

**Corporate**  
**2008**  
**Philanthropy**

**BEYOND THE CHECK**

**GIVING MONEY AWAY**

Find out which companies gave the most. Inside.

SF BUSINESS TIMES | JULY 18-24, 2008

**GSB: Donating half its profits to community groups**

BY **CECILY O'CONNOR**  
 San Francisco Business Times Contributor

**T**here is no mistaking the objective behind the moniker at Give Something Back.

The Oakland company sells discount office supplies and furniture under a philanthropic business model that was replicated from food company Newman's Own. By offering customers low-cost merchandise, Give Something Back generates profits that are dispensed to various groups supporting arts, education, health care, social services and the environment.

**COMMUNITY CHANGE AND IMPACT IN PHILANTHROPY: GIVE SOMETHING BACK BUSINESS PRODUCTS INC.**

**HQ:** Oakland.

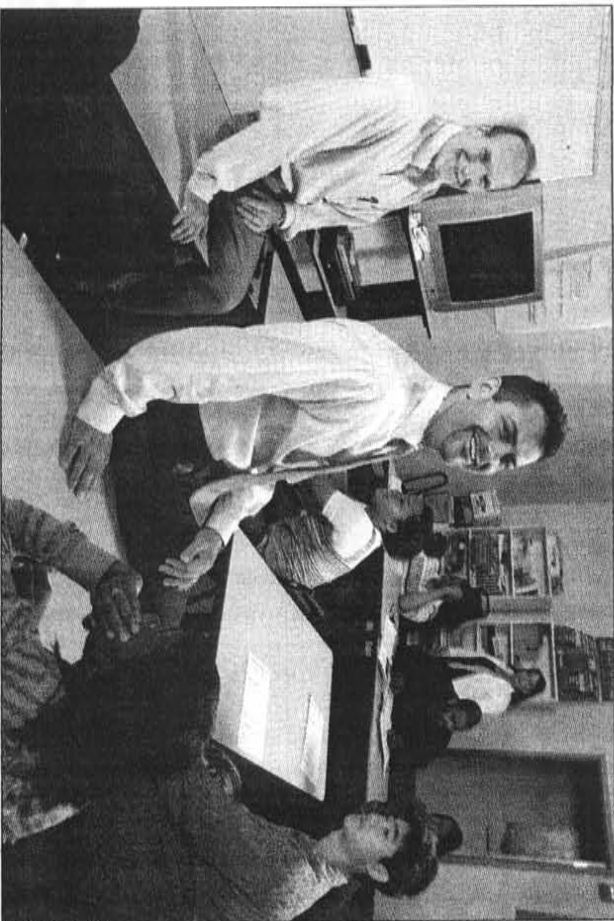
**CEO:** Sean Marx.

**2007 revenue:** \$25.7 million.

**Bay Area employees:** 70.

**Programs:** PAWS, Youth Employment Program, Habitat for Humanity.

to community groups, about 57 percent of its profits. Of that total, \$309,683 was doled out to Bay Area groups. Overall,



PAOLO VESCIA

**"We're proud to be pioneers," says Marx, center, with Hannigan.**

GSB has donated more than half of its profits every year since its founding in 1991, which brings its total donations to nearly \$4 million.

The company's staff, customers and co-founders, Marx and Mike Hannigan, choose how the funds are allocated through an annual voting process. The nonprofits that receive the most votes get the largest donations. It's a democratic process that "has allowed us to donate to grassroots organizations that are typically operating on a tight budget," Marx said.

such as YEP in Oakland to help teens learn important job skills. And partnerships often include multiple layers of support. For example, the company has provided training to YEP staff, as well as helped bridge a loan for the youth employment group's new office building.

GSB "started hiring our kids, and then said, 'We have some office supplies for you,'" said Michelle Clark, executive director at YEP. "I love the front-line investment with our young people, all the way to the coaching of our leadership on how to make our business stronger and a better fit for business partnerships," Clark added.

Creating business resources within the community is another area in which GSB is focused. It is involved with organizations such as the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, which seeks to spur economic development of inner cities.

GSB also is also one of the creators of B-Corp, a certification that's been given to about 75 companies so far that make positive social change. To that end, GSB considers itself an industry leader in sustainability, focused on selling green and recycled products, Marx said.

"It's great to see the movement really taking foot and we're proud to be pioneers in this way," Marx said.

In addition to staff-driven projects, senior managers also are involved by volunteering for boards and organizations throughout the Bay Area.

Pets Are Wonderful Support, or PAWS, received the most votes in 2007, while other groups such as Larkin Street Services, Youth Employment Partnership (YEP) and Habitat for Humanity were among the top 10 recipients. Overall, grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$23,975.

In addition to grants, GSB supports the community through partnerships with nonprofits, including education and job-training organizations. For example, GSB is keen on supporting the Bay Area in its own hiring, working with organizations

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## GIVING MONEY AWAY

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### GOOGLE INKS LEASE = 4

Search giant to shell out \$60M for S.F. space.

### SOCCER KICK-OFF = 8

Entrepreneur takes shot at pro women's team.



## Top Corporate Philanthropists in the Greater Bay Area

(Ranked by Bay Area cash contributions)

Rank	Company	Address	Phone	Web site	2007 Total cash contributions paid to Bay Area- based charities	2007 Total cash contributions paid to charities companywide	Total cash giving as a percentage of profit*	Bay Area cash giving per Bay Area employee	Type of business/ Total revenue '07/ Income before taxes '07	Top Bay Area: Corporate officer/ Giving program officer
59	Give Something Back Business Products Inc.	7730 Pardee Lane, Oakland 94621	(510) 635-5500	www.givesomethingback.com	\$309,683	\$400,033	57.24%	\$4,129	Office supplies \$25,700,000	Sean Marx CEO Alma Azarcon

Office supplies  
\$25,700,000

Sean Marx  
CEO  
Alma Azarcon