



International Children Aid Raised by United Sponsors

## **Striving for profit and social commitment at the same time. Is this a paradox?**

It is nothing new that companies have become aware that social commitment is good for their image and therefore also good for their business. It is not reprehensible when profit oriented enterprises give some part of their business success to persons with low-income backgrounds within our society, even when this is not done by idealism alone but furthermore done by calculation that the public values this commitment to be human or generous.

One good example for this is the charity campaign ICARUS (International Children Aid Raised by United Sponsors). It is special because many companies from very different industries and sizes have come together for a common campaign raising money or non-cash benefits for a good cause.

This campaign originated back in 2001 when its name was still „Mobil fuer Kids“ and was founded by the international transport- and logistics company World Courier and held only in Germany . The starting point was the thought that the common „X-mas rally“, to give presents to a large number of customers – from pens to diaries – is not really useful to anyone and costs a lot of working time and money. At this time, World Courier came to the conclusion in consultation with the customers to better donate this money for a beneficial purpose. The decision who will receive the donations was made very quickly. At the 12 locations where the company was represented in Germany, orphanages were contacted and without hesitation elected as the receiver of the donations. The wardens were asked in advance what the children would like to have for Christmas and after a short time, wish lists arrived at the headquarters of World Courier. Then, from TV sets for their common room to goals for football to bicycles, computer games and the entire equipment for a hobby room and other items, the presents were bought. In a one week tour through all the homes, the presents were delivered by the managing director Klaus Hachmann. „I have had no idea what to expect there“ says Hachmann today. „My imagination of children’s homes were sleeping rooms with 50 and more beds and strict nuns who supervise the kids.“

A journey of deep and formative impressions started for him. „Today, there are hardly any orphans living in those institutions“ says Hachmann. „instead, children are at home here who can not live together with their families due to familial and social problems“. He heard many often dramatic stories when he spoke to the personnel in the homes. At the end of his journey, he was convinced that this would not be the last activity of this kind, but the beginning of an initiative which has been growing and gaining importance since then.

After many discussions in connection with this first step, an idea arose to produce a calendar. The children were given a motto – for the first calendar, it was „The nicest place in the world“. Under the guidance of the teaching staff, it was discussed together with the children what the motto means for them personally, and after this they started to draw pictures according to the theme. A few months later, hundreds of pictures arrived and the 12 best ones were chosen to decorate the calendar. After that, one began to search for volunteers who could help and a layouter, web-designer, print-shop and bookbinder were found to produce the calendar at no cost.

From this point on, World Courier was not the only initiator of the campaign anymore...suddenly, there were five companies which were involved, who came together and discussed how to acquire more co-initiators and decided that whoever buys 50 and more calendars will be named sponsor. This commitment will be rewarded by putting their logo on the website [www.icarus-kids.com](http://www.icarus-kids.com) as well as on the front page of the calendar.

„Today, we have more than 25 co-initiators“ says Hachmann. „Large and small, renowned and unknown enterprises support the campaign. As of 2008, we have become international. The same campaign also takes place now in Denmark, Sweden and in the Czech Republic. And in 2009, even more countries will join in. But the nicest thing is that we don't give presents to our customers anymore, but that they buy calendars and help the children with it.“ ICARUS has raised an amount far beyond 200.000,- € of donations over the years since it was founded..

The art calendars with 4 colour printing can be bought via the homepage [www.icarus-kids.com](http://www.icarus-kids.com) at a price of 14,00 € per pcs. An amount of net proceeds of 12,00 € will go directly to the children.

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