

2012 HONOREES

Environmental

MEDIUM



CEO: Ira Sharfin
Business: Office furniture and interiors
Based: Columbus
Central Ohio employees: 174
2011 revenue: \$108 million
Website: continentaloffice.com
Volunteers: 103
2011 company cash contributions to charity: \$249,710
2011 employee cash contributions raised for charity: \$58,000

**CONTINENTAL OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS**

Continental Office Environments has a three-pronged approach to philanthropy.

The company, which plans corporate moves and renovates office space, looks for causes that will improve the environment, promote the wellness of people and strengthen the community.

The company does its charity work through Continental Cares, where associates decide where to donate company resources, wrote Rachel Friedman, executive vice president of marketing, in the company's application for a Corporate Caring Award.

"It's been a tremendous success for us," she said. "It has really taken on a life of its own."

As part of Continental's commitment to environmental causes, the company recycled more than 1 million pounds of carpet, pallets and cardboard in 2011.

The company seems committed to diverting material from the landfill, said Don Penrod of Reclamation Limited in Columbus, a company that helps recycle carpet and flooring.

"They really jumped on the bandwagon," he said. "We have a good relationship with them."

The company tries to deal with other companies that follow sound environmental practices, Friedman said. Continental also looks for products to sell that are green.

Whenever possible, company employees try to pack furniture and other large items in blankets rather than in packing materials.

The company's philanthropy extends to causes that fight cancer. Employees participate in Pelotonia, the Stephanie Spielman Fund for Breast Cancer Research and the Komen Race for the Cure.

Continental donated \$249,710 and provided more than \$75,000 worth of in-kind services in 2011. Employees also raised an additional \$58,000 for area nonprofits. Company representatives served on the boards of four local organizations.

—MELISSA KOSSLER DUTTON



COURTESY CONTINENTAL OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS

Continental Office Environments employees last year helped support cancer research and awareness in addition to their everyday activities that help preserve the environment, such as recycling.