that change will be for the better and not for the worse is the task of business and society as a whole. The big changes nonhuman animals need will also benefit the vast majority of human beings.

Remember nature's contribution.

It is estimated that nature contributes about \$33 trillion each year to the human economy. The largest animal-exploiting industries – especially the flesh, milk, and egg industries – diminish nature's capacity to continue providing humans with basic needs such as clean water and sufficient topsoil to produce enough food for the large and growing human population. Recognizing nonhuman animals' basic rights not to be used for human purposes and not to be subjected to pain, hunger, thirst, or fear will help ensure nature's capacity to continue supporting human life and civilizations.

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