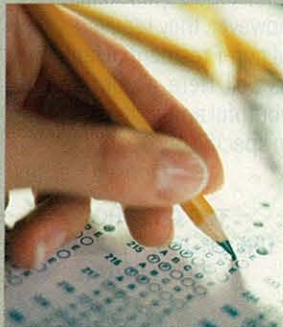


E-GIVING

CHARITY BEGINS... ONLINE

At many large corporations, a full-time philanthropy staff selects charities to support. For small companies lacking a strategic philanthropic mission, Gratus Capital Management in Atlanta has created CompanyGivingTest.com. The site uses an online questionnaire to help employers find charities from a pool of about 80



nonprofits that Gratus has vetted for soundness.

Employers (or employees) taking the survey agree or disagree with 55 statements to pinpoint causes that fit a company's values or employees' preferences. (Sample: "The problem of homelessness is perhaps the greatest tragedy of our society.") Gratus uses the results to recommend three to five charities.

The month-old service, which starts at \$2,500 for 1 to 50 test takers, has been used by the 15 employees at Access Worldwide in Atlanta, a mailing services operation that paid about \$1,000 for a customized questionnaire. It was "a great tool," says Access CEO Adam Langston. —Dean Foust

PRODUCT PEEK

WILL GE BRING GOOD THINGS TO CAMERAS?

GENERAL ELECTRIC got out of the consumer-electronics business years ago. But to woo a new generation of buyers, the company now known for wind turbines and jet engines has decided to lend its brand name to a new line of digital cameras and photo printers. "We are looking at the products that connect with young people," says Marc Bertino, president of GE Trademark Licensing.

Under a licensing agreement, eight digital cameras and a photo printer will be designed and marketed by a startup to be sold worldwide under the GE brand. In March, General Imaging in Torrance, Calif., will unveil the gadgets at the annual Photo Marketing Assn. trade show in Las Vegas. Prices haven't been announced, but the cameras will be available in the U.S. in mid-April. ("Introducing the first digital cameras worthy of the GE name," reads the slogan on General Imaging's Web site.)

GE and General Imaging executives won't disclose their financial arrangements or the names of major investors. But it's clear that GE had a big hand in setting up its licensee. Last summer it persuaded Hiroshi Komiya, the former president of camera



LICENSED TO SHOOT
Eight cameras will carry the GE name

maker Olympus Imaging, to give up retirement to start the company. General Imaging's chief designer is Takeyoshi Kawano, the man who created the Sony Walkman, the Sony VAIO laptop, and the Olympus Stylus camera series.

Few industry analysts believe putting the GE name on new gadgets will strengthen the brand. The digital camera market is already mature, they say. And there's a risk of diluting the GE name should the licensee have quality problems. Given GE's history in consumer electronics, says Geordie McClelland, director of strategy at branding consultancy Straightline International, "consumers may well assume that the products were made in-house." —Olga Kharif

NOVEL IDEA

A DARK AND STORMY SITE

AIMING TO BURNISH its Web 2.0 credentials, Penguin Books in the U.K. is hosting a wiki Web site that allows people to write a novel collectively. So far the experiment has been playfully challenging the notion of the wisdom of crowds.

Since its launch on Feb. 1, the novel-in-progress at amillionpenguins.com has grown from a single, Penguin-supplied sentence ("There was no possibility of taking a

walk that day," the opening line from *Jane Eyre*) to 36,000 words and 11 different versions with 59 characters, including a dancer who tangoes people to death. The content changes just about every minute as the wiki's 1,300 registered users worldwide rewrite the story, with some 8,500 individual edits so far.

About 75,000 people have visited the wiki, which Penguin now locks for two hours a day to give its volunteer monitors—a few Penguin employees and eight graduate students

from Leicester's De Montfort University—time to absorb changes and to delete pornography and obscenities. Jeremy Ettinghausen, head of digital publishing for Penguin UK, praises the

"astonishingly creative" work he has seen. As for initial plans to publish the novel when the five-week wiki ends: "That would be virtually impossible because of the way the wiki has evolved," he says. "But I am looking at how we could produce an e-book."

—Elizabeth Woyke

