

## Capstone Investment - Business All-Stars



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There was a time when altruism (selfless concern for the well-being of others) was commonplace in America. Now, it is growing rare and is not tended to in an appropriate fashion. Much like a garden, it must be cultivated and tended in order to thrive.

Today's headlines go to the coarse naysayers - the Donald Trumps, the CEOs who oppose raising the minimum wage, those who threaten to lay off workers rather than supporting their health care needs, etc. We face so many difficult problems, but the solutions must raise all boats rather than just a few. I think we need to tell the stories of altruism in the American economy and celebrate those who are selfless versus those who celebrate only their own aggrandizement. Running a successful business in a sustainable society means we can all do well.

Our first award goes to Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks. Many are making headlines about what they are doing to avoid providing health insurance in anticipation of the Affordable Care Act. Employers are on the news daily with their plans to avoid coverage thru keeping their number of employees below 50, by cutting hours so that employees are not eligible and by reducing coverage for spouses and partners. Not Howard!



Starbucks has long been an employer which proudly offers health care to as many employees as it can, currently covering those who work 20 hours a week or more. That exceeds who they are required to cover, so demonstrates a level of caring and.....altruism for its employees. Now, CEO Schultz has announced they will “continue benefits for partners and won’t use the new law as an excuse to cut benefits or lower benefits for workers.”

Now, I don't want you to get me wrong and think that Howard Schultz is a Boy Scout. He is a billionaire, runs a hugely successful business and makes an eight figure sum as CEO.

But, he is a beacon showing the right way to succeed. He is not trying to sink all the other boats in the port in order to raise his. He understands that if the employees all do well it is even better for him.

We plan to run a series of these features on business initiatives that are not widely covered, showing a variety of ways in which business owners and CEOs accomplish great things in our communities. The question of why these voices aren't being heard is an interesting and important one. Last week, the Wall Street Journal ran a commentary from T.J. Rogers of Cypress Semiconductor attacking the government, taxes on the wealthy, Obamacare, etc. He claimed to have created over 3000 permanent, high paying jobs and that therefore we should listen to him. I do not believe Mr. Rogers's claims about these jobs will stand up to much scrutiny. Meanwhile, Howard Schultz at Starbucks has created over 200,000 jobs and creates as many in a year as Mr. Rogers has in a lifetime. Shouldn't he be heard a bit louder in our country? He is an innovator and a voice of reason.

This is the first in a series of articles published by Ted Schwartz, CFP®