

research snapshot

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The Benefits of Employee Volunteering

What is this research about?

Corporations use Employee Volunteering (EV) to improve its community and employee relations. EV is when employees contribute their time and resources to engage with their local community. For example, employees at a public relations (PR) firm can give their time to charities that need help with PR-related problems. This research is about how EV creates social capital, which refers to the value of social networks and interactions between people.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers selected three multinational corporations in the United Kingdom, which have an EV program. They interviewed employees from these companies and analyzed their descriptions about exchanges with others while doing volunteer work.

What did the researchers find?

Employee Volunteering created value for both, community organizations and corporations, through the following ways:

What you need to know:

Employee Volunteering helps companies build partnerships with their community. Employees, community organizations and the public at large, all benefit from the give-and-take relationships.

It provided community organizations with resources that they needed to solve problems and expand their circle of influence.

It gave corporations a reputation of being socially responsible for giving back to the community.

Employees used both formal connections within their companies, and informal connections outside of work, to mobilize resources for volunteering. For example, a volunteer in charge of developing an environmental garden at a school had a limited budget and could not afford all the tools that were needed. To complete the task, he would email his coworkers and request them to donate any spare gardening tools that they owned.

Companies built relationships with community partners through team challenges, mentoring in person and through email. Teamwork and frequent interactions led to strong bonds and

trust, while mentoring via email was used by people who did not have a lot of time.

Employees claimed that they benefitted from volunteering. Benefits included sharing knowledge, gaining new skills, understanding community issues and inner satisfaction. Community organizations also benefitted through enhanced staff skills and knowledge, and access to resources. Exposure to the 'business world' helped them attract more corporate support in the future.

How can you use this research?

This research may be used by companies to improve their EV schemes. It may also be used by local charities or NGOs to seek assistance and resources from companies.

About the Researchers

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