

What motivates employees to volunteer? Hint: The answer isn't personal recognition

by LuAnne Speeter

If your company's social responsibility program includes volunteerism, it can have tremendous impact not only on the community, but also on your company and employees.

How the community benefits

- Increased access to resources
- Improved health and welfare
- Enhanced economic development
- Community needs are addressed

How your company benefits

- Enhanced reputation
- Increased product/service awareness
- Raised productivity
- Improved staff satisfaction and retention

How your employees benefit

- Increased community awareness/involvement
- Heightened employee satisfaction
- Acceleration of professional development
- Opportunities for leadership
- Improved attitude and outlook

Source: [Corporate Volunteerism Council – Twin Cities](#)

But what motivates employees to offer their time and skills to a charitable cause? The answer may surprise you.

In past years, personal recognition was the primary motivation for corporate volunteering, according to [LBG Associates](#), the firm that launched the study involving more than 8,000 employees in 36 companies. However, the latest study, conducted from late 2008 to early 2009, showed the following:

When it comes to recognition, employees rank “a donation made to my charity when I volunteer” highest among all other forms of recognition.

When asked to rank the reasons they volunteer, employees listed the following on a 1-5 scale, with 5 as “very important”:

- The cause is important to me personally **(4.35)**
- Community organizations are experiencing financial hardship **(3.61)**
- My volunteering results in a donation for the organization from my company **(3.53)**
- The cause is important to my company **(3.35)**
- The charity came to the company to talk about what they do for the community **(3.08)**

When you’re selecting a charitable organization and you want maximum participation from your employees:

1. Start by looking at several options that are relevant to the majority of your employees’ interests and skill sets.
2. Choose venues that are local and easily accessible.
3. Ask employees to vote among the charities and go with the most popular choice(s).

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