

# The Chevron Way

**An Interview with Rhonda I. Zygocki,  
Executive Vice President, Policy and Planning, Chevron Corporation**

**EDITORS' NOTE** Rhonda Zygocki oversees strategy and planning; health, environment and safety; and government and public affairs for Chevron. She graduated in 1980 from Memorial University of Newfoundland where she earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Upon graduation, she joined Chevron Canada Resources (CCR) in Calgary, as a petroleum engineer. In 1993, she was named CCR General Manager, Strategic Business Services. In 1994, Zygocki was appointed Profit Center Manager for Chevron U.S.A. Production Co., in Houston. In 1997, she returned to Canada as Chief Financial Officer for CCR. In 1999, she was named Manager of Strategic Planning for Chevron Corporation. In 2000, she was named Advisor to the Chairman of the Board for Chevron Corporation. After the merger of Chevron and Texaco in October 2001, she was named Managing Director of Chevron Australia Pty Ltd. located in Perth, Australia. In 2003, she was named Vice President of Health, Environment and Safety (HES) for Chevron Corporation. In 2007, she was named Vice President of Policy, Government and Public Affairs for Chevron Corporation.



Rhonda I. Zygocki

**COMPANY BRIEF** Based in San Ramon, California, Chevron ([www.chevron.com](http://www.chevron.com)) is one of the world's leading integrated energy companies. Chevron is involved in virtually every facet of the energy industry. The company explores for, produces, and transports crude oil and natural gas; refines, markets, and distributes transportation fuels and other energy products; manufactures and sells petrochemical products; generates power and produces geothermal energy; provides energy efficiency solutions; and develops the energy resources of the future.

## **How critical is corporate responsibility to Chevron and what are some of the key areas you focus on?**

Drawing on over 130 years of operation, we see a deep connection between a healthy business and a healthy society.

Support for the communities in which we live and work is embedded in "The Chevron Way," a statement of our values. It's also embedded in our operational processes; in all the requirements around our health, environment, and safety processes; and you'll also see it referenced as part of our growth strategy.

We have had four strategic shifts in community engagement over the course of many decades. We've moved from corporate philanthropy to social investment; from a donor to a partner with communities; from what I call building bricks to building capacity at the community level; and from promoting good causes to promoting economic development.

Our focus areas are health, education, and socioeconomic development. These are the building blocks of healthy economies that require energy for sustainable growth and prosperity.

## **Is it important that there be a clear relation between what you're supporting and your business focus?**

Absolutely. In health, our biggest programs are in the prevention, awareness, and treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, which are issues in some of the countries where we have our biggest operations. These issues impact our employees, families, and communities. Ensuring healthy workforces and communities supports a healthy business.

This is critical, because when we go into a region or country to develop energy, we are making an investment that lasts for decades. We want those energy developments to prosper in vibrant communities and economies. So our focus on health ultimately makes excellent business sense.

In education, we've put a big push on STEM—science, technology, engineering, and math. We hire scientists and engineers, and these technical disciplines are paramount to the skills we need to run our business. So we have partnerships not only at the local level with local schools to strengthen the STEM curriculum, but we have partnerships with some 90 universities around the world that we recruit from to facilitate programs with faculty to ensure the STEM curriculum is strong.

In terms of socioeconomic development, the business link is equally clear. Because we need qualified local suppliers, we support all kinds of vocational training and skills in the local supply chain. We invest a substantial amount of time training and providing programs to ensure that local suppliers are qualified to do the work we need in our business. Once they get that qualification, they are also better able to serve others in the industry and local economy as well.

## **Do you partner with other organizations in the community to have an impact in areas outside of your expertise?**

Absolutely. For example, our biggest partner in health is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It operates across multiple countries in various capacities. We work through them as a partner to leverage our dollars in countries important to us.

We also have a global education partnership with the Discovery Channel that extends to 65 learning centers across a number of countries.

Within socioeconomic development, we bring multiple NGOs and others together so we can assemble the right expertise to leverage our dollars to create greater scale and impact.

Partnerships build trust and commitment for shared economic and human progress in our local communities. There is little we do that is not done through a partnership.

## **On the giving side, do you need to have metrics in place to track impact?**

Measuring the results of corporate giving is critical and it is evolving. We want to be able to measure outcomes because if we can't make these investments sustainable, and they're not building on each other over time to create stability and growth in communities, we're really not making progress.

## **How critical is internal communication with your people on this focus to make sure they're engaged in this work?**

Our operations in each country around the world have their own internal communications programs. But we also issue a corporate CR report that is a wonderful summary of everything we do and communicate through our corporate advertising, our YouTube channel, and our Facebook page.

Beyond communications, we create opportunities for employees to get involved. Our giving and volunteer program in the U.S. is called Chevron Humankind. Between corporate matching and employee donations, it has raised some \$70 million over three years for U.S. nonprofits.

We have a big week of caring where employees from management on down get involved in the communities. In our home state of California, Chevron employees have donated over 25,000 volunteer hours.

Another area that has been prominent for us over the past five or six years is our efforts on disaster relief. Those situations draw in our local organizations and employees in a big way to support their neighbors when they need it most. ●