



## Involved Workplace TOOLKIT

### **Achievers will be recognized as a *Local Community Champion***

The Involved Workplace Challenge aligns with Mayor Dean’s Impact Nashville volunteerism initiative to promote service as a core community responsibility and is part of the national Cities of Service movement. Impact Nashville seeks to leverage local human, institutional and cultural capital through impactful volunteerism directed towards our city’s greatest need areas while also promoting service as a core community responsibility. While striving to increase the number of volunteers, Impact Nashville also aims to raise the standards of volunteerism across the public and private sectors.

Being a steward of community volunteerism has many positive impacts for the individual, the organization, and the city of Nashville. Below are some ideas and suggestions on reasons why and how to create a culture of service in your workplace:

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Best practices for effective workplace volunteer programs that are more strategic to organizations, and impactful for communities, include key elements of prime importance:

- Creating a culture of service in the workplace
- Having a volunteer program or policy for employees
- Designating staff to coordinate volunteer projects
- Implementing a volunteer tracking system
- Focusing employee volunteer efforts
- Posting and promoting community and volunteer projects
- Awarding outstanding volunteers

Join the  
***Corporate  
Volunteer  
Council***  
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Workplace volunteerism is a growth industry within a growth industry as more and more organizations from large, mid, small and even mom-and-pop are weaving service into their mission. A volunteer program or policy in the workplace can have the following benefits:

#### Organization Benefits

- Living and sharing your values
- Practice good governance and ethics
- Being involved in communities
- Creates value for stakeholders
- Builds trust and relationships
- Being transparent and accountable

- Treats employees well
- Has a positive, social impact
- Contributes to a sustainable, healthy environment
- Improves relationships with surrounding community
- Improves public image
- Builds a cohesive, motivated workforce
- Increases employee performance and productivity
- Helps establish and enhance corporate or brand reputation in new or existing markets
- Helps build company reputation
- Creates and fosters team-building among diverse employees

#### Employee Benefits

- Improves leadership and interpersonal skills
- Reduces isolation and increases interaction with employees in other segments and levels of company
- Adds variety and fulfillment and increases sense of self worth
- Improves the community services employees and their families use
- Employees gain business skills through volunteering
- Improves employee morale, job satisfaction, retention and recruitment
- Increases staff motivation and productivity

#### Community Benefits

- Provides new talent and energy by increasing number of volunteers and pool of available skills
- Increases understanding between businesses and nonprofit sector
- Supports the quality of life in the community
- Gives capacity to provide community services that otherwise might be impossible
- Supports a higher quality of life and well-being for both employees' experiences and the overall community

#### **Measurement.**

Impact for the volunteer and the organization can be measured in many ways from the total number of volunteers and volunteer hours to the number of projects of involvement. Measuring impact can take a step further by gathering metrics from the impact of your employees work on the community and the impact for the experience on the employee.

These are just as vital as tracking quantitative metrics. When partnering with an agency for volunteer projects, ask if they measure the impact of project and request the information to share with your employees. This will only make the experience more rewarding and memorable for the volunteer while also providing information in future volunteer project decision making based on measurement-driven results.

### **Passion.**

The best workplace volunteer programs strike a balance among the goals of the business- the passions of the employee volunteers, and the needs of the community. The overarching vision is wanting to make a difference.

### **Partnerships.**

Partnerships are important internally and externally. Inside the company the partnership is between company goals and employee interests- combining focus with passion. In the community, partnerships with community agencies are essential because they know the needs and the expertise to meet those needs. A good partnership includes strong communication and listening skills, thoughtful organization, and passion on both sides to bring the best of skills together to meet the needs in the community.

## **Additional Benefits of an Involved Workplace**

**Recruiting and keeping the best:** A vibrant employer supported volunteering program can contribute to improved employee perceptions of the workplace as well as higher levels of motivation and retention. Companies increasingly communicate employer supported volunteering alongside other benefits such as pensions, health insurance or interest-free loans for travel to work season tickets. A survey in 2007 found that 54 per cent of employees who did not have access to a company volunteering or giving scheme said they would like their employer to have one.

**A skilled workforce:** Modern businesses need a highly skilled workforce. Training courses, team away days, and social events are necessary elements of a business that values its workforce. But they can be costly.

Employer supported volunteering provides an opportunity to develop a wide range of skills and competencies and can be an ideal complement to formal training. Employees can develop better communication and team working skills through volunteering. Volunteering can give them an opportunity to lead projects and have responsibility for managing others sooner than might be possible in the workplace. It can also expose them to a wider range of tasks than they might get in their day jobs, including planning, budgeting, staff and time management and evaluation. Meanwhile, community team challenge events provide the opportunity to build teams and new social relationships while helping the community.

### **Creating marketing and PR opportunities**

A volunteering program can provide increased visibility for a business in its local community and generate positive media coverage. For example, employer supported volunteers are company ambassadors and can enhance the reputation of their company in the community. As a result of the improvement in its image the company may also win new clients. Volunteering has also been known to spark ideas for new services and products.

### **Volunteer Resource Agency**

Working with a volunteer resource center could help redirect payroll dollars and make sourcing project more efficient. Often times, the employees working in service initiatives aren't experienced in gauging if an opportunity will work within the parameters a company has set. Our experience and pool of resources offers quick access and vetted nonprofit accessibility.

Our local volunteer resource agency, Hands On Nashville(HON), has twenty years of experience, knowledgeable staff and resources to advise you on weaving service into your workplace, including anything from creating impactful volunteer projects to implementing effective volunteer policies. For more information on HON, go to <http://hon.org> or contact Brian Williams at [brian@hon.org](mailto:brian@hon.org) or 298-1108.

### **Suggestions to the Questions on the Involved Scorecard**

#### **Culture of service**

Corporate community involvement lifts employee morale, provides excellent leadership development, and offers team building opportunities while making a lasting positive impact on the community.

Consider simple steps to develop a program like:

Identify a single impact area such as environment, positive youth development, etc. and identify needs. Based on the needs indicated, determine how your company can play a part.

#### **Having a program or policy allowing/ permitting your employees to volunteer during the week**

Understanding companies depend on their employees to be present during the workday; does holding a food or book drive make more sense for your business?

Volunteer resource centers like HON can help identify ways to add service to your work day and provide insight on workplace projects that can happen at your location and still make a huge impact on the community.

Start small when building a workday project into a company schedule. The payoff is great for your company as well as the community.

### **Having a program or policy encouraging your employees to volunteer as a formal group after work or on the weekends**

After-work projects offer additional opportunities for corporate community building. Based upon employee interest, companies are often able to take on an ongoing project such as serving dinner once a month at a specific nonprofit. Employees often share insight regarding their experience which garners interest.

### **Allowing paid time off to volunteer**

Paid time off to volunteer increases participation and maximizes impact on the nonprofit or cause selected. This policy also provides a clear indication that your company is completely invested in bettering the community.

### **Implementing day(s) of service during the work week**

Consider the impact a day of service can garner. While many companies would like to engage all of their employees at one location, spreading manpower in the community is less burdensome on a nonprofit and allows employees to choose impact areas where they feel their skills and interests can be most engaged.

### **Directing volunteerism towards one specific community, cause, or non-profit organization**

Sustained volunteerism for one focus area increases impact. If offering a variety of causes, diversifying how you volunteer is helpful. Offering a month of service where employees can choose from an assortment of vetted projects gives a la carte accessibility and flexibility.

### **Measuring the impact of employees' efforts**

Create post event surveys that offer employees a chance to provide feedback

Debrief with your community partner to identify successes and areas for improvement.

There is a finite number attached to the value of a volunteer hour. Your employees will be amazed to know the value attached to their service.

### **Having an employee volunteer reporting system that tracks volunteer engagement**

A volunteer management agency offers online volunteer tracking. Through a volunteer resource center website, your company can track all service hours and impact areas. Employees can also track volunteer hours, both as a company volunteer and individual. These can be reported to your company annually and gives an accurate snapshot of total impact over time.

**Designating staff member(s) who is responsible for coordinating volunteer and community projects for your employees**

Rotating employee appointments to a coordinator role offers skill building opportunities and an opportunity to increase responsibility levels.

Sourcing projects and needs can also be done through community volunteer agencies. Company leadership can determine which best suits a company and have the project managed through the volunteer agency.

**Leading by example by having your company's top leadership participate and promote volunteer engagement**

Leadership participation encourages employee participation and buy-in.

Community service directives put into motion by leadership establishes the desire for positive global citizenship.

**Having an award or mechanism to honor outstanding volunteer employees, teams, or departments**

Recognition drives participation and pride in oneself and his/her employer.

Recognizing overall impact and employees who drive impact is key to producing employee loyalty and service longevity.

**Posting community events and volunteer opportunities to your employees**

Posting events is a great way to start this service buzz and gauge interest. Do so well in advance of the project and encourage participation. When the project wraps up, report back to employees their impact and hours served.



## CORPORATE VOLUNTEER COUNCIL

Another way to learn more and share best practices on how to create a culture of service is to join the Corporate Volunteer Council (CVC). Nashville's CVC is a partnership among the Office of Mayor Karl Dean, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and Hands On Nashville that invites business leaders' participation in promoting corporate volunteerism and addressing critical community needs. From public education to environmental protection, CVC members will be part of the solution via creative problem solving, volunteerism and/or philanthropy. The CVC provides meaningful ways for businesses to serve the community and to connect with nonprofit and government leaders to Be The Change.

### Corporate Volunteer Councils – History and Background:

In the early 1970's, several companies in New York City were organizing their own corporate volunteer programs. These informal meetings of half a dozen corporations became known as Corporate Volunteers of New York. By 1992, more than 45 corporations had joined the New York group — and a new movement was born.

Since its formation in 1990, the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network has supported the nationwide network of Corporate Volunteer Councils (CVC). Today, there are over 100 CVC's across the United States. CVCs are also known as Business Volunteer Councils (BVC), Workplace Volunteer Councils (WVC), Corporate Community Relations Councils (CCRC), etc. The variety of names merely reflects the differing preferences from community to community.

### CVC Affects Philanthropy and Volunteerism:

The recession has impacted the way that corporations traditionally support non-profits and the communities in which they operate. From 2008 to 2009, 60-percent of companies reduced their philanthropic donations, most by more than 10-percent. Companies are choosing to give time and goods rather than money. According to a survey conducted by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, when asked how the recession has changed their philanthropy, companies by far, have said they were encouraging employees to volunteer more. "Companies and employees are seeing their communities in greater need, but they don't have as much cash to give," Coady says.<sup>1</sup>

In general, volunteerism is increasing. Companies that want to attract the best recruits are trying to incorporate that into their corporate culture. "This generation of 20-somethings coming into the workforce have gone through high school and colleges that have service volunteerism requirements. And they define philanthropy by action, not cash," says Evan Hochberg, national director of community involvement for Deloitte, an accounting and consulting firm.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, Deloitte started allowing employees to include volunteer work

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.usnews.com/mobile/articles\\_mobile/recession-driving-changes-in-corporate-philanthropy](http://www.usnews.com/mobile/articles_mobile/recession-driving-changes-in-corporate-philanthropy). Obtained online, 10-19-2011.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

for nonprofit organizations as paid time, and staffing the work employees do for nonprofits the same way the firm does for paying customers. Deloitte set a three-year goal to do \$50 million worth of volunteer work by 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Corporate Volunteerism Matters to Communities/The benefits:

Corporate volunteering recognizes the value of business engaging with people in the community.

The benefits for business are many:

- It improves their reputation.
- Improves internal culture.
- Increases productivity and long-term sustainable future in the community.

For employees, it improves their professional development, leadership opportunities, and morale. It also allows them to contribute in a meaningful way to their communities.

Businesses can positively impact their bottom lines by developing employee volunteer programs in line with their core business goals are in turn improving their bottom lines, recruiting and retaining more satisfied and productive employees, and enhancing the quality of life in the communities where they do business and where employees live. With the growth of workplace volunteerism, partnerships help support the capacity of businesses, both large and small, to develop and manage employee volunteer programs, and to maximize the benefits of volunteerism for businesses, employees, nonprofits, and the community. CVCs, in cooperation with local Volunteer Centers and nonprofit organizations, are productive, collaborative means to support employee volunteerism and to develop successful employee volunteer programs.<sup>4</sup>

For more information on CVCs and the benefits of CVCs, the following articles are referenced:

1. “Best Practices in Employee Volunteerism: Corporate Volunteer Councils, Volunteer Centers, and Nonprofit Organizations Partner to Strengthen Communities and Improve Performance,” By Chris Hahn, University of Texas, Austin, December 2003 - <http://www.serviceleader.org/instructors/studentpaper1#4>

2. “Principles of Excellences for CVCs”:  
[http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/Principles\\_of\\_Excellence\\_for\\_CVCs.pdf](http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/Principles_of_Excellence_for_CVCs.pdf)

3. The Toolkit from HandsOn Network:  
<http://www.handsonnetwork.org/companies/corporatevolunteercouncils>

4. <http://www.bvuvolunteers.org/about-us.htm>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Best Practices in Employee Volunteerism: Corporate Volunteer Councils, Volunteer Centers, and Nonprofit Organizations Partner to Strengthen Communities and Improve Performance, By Chris Hahn, University of Texas, Austin, December 2003 - <http://www.serviceleader.org/instructors/studentpaper1#4>; Obtained online, 10-19-2011.



**Nashville's Corporate Volunteer Council  
Meeting Dates 2012  
CVC meetings run from 8am to 9am**

January 18, 2012	C3 offices
April 18, 2012	Hands On Nashville
August 15, 2012	Hands On Nashville
November 14, 2012	Hands On Nashville

For more information on the Corporate Volunteer Council, contact Brian Williams at [brian@hon.org](mailto:brian@hon.org) or 615-298-1108.