

Research on Volunteerism

Increasing employee retention, attraction, morale, team building

Presented on these pages are numerous studies confirming that when employees engage in volunteerism, the result is increased retention, attraction, morale, and other benefits.

According to the 2003 Corporation for National and Community Service survey 63.8 million Americans volunteered via their companies.

Sources of data or quotations are noted in italics at the end of each section.

“By paying more attention to community needs and pledging valuable skilled services to nonprofit organizations, companies are, consequently, strengthening **employee retention, recruiting, teamwork and morale.**”

“Giving Back, Giving Time” HR Magazine April 2008 Volume53 Issue4

According to a 2000 survey of 248 employee volunteer managers, 97% felt employee volunteering provided a way to **improve teamwork**, 58% use the volunteer program for **recruitment and employee retention**, and 100% thought volunteering **improved the company’s image**.

“Increasing Small Business Volunteerism: Overcoming the Cost Factor” Kilcrease, Kelly M. Ivey, Business Journal

“The top business benefits associated with supporting volunteer activities included:

- providing personal development opportunities for employees (76%)
- helping to **motivate** staff (72%)
- bringing new skills/experience/ideas into the organization (69%)
- enhancing corporate reputation (69%) or making it more respected (60%)”

“Even fewer promote support for volunteers as a benefit to existing or potential employees. This is despite a growing desire amongst employees that such activities should be supported. This gulf between attitude and action means that many employers are missing an increasingly valuable opportunity in the ongoing battle to attract and retain the best employees. In the survey, 40% thought that providing support for volunteer activities can play an important role in improving staff retention and 33% thought it helped attract high quality employees. 69% said that their organization’s policies on support for volunteering should be better publicized.”

Author Claire McCartney (Senior Researcher at Roffey Park Management College) said:
"Volunteering is becoming increasingly important for employers - and not just for their corporate responsibility. It is clear that well managed policies to support staff wishing to take part in volunteer activities can deliver significant business benefits in areas such as staff development and retention."

"The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development 2005 Flexible Working survey of 585 UK organizations, found that staff retention is the main reason for organizations introducing flexible working practices.
In the same survey, of HR professionals, 70% said that flexible working had a positive effect on employee motivation."

"Volunteering for a successful business - working opportunities report"
http://www.sabre.mod.uk/files/pdf/Volunteering_for_a_successful_business%20-%20summary_report.pdf

"...[volunteer] programs improve **employee retention and morale, aid in recruitment and build better teams**. Half of the respondents reported a direct correlation between volunteerism and profitability."

"These efforts are paying off in the way of recruiting and retention. ""We are finding more and more that people are joining the company not just for the job and the money, but **for a sense of shared culture**," says Allen."

"Volunteering to Succeed" By Kenneth Hein and Helena Miele (allbusiness.com)

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- Family Volunteering increases employee morale and builds a positive attitude in the workplace.
 - Family Volunteering improves the workplace by breaking down barriers among employees, reinforcing teamwork and building commitment.
 - Family Volunteering in the workplace adds an extra dimension of sharing, caring and creates a sense of community among employees.
 - Family Volunteering enhances quality time for families by allowing learning opportunities and positive role modeling for children.
 - Family Volunteering provides opportunity for skill development in such areas as leadership, problem-solving, and public speaking, as well as improved organizational skills.
 - Family Volunteering has a positive impact on a company's image in the community and demonstrates the commitment of a company and its employees to the communities in which it is doing business.

http://www.pointsoflight.org/downloads/pdf/networks/business/membersonly/Business_Benefits_of_Family_Volunteering.pdf

“Businesses that promote Family Volunteering report significant results:

70% report improved public and community relations
57% report greater employee commitment
15% report more productive employees
12% report fewer hours lost for family responsibilities”

Points of Light (.org)

“Communities are suffering due to the growth of secular societies but at the same time we can really bridge that expanding gap through volunteering. Volunteering is ultimately about helping others and having an impact on people’s wellbeing. What better way is there to connect with your community and give a little back? As a volunteer, you certainly return to society some of the benefits that society gives you.”

“A survey carried out by Time Bank through Reed Executive showed that among 200 of the UK’s leading businesses

- 73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without
- 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills
- 94% of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted”

“The energy and sense of fulfillment can carry over to a work situation and sometimes helps to relieve tensions and foster new perspectives for old situations. Sometimes a volunteer experience can lead you to something you never even thought about or help you discover a hobby or interest you were unaware of.”

“Volunteering is a brilliant way to get life experience.”

“Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Both the recipients of your volunteer efforts and your co-workers can be a rich source of inspiration and an excellent way to develop your interpersonal skills.”

“Ten Professional Developmental Benefits of Volunteering,” by Mary V. Merrill

“This research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.”

“Volunteering also leads to improved physical and mental health.”

“Recent studies on the relationship between health and volunteering demonstrate that the benefits of volunteering are not limited to the recipients of the volunteer services.”

“The results of a survey of a large, ethnically diverse sample of older adults showed no association between receiving social support and improved health; however, the study did find that those who gave social support to others had lower rates of mortality than those who did not, even when controlling for socioeconomic status, education, marital status, age, gender, and ethnicity (Brown et al., 2005).”

“Research also suggests that volunteer activities offer those who serve more than just a social network to provide support and alleviate stress; volunteering also provides individuals with a sense of purpose and life satisfaction.”

“A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment that an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities (Herzog et al., 1998).”

“Researchers found statistically significant, positive relationships between volunteering and lower levels of depression.”

“A study found that, in general, volunteers report greater life satisfaction and better physical health than do non-volunteers, and their life satisfaction and physical health improves at a greater rate as a result of volunteering (Van Willigen, 2000).”

“A study of data from the Americans’ Changing Lives survey found that those who volunteered in 1986 reported higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life, and physical health, as well as lower levels of depression, in 1989. Similarly, those in 1986 who reported higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life, and physical health, as well as lower levels of depression, were more likely to volunteer in 1989 (Thoits and Hewitt, 2001).”

“A study of the Americans’ Changing Lives survey found a more moderate level of volunteering was necessary for health benefits. Those individuals who volunteered at least 40 hours per year, as well as those who volunteered with just one organization, or group, had the lowest risk of mortality (Musick et al., 1999).”

“States with a high volunteer rate also have lower rates of mortality and incidences of heart disease.”

“The Health Benefits of Volunteering” From the Corporation for National and Community Service by: Robert Grmm Jr., Kimberly Spring, & Nathan Dietz