

Friends of Casco Bay  
How We Work

**Protecting Our Brand at Friends of Casco Bay**

October 2013

Partnering with corporate for-profit ventures is an extremely tricky and very sensitive area for nonprofits to navigate. While the line, between what is a charitable exchange and what is a commercial exchange in this arena of corporate for-profit and nonprofit interactions, continues to blur all around us, we at Friends of Casco Bay are very careful – one might even say wary – when we are approached. We view these situations very clearly, very soberly, and very seriously.

Our policy is to exercise caution and diligence when a corporation seeks some sort of business interaction that would allow them to trade on our name. We will not risk our organizational reputation, mission, and credibility to help a private company's bottom line by allowing them to leverage our name, reputation or logo. We assess each opportunity on a case by case basis.

If a company wants to make an arm's length donation, that's great. Sponsorships, as well as charitable donations and volunteer time, provide our corporate partners with ways to raise their visibility while supporting our work – without leveraging our brand in advance.

Good corporate citizenship, perhaps with an eye toward triple bottom line ethics, is demonstrated by a healthy business making enough of a profit trading on its goods or services that it is able to make charitable donations. A business that professes to be unable to make a donation unless it is first able to leverage the use of the logo and reputation of a charitable organization to create more sales, seems at best naïve about the differences in the purposes of the two types of entities, and at worst, projects an image of a less than viable business.

Proposals to use our logo on a product or use our name to help leverage sales in some way, especially with vague promises to make some form of payment to us subsequently, too often cross the line.

Executive Director Cathy L Ramsdell, CPA, CGMA