

About Boots Ireland

Boots Ireland is a leading pharmacy-led health and beauty retailer with 86 stores and over 2,200 employees. Customers are at the heart of Boots Ireland's business and their purpose is to help customers look and feel better than they ever thought possible. Boots Ireland is a member of Walgreens Boots Alliance, the first global pharmacy-led, health and wellbeing enterprise, whose purpose is to help people across the world lead healthier and happier lives.



The challenge

Boots Ireland was experiencing continued growth in the Irish market and had a very strong global policy when it came to CSR and sustainability. However, it faced challenges when it came to localising the worldwide policy for the Irish marketplace especially when growing at a fast pace. Initially, the company wanted a strategic approach to charity involvement and employee engagement and then went on to explore other areas of their sustainability agenda.

They approached Business in the Community (BITCI) for help.

How Business in the Community worked with Boots Ireland

Boots Ireland joined the BITCI network in 2009. We started with the area of a strategic partnership with a charity partner and staff engagement. We initially examined what criteria the company prioritised when it came to the selection of a Charity of Choice. A key factor was Boots Ireland wanted the charity to reflect their core business. As a result, we sourced a number of charities in the area of health. We presented options to Boots Ireland management and then surveyed their employees to help make a final choice.

The Irish Cancer Society was chosen and has been the Charity of Choice since 2012. Initially it was a three year partnership but the partnership has grown and evolved to become a core element of their CSR programme which includes fundraising, volunteering, raising awareness of cancer as well as early detection. We have also created seven school links for Boots Ireland in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Wexford and Donegal through our Business Action on Education programmes. These programmes were created to develop more links, within local community settings.

CASE STUDY

Initial outcomes

To date since partnering with The Irish Cancer Society, Boots Ireland has raised in excess of €1.3 million for their Night Nursing service, which is a nationwide service providing free end of life care allowing patients to remain in their own homes. This equates to over 3,800 nights of Night Nursing care and has been achieved through a programme of fundraising activities and events taking place across stores throughout the year culminating in the annual 'Boots Night Walk for Night Nurses' with over thirty 5km walks happening across the country in August each year.

Over the course of the partnership they have been awarded Best Corporate Charity Partnership by National Fundraising Ireland as well as winning the Chambers Ireland CSR Multinational Company 2017 award for "Excellence in Community - Partnership with a Charity" in their work with the Irish Cancer Society.

Boots Ireland appears in the top rankings in RepTrak's annual reputational survey.

The seven school links are supported by graduate pharmacists and store managers. Engaging with the Business Action on Education programme helps the participants develop a range of skills as well as building on local engagement within the community.



The next step in Boots Ireland's sustainability journey

Having worked with Boots Ireland on the community engagement area, we worked with them to examine other areas of their sustainability. Boots Ireland then decided to go for the Business Working Responsibly mark.

They wanted to use the Mark as a management tool and identify additional opportunities within their CSR strategy. They were the first retailer to achieve the Mark back in 2013 and were recertified in 2015.



CASE STUDY

Leadership in Sustainability

Having achieved the Mark, Boots Ireland's CEO Bernadette Lavery joined the Leaders' Group on Sustainability, which was launched in May 2018.

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Testimonials

"BITCI is a true partnership, they have helped us cement and grow our business. By working together, we have developed a roadmap for our sustainability journey. They provide essential expertise, guidance and leadership when it comes to all areas of sustainability".

Louise O'Brien, CSR Manager.

"Boots Ireland has been wonderful to work with. They have really embraced the sustainability agenda and put internal resources in place to drive this agenda throughout the organisation. They have provided a very strong foundation to grow from and my top tip for any company is to put in great internal resources that are empowered and get buy in from the top".

Elaine Stephen, BITCI Senior CSR Adviser and Boots Ireland Account Manager.

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