

The Case for Corporate Volunteering

Author: Limor Regular, Partner at Infolinks Media





Why should employers offer volunteering opportunities to their employees?



Infolinks CEO Bob Regular along with Sales Associates Conor O'Brien & Daniel Rozzi unload a truck of supplies.



Corporate Volunteerism

It was well established that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) allows businesses to drive positive social change by implementing strategies that benefit society, the company, its employees, and stakeholders.¹ Nowadays, volunteering and community involvement has become a key strategy for CSR.² A recent survey by Deloitte³ showed that employees do not volunteer as much as they like and would volunteer more often if they understood their contribution better. Hence, companies that provide volunteering opportunities and help employees understand how their actions contribute to the community can benefit from increased morale, workplace atmosphere, and brand perception.³ A culture of corporate volunteerism is also linked to increased employee engagement and retention, supports employees' health, attracts recruits, increases brand recognition, and improves the company's financial performance.⁴

¹ McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. (2001). Corporate Social Responsibility: A Theory of the Firm Perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 26(1), 117–127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259398>

² Logsdon, J. M., & Wood, D. J. (2002). Business citizenship: From domestic to global level of analysis. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 12(2), 155–187. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3857809>

³ *Deloitte Volunteerism Survey*. Deloitte. (2017). <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-2017-deloitte-volunteerism-survey.pdf>

⁴ Caligiuri, P., Mencia, A., & Jiang, K. (2013). Win-win-win: The influence of company-sponsored volunteerism programs on employees, NGOs, and business units. *Personnel Psychology*, 66(4), 825–860. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12019>

Infolinks Media Community Engagement Program

Infolinks Media worked with two non-profit organizations – Feed the Children in New Jersey, Boys and Girls Club in Paterson and Passaic – to form the company's first community engagement and volunteerism program. Participation in corporate volunteering has several workplace outcomes.



FEED THE CHILDREN

Increased Employees Engagement and Retention

Company-sponsored volunteering initiatives contribute to employee engagement, a sense of purpose, pride in the employer, personal growth, and job satisfaction. Companies can enhance employee engagement by supporting their employees' interests in such programs.⁴

A community involvement study published by the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship⁵ reported that nearly all companies (94%) offer employee volunteering programs or are developing one. Among the companies that track the connection of employee volunteering to employee engagement, 96% find that employee volunteers are more engaged than non-volunteering peers.

⁴ Caligiuri, P., Mencia, A., & Jiang, K. (2013). Win-win-win: The influence of company-sponsored volunteerism programs on employees, NGOs, and business units. *Personnel Psychology*, 66(4), 825–860. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12019>

⁵ *Community involvement study*. Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship. (2021). <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research/reports/community-involvement-study.html>

THE CASE FOR CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

A Gallup⁶ report shows businesses that have higher levels of engaged employees benefit from higher business outcomes, such as a 23% increase in profitability, 18% higher general productivity, a 64% decrease in safety incidents, up to a 43% decrease in turnover, and an 81% decrease in absenteeism.



Increased Attractiveness to Recruits

By creating volunteering opportunities, companies become more attractive to employees. A study published by Stanford University⁷ shows that more socially responsible organizations attract higher levels of MBA candidates. The organization's reputation for ethics – an important component of CSR – was as important as financial benefits in selecting a job.⁷

Similarly, Generation Z and Millennials are more interested in the company's CSR practices and programs than salary and benefits packages.⁸ Millennials are primarily motivated by a desire to give back to the world and increasingly search for employers that allow and enable them to create a positive impact. Cone⁸ reported that 74% of employees find their job more fulfilling when given the opportunity to

⁷ LaPlante, A. (2004, January 1). MBA graduates want to work for caring and ethical employers. Stanford Graduate School of Business. <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/mba-graduates-want-work-caring-ethical-employers>

⁸ Cone Communications employee engagement study. Cone. (2016).
<https://conecomm.com/2016-employee-engagement-study/>

make a positive impact at work, 93% want to work for a company that cares about them as an individual, and 51% will not work for a company that does not have strong social and environmental commitments.



Increased Benefits for the Organization

Employee volunteering programs can benefit organizations in many ways. Godfrey and Hatch⁹ show that corporate community involvement investments provide an opportunity for companies to build long-term loyalty, legitimacy, trust, or brand equity that, in turn, reinforce other strategic objectives of the organization.

A McKinsey & Company¹⁰ report that looked into the value that environmental, social, and governance programs found that they can improve companies' financial performance. CFOs, investment professionals, and Corporate Social Responsibility professionals participating in the McKinsey & Company¹⁰ study agreed that CSR programs contribute to the organizations' performance by maintaining a good corporate reputation, attracting and retaining talented employees, and meeting society's expectations for good corporate behavior.

⁹ Godfrey, P., & Hatch, N. (2007). Researching corporate social responsibility: An agenda for the 21st Century. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 70(1), 87-98.

¹⁰ McKinsey & Company. (2019, February 19). *Valuing corporate social responsibility*. McKinsey & Company.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/valuing-corporate-social-responsibility-mckinsey-global-survey-results>

Our Program

Increased Benefits for the Organization

Our program goals were to first understand the needs of our neighboring communities. To help determine what communities around us need the most, we reached out to various community leaders in underprivileged areas such as Paterson, NJ, asked questions, listened, and learned. Second, we identified ways in which we can engage and contribute to our community, and third, we offered our employees volunteering opportunities. The last step of the program was the evaluation of its outcomes.

Increased Benefits for the Organization

Infolinks Media partnered with Feed the Children for a Back-to-School event for over 400 children and families in the cities of Paterson and Passaic. The 8-hour event was hosted at the Boys & Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic's main Clubhouse. It included opportunities for families to take home back-to-school essentials and healthy meal kits and partake in various activities on site, including reading and literacy games.

The Results

A post-volunteering survey and meeting with Infolinks Media employees found that participation in hands-on corporate volunteering **increased** employee engagement, a sense of purpose at work, a sense of pride in the company, personal growth, and job satisfaction.

**"It was a joyful, bountiful, beautiful way to end our Summer Programming and kick off the school year and something we will not soon forget."
– Wendy McGuire, CEO Boys & Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic**

Conclusions

Employee engagement programs focusing on giving back to the community enrich the employee and the employer. Increasingly more today than ever, the younger workforce expects their employers to provide workplace environments where they can achieve fulfillment, meaning, and giving back. Companies that offer volunteering opportunities to their employees can attract and retain top talent, boost productivity, instill a sense of purpose and meaning, and improve employee engagement. Corporate volunteering is also a powerful tool for increasing brand recognition and improving the company's financial performance.

About Infolinks Media

Headquartered in Northern New Jersey, Infolinks Media is a leading digital media company that uses proprietary technology to connect brand advertisers to exclusive, transparent, and viewable ad inventory across thousands of top publishers. Infolinks Media is committed to providing quality advertising services to its clients, and we pride ourselves on responsive personal service and support to ensure our customers succeed. Furthermore, Infolinks Media envisions a digital space where advertising can support businesses and help society at the same time. Giving back to our community is a priority for our team.

In 2021 Infolinks partnered with Feed the Children and, in 2022, with The Boys and Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic to create a community engagement and volunteering program for its employees.

Visit infolinks.com for more information.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Paterson and Passaic

As a leader in youth services and a pillar of the community for over 100 years combined in the cities of Paterson and Passaic, the Boys & Girls Club focuses on academics, healthy habits, and social-emotional learning. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Club continues to adapt to the community's needs, the Paterson and Passaic Clubhouses, and 13 school-based units where after-school care is provided. The Boys & Girls Club currently provides a safe haven for children to attend, provides dinner and a healthy snack daily, and offers supplemental education to combat learning loss and keep their minds and bodies strong.

Visit bgcppnj.org for more information.

About Feed the Children

Feed the Children is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to feeding hungry kids. Feed the Children envision a world where no child goes to bed hungry. In the U.S. and internationally, they are committed to helping families and communities achieve stable lives and reducing the need for help tomorrow while providing food and resources to help them today. The organization distributes product donations from corporate donors to local community partners, provides support for teachers and students, and mobilizes resources quickly to aid recovery efforts when natural disasters strike. Internationally, Feed the Children manage child-focused community development programs in eight countries.

Feed the Children welcomes partnerships because their work would be impossible without collaborative relationships.

Visit feedthechildren.org for more information.