A Global Study of Employee Motivation to Engage in Corporate Volunteering Programs

Volunteer Motives
Employee volunteering was driven by 2 motivations:

- Belief in the cause
- Opportunity to use or gain skills

Company Motives
Companies hosted employee volunteering programs for a variety of reasons. The top rated were:

- Connect with community
- Provide bonding experience for employees
- Convey values to employees

Not Volunteering
Employees who chose not to volunteer expressed:

- Anxiety over new experiences
- Desire to segment their work and home lives

Volunteer Programs

- Program structure varied widely by company
- Employees viewed corporate volunteering programs positively, even if they didn’t participate
- Companies tracked participation, but not success metrics

Employee Volunteering
United Way Worldwide partnered with researchers at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business to examine corporate volunteering programs and employee motivations for participating in these programs.

United Ways around the world volunteered to assist with this study by recruiting companies with volunteering programs. Ultimately data on 52 companies were included in this study. A company representative provided information about their corporate program and a handful of employees (ranging from 3 to 10) from each company provided information about their volunteer behavior and motivations, as well as their general workplace attitudes and actions.

Why volunteer?
Employees listed a variety of reasons for volunteering, ranging from a belief in the cause to an opportunity to either socialize, gain or use skills, or benefit their employer. Ultimately, two motives emerged as the best (and the only significant) predictors of employee volunteering: belief in the cause and an opportunity to gain or use skills.

Why not volunteer?
Despite the prevalence of employee volunteering through corporate programs, some employees choose not to participate. Two main reasons emerged for this decision: either anxiety of engaging in new experiences or the desire to keep work and home activities separate.
Are there benefits of employee volunteering?

Volunteers were more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to their employer than non-volunteers. In addition, volunteering more often increased both job satisfaction and company commitment, as well as intentions to volunteer in the future.

Corporate Programs

Why host a corporate volunteer program?

Company coordinators noted a variety of motivations for hosting a volunteering program. Most notably, they had a desire to build relationships with their community, provide a socializing and bonding experience for their employees, and to convey their image and values to their employees.

Coordinators also provided information about the structure of their volunteering program. They most frequently described their program as a formally constructed, “top down” program decided by the company rather than the employees. Most programs incorporated many opportunities rather than focusing on a specific cause, and provided employees paid time-off to participate.

How do companies track volunteering?

The vast majority of company coordinators noted that they tracked employee participation in the volunteering program. Although they also believed that these programs were a success, only a minority of companies collected data to evaluate the program.

- **Track employee volunteering activity**: 82%
- **Conduct employee surveys to measure**: 14.6%
- **Rely on community partners’ (such as United Way) reports**: 7.3%
- **Compile internal metrics of program success**: 2.4%