Employee Volunteer Programs: Everything You Need to Know

CyberGrants

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Employee volunteer programs can also be called workplace volunteer programs, corporate volunteer programs, company volunteer programs, and other iterations. These programs are typically built to support a company's larger corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy or community engagement programs. Companies may have specific reasoning for building employee volunteer programs like building a positive brand reputation or increasing employee engagement.

What You'll Learn in This Guide:

• How to start an employee volunteer program

• The corporate volunteering benefits to your business

• How to encourage volunteerism within your workforce

Why Are Employee Volunteer Programs Important?

Employee volunteer programs are becoming increasingly important as the need for businesses to give back to their communities grows. In addition, employers have the resources to make a larger impact than individual volunteers because of the sheer number of employees they can deploy to causes. Not only are employee volunteer programs great for our communities, but they are in a company's best interest when the following advantages are considered:

- Improves corporate brand image on local, national and international levels

- Supports external relations with key stakeholders

- Provides employees with team building opportunities, thus increasing company loyalty and employee morale

- Provides employees with an outlet to get out of the office and break up their work schedule, thus increasing employee engagement and employee productivity

- Attractive to Millennial job seekers

- Places the company as a positive role model in the community

- Improves recruitment, retention, and engagement

- Develops employee skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication

"Employees who engaged in corporate giving programs tended to have 75% longer tenures with the company."

Corporate Volunteering Statistics

If you're still not convinced employee volunteer programs matter, here are a few corporate volunteering statistics that prove how valuable they are:

- **71%** of **employees surveyed** say it's imperative or very important to work where culture is supportive of giving and volunteering.

- A **PwC study** revealed "Employees most committed to their organizations put in **57%** more effort on the job—and are 87% less likely to resign—than employees who consider themselves disengaged."

- **88%** of HR executives believe volunteering has a positive impact on an organization's reputation. **(Deloitte)**

- Corporate volunteer programs have been shown to reduce employee turnover by as much as **50%** and increase productivity by at least 13%.

- **61%** of Millennials want to work for a company that offers volunteering opportunities.

- **86%** of employees would consider leaving their current job to work for one with an excellent corporate reputation.

- **92%** of surveyed **corporate human resources executives** agree that contributing business skills and expertise to a nonprofit can be an effective way to improve employees' leadership and broader professional skill sets.

How to Start a Volunteer Program

Starting a volunteer program can make even the most experienced HR professional overwhelmed. Having a step-by-step plan is recommended so that every consideration is taken into account. You'll want to make sure you've identified the right employees to target, you'll want to make sure the program fits the needs of your organization and employees. Setting goals, getting executive approval, delivering the news to your team, and then finally kicking off the program...phew! It's a lot of work. There's so much that goes into starting a volunteer program, but we've laid out the entire process in 10 steps:

Steps for starting a volunteer program:

1. Define your focus to align with employee and company values.

2. Tailor the program to fit your company's specific and unique needs.

3. Create achievable and granular goals to ensure you can both reach and measure them.

4. Put together a pitch to get leadership buy-in and budget access.

5. Get support from company leadership to kick off employee participation.

6. Prepare for objectors.

7. Create a meaningful experience by surveying employees on their expectations and needs.

8. Communicate to employees via email, meetings, social media and company intranet.

9. Integrate volunteerism into your culture.

10. Set quarterly milestones to adjust, tweak, check measurements and connect with stakeholders.

Volunteer Program Development Best Practices

Corporate volunteer programs are a recruiting tool, a skills development pathway and an employee engagement and branding opportunity that can be built into your business objectives. Take a look at these volunteer program development best practices to make sure you get it right:

Make it attractive to all employees:
The evidence is overwhelming that employees want to give when given the opportunity. So create opportunities for them. From large teamwork-focused volunteer outings, to smaller projects, there can be programs for everyone to participate.

Communicate across multiple channels:
People can't join if they don't know about your program. While email alerts, SMS texts or internal groups as well as traditional means like flyers and company meetings are great to spread the word, there's nothing like a complete organi-zation management system to coordinate your employees' philanthropic goals.

Provide options:
Sometimes dates and times don't work out for everyone else or people would rather give monetary gifts. Give them options to contribute even if they can't be physically there or find the time in their schedule to volunteer.

Make it mobile:
Today's workforce needs options that are available on the go. If your program is hidden behind an impenetrable firewall or buried in the company intranet, it may be extremely hard to gain company-wide traction. Offer opportunities that employees can access anytime, anywhere.

Corporate Volunteering Benefits

Corporate volunteering benefits employees and employers in so many ways! In fact, studies show that employee volunteering contributes to a happier, healthier and more engaged workforce.

How to Encourage Volunteerism

Encouraging volunteerism in your company can be done through incentives like paid time off, but did you know there are other ways to encourage employees to volunteer? In our article, **4 Quick and Easy Ways to Increase Employee Volunteering**, we share a few ideas that may be helpful to your company as well - but here are a couple hints:

- **Incentivize volunteers with gift cards** – Learn what you shouldn't forget to do if you choose this option!

- **Treat employees volunteers to lunch** – No chains, please! Opt for a locally-owned restaurant to support your local community.

Did you know?

- **67%** of managers were more likely to volunteer if their coworkers participated.

- **77%** of managers are more likely to volunteer if they are able to use their specific skill set.

- **77%** of the Millennial workforce would prefer to volunteer with their coworkers.

Volunteer Incentive Program

From offering employees paid time off to volunteer to hosting company-wide volunteer events, there's so much you can do to create a volunteer incentive program. No matter the size of your organization, you can increase employee participation in volunteering by providing incentives.

Here's a few simple tips we've pulled from these leading companies:

- Novo Nordisk's (@novonordisk) "Changing Our Communities" program is genius. It was launched to track and help employees find volunteer opportunities. Employees may submit projects they want to work on, and Novo Nordisk will make a monetary donation to the organization in honor of the employee or department.

- Make this work for your company: Can't afford to donate to every organization your employees submit? Here's a budget-friendly solution: Host a company-wide contest that invites anyone to submit ideas for a company-wide volunteer day! Set a monetary amount for project submissions like $5 or $10 or more if you want (depending on the size of your company). Then, take all submissions and stack them against each other to get all of your employees to vote for the best one.

Want Help Managing and Tracking Your Corporate Volunteering Programs? Contact Us Today!

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Employee Volunteering Articles:

Statistics Every Employer with Philanthropic Goals Should Know

Employee Volunteering Programs

How to Increase Employee Participation in Volunteer Programs

Workplace Volunteering

Increase Employee Volunteering

Celebrate National Volunteer Week

Employee Volunteer Program Benefits You Can't Ignore

Things You Didn't Know About Employee Volunteering

10 Steps for Starting an Employee Volunteer Program

Employee Giving is the Community Connection Your Company Needs

The Ultimate List of Charitable Giving Statistics for 2018