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## Engaging with Charity and Community the Unipart Way

Unipart Group's Corporate Affairs Director, Frank Nigriello, has supported Ian Inshaw, the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, in a new bid to encourage businesses to support community groups.

Speaking at the initiative's launch event entitled "Engaging Business within the Community", Nigriello encouraged other local businesses to reap the benefits of working with charities and local not for profit groups:

"At Unipart we believe that engaging with charities and communities makes absolutely sound business sense. Experience has show us that working in partnership with community organisations can result in significant returns for our shareholders and growth in our business' strategic capability at little or no cost to the company.

"It is a fundamental requirement of any business that it competes in its marketplace by differentiating itself to gain a competitive edge. In a globalised world, however, where the traditional market levers are no longer relevant, competition is now based on the creativity, innovation and service that employees can deliver, irrespective of whether the company they work in is in the manufacturing, sales or service industry. So important are these attributes seen to be that, according to the CBI, 78% of business leaders want graduates straight out of university to come equipped with management skills.

"In this global war for talent, companies are focused on hiring the best. But hiring is expensive and it is always easier and cheaper to bring on people who already understand the business and its culture. The knowledge that three quarters of the people who will be in work in 2020 are already in work today (Leitch Report on skills) adds impetus to businesses' need to find creative ways to develop their workforce.

"Of course, employees can be developed in classrooms but at best they will only acquire theoretical knowledge. The key to developing their skills is actually putting them into roles where they gain true experience and understanding, but unfortunately organisations are often quite crowded and can't always provide people with that space to grow.

"Engaging with community groups, charities or associations, however, can go a long way to filling this gap.

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“Unipart has already used this approach for several years to develop a number of our own people. The projects involved have been many and varied. Examples include some of our graduates turning a disused bakery into a community IT centre in Barton, one of the most deprived areas of Oxford, picking up some very practical, and very valuable, project management skills along the way; some of our e-learning specialists working with school children in primary schools to create online learning modules, developing new software that has applications within the company; and one of our Directors chairing the Oxford Economic Partnership volunteering his time – and a little of the company’s – and getting invaluable first hand, personal experience working as chairman of a not-for-profit company in return.

“In a world of dwindling training budgets, companies engaging with local not for profit groups can benefit these organisations and themselves by exchanging their time and expertise for valuable experience, and saving significant sums of money that would otherwise need to be spent on expensive development programmes and courses.

“The employees involved invariably enjoy the opportunity to do things they would never encounter in their day job, testing their abilities and stretching their experiences. All in all, it’s a “win-win” situation for all concerned.”

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#### **Notes to editors:**

##### **About Unipart Group**

The Unipart Group employs more than 9000 personnel worldwide and has an annual turnover of more than £1billion. It is one of Europe’s leading logistics companies and a widely-recognised pioneer in the field of Lean implementation.

Operating across a range of market sectors, including automotive, leisure, marine, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology, Unipart offers a breadth of services from third party logistics to expert consultancy.

All Unipart sites operate according to the Group’s proprietary version of Lean known as The Unipart Way. This is a philosophy of working underpinned by tools and techniques that inspires efficiency, flexibility and outstanding customer service in any process.

Unipart also offers expert consultancy in implementing Lean principles and in supply chain management across a variety of industry sectors.

The Group’s clients include Halfords, ASOS.com, Homebase, Vodafone, 3, BSkyB, Jaguar, Severn Trent Water and HMRC.