Corporate volunteering:

Connecting People, Participation & Performance

The MGSM CSR Partnership Network
The MGSM Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Partnership Network is led by MGSM faculty leader of Global Citizenship, Dr Debbie Haski-Leventhal. The Partnership Network was launched with the aim of creating an evidence-based dialogue on various aspects of CSR, creating shared knowledge and providing participating organisations with a strong network, inspirational practices and tools to enhance CSR and their employees' engagement with it.

The MGSM CSR Partnership Network is based on a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectorial collaboration and includes selected Australian companies, not-for-profit organisations and governmental departments known for their CSR initiatives. In 2013, members include Johnson & Johnson Medical, Johnson & Johnson Pacific, Janssen, the NAB, PwC, IBM, AMP, Qantas, Brookfield Johnson Controls, the Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the NSW Department of Citizenship, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity Australia and the NSW Centre for Volunteering.

The MGSM CSR Partnership Network offers its members workshops, events and participation in an annual study on various aspects of CSR. This first study was enabled by our lead sponsor, the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, and examined corporate volunteering, participation and engagement. In 2014 a qualitative study will examine two additional aspects of CSR: disaster responsiveness of businesses in Australia and creating shared value.

For more information, to join and support the MGSM CSR Partnership Network please contact research@mgsm.edu.au
It is our great pleasure to share with you the results of the first annual study, led by MGSM, sponsored by Johnson & Johnson and conducted in collaboration with companies, not-for-profit organisations and government departments that comprise the MGSM CSR Partnership Network.

The importance of this research report lies in the process as well as the findings. This research on CSR is unique in that it involves a multi-sector partnership that encouraged ongoing dialogue and shared learning. Through workshops, members of the Partnership Network helped to finalise the survey and to later distribute it within their organisations. The enthusiasm and support of the Partnership Network members and the remarkable participation of their employees (over 4,100 responses) demonstrate that corporate volunteering is very important to all stakeholders and has the potential to play a more central role in business and the community.

Furthermore, the findings of this report are extremely positive. Having their voices heard on matters of corporate volunteering and CSR, employees showed that corporate volunteering contributes to the overall value of their work. They further demonstrated that meaningful corporate volunteering will not only increase participation but will also lead to employee engagement in general, including commitment and retention. The findings of this report present business with an untapped vehicle that can make a difference in our communities while as increasing workplace commitment, engagement and satisfaction. Most importantly, the findings show that CSR is no longer a “nice-to-have” sideshow in business operation, but a growing expectation of all stakeholders, especially employees.

Dr Debbie Haski-Leventhal, MGSM, September 2013
The Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, through its Credo, written in 1943 by Robert Wood Johnson, has a proud heritage of corporate social responsibility. From its foundation in 1883 Johnson & Johnson has always sought to be more than a business focused on financial measures. Whether supporting communities affected by natural disaster, working to address infant mortality as part of the Millennium Development Goals or simply getting behind the disadvantaged in the local communities around our offices world wide; we have always sought to make a difference.

In the 1970s Johnson & Johnson was faced with a choice; to move out of its historical head office in New Brunswick, USA to more modern facilities in New York, or stay in a small, local community. By looking to our Credo and its focus on the “communities in which we live and work” the decision was made to stay in the local community. As a result we formed a partnership with other businesses, local community groups and the local Government to re-vitalise and renew the New Brunswick area.

Wherever we operate around the world we seek to emulate this approach. The MGSM CSR Partnership Network, a multi-sectorial and a multi-stakeholder collaboration, aimed at creating evidence-based dialogue on CSR and to inspire others, was therefore a natural fit of our business. We are proud to be the lead sponsor of this important initiative and to reinforce Our Credo and its commitment to customers; employees; the community and environment and shareholders.

We are proud to be able to play even a small role in encouraging and inspiring other companies to get involved in their local communities and contribute to research that will make investment in this area more effective. This study provides a unique opportunity for businesses, not-for-profit and the public sector to work together in improving the lives of Australians. Hopefully this is just the first step in a long running and successful partnership.

We would encourage any other businesses that read this report to consider joining this network in the future. It is only through working together, like we did in New Brunswick, that we can truly make a long-term difference for Australians.

**LEAD SPONSORS**

Gavin Fox Smith – Managing Director, Johnson & Johnson Medical

Chris Hourigan – Managing Director, Janssen

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The purpose of this report was to assess the factors that contribute to participation in corporate volunteering and to employee engagement. This research was undertaken as part of the MGSM CSR Partnership Network collaboration, funded by the lead sponsor Johnson & Johnson. Over 4,000 employees from our partner organisations contributed to this project by providing survey responses. The collected data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to create a clear, succinct and comprehensive illustration of the critical elements that are involved in corporate volunteering participation rates and that determine the relationship between corporate volunteering and employee engagement.

The most important motivator for participation was the belief that corporate volunteering makes work more meaningful.

There are several major findings of this study. Whilst employees demonstrated a high level of corporate volunteering awareness, there exists a large gap between this awareness and their actual participation rates. The most important motivator for participation was the belief that corporate volunteering makes work more meaningful and the most important contribution to increasing participation is to provide volunteering experiences that are both meaningful and accessible. Furthermore, strong leadership is required, as employees want to see organisational management being committed to corporate social responsibility programs. Our strongest findings, however, relate to employee engagement. Employees who participated in corporate volunteering scored significantly higher than non-volunteers on all measures of engagement with their organisation, as well as on most measures of job satisfaction.

These results of the first annual study of the MGSM CSR Partnership Network lead to several key recommendations. To increase participation in corporate volunteering, employees need greater flexibility regarding time, location and available options, as well as better communication about the availability of these options. This improved communication should also extend to informing employees about the outcomes and impact of their organisation’s corporate volunteering programs. Meaningfulness of the experience can be enhanced through drawing together the strengths of both the company and the employee, such as through skill-based volunteering, which contributes to the development of strategic CSR. Finally, maintaining and enhancing employee engagement can be achieved via the provision of appropriate corporate volunteering programs, and this should be actively pursued by organisations seeking to maximise retention rates and strengthen organisational culture.

**Executive Summary**

**Key findings:**

- Up to 90% of the 4,127 employees surveyed were aware of corporate volunteering options and up to 60% participated in corporate volunteering in the last 12 months.
- The number one ‘very important’ reason given for participating in corporate volunteering was ‘it makes work more meaningful’.
- Corporate volunteers were very satisfied with their volunteering experience (83% satisfied), very likely to continue (87%) and very likely to recommend it to their friends (75%).
- 90% of volunteers indicated that ‘feeling that we are doing something meaningful’ would impact their decision to continue in the future, followed by ‘making a real difference in the future’ (87%).
- The most common barriers were ‘not being asked’ (38%), ‘being too busy’ (36%), ‘preferring to volunteer privately’ (31%) and ‘preferring to donate money than to volunteer’ (21%). However, 60% of non-volunteers indicated they are ‘likely to join in the future, if they would only be given the right opportunities’.

Corporate volunteering is positively related to employee engagement, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This presents companies with an excellent tool to impact not only the communities but also employees’ wellbeing and the financial bottom line.
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and corporate volunteering are beneficial vehicles to assist companies in creating social impact, making a difference in the community and engaging employees in activities that can make their work more meaningful.

CSR is usually perceived as an activity aimed at external stakeholders: from consumers to the community and from shareholders to the government. However, firms across the globe have come to understand that they need to be genuinely responsible for their internal stakeholders as well: their employees. To do so, they need not only to behave ethically towards them, but also to engage them in the discourse and actions of CSR. Corporate Social Responsibility is defined as ‘business decision making linked to ethical values, compliance with legal requirements, and respect for people, communities, and the environment around the world’¹. These ideas now resonate with many employees and they have become an important element in the workplace.

One of the more successful ways to engage employees in a company’s CSR is through corporate volunteering; that is, employees giving their time to help a social cause, with the support of their employer². This allows companies to create a more meaningful impact in society and employees to do something that is aligned with their personal values. Additionally, actively involving employees, creating engagement and enhancing reputation are beneficial for the financial bottom line. However, for corporate volunteering to achieve all of these positive impacts, it has to be strategic; it needs to be tied to the company’s competitive advantage, to build on employee motivations and skills and, most importantly, to create shared value.

Creating Shared Value (CSV) is about shifting away from corporate philanthropy to addressing social issues through the company’s competitive advantage, based on the understanding that the competitiveness of a company and the health of the communities around it are mutually dependent. It is no longer about businesses acting as charities, giving money randomly to various causes, but businesses acting as businesses, with their particular knowledge and resources, to address social problems.

How do we create corporate volunteering that is meaningful to all stakeholders? What are the keys to increasing participation and boosting morale? How can we tie together people, participation and performance?

To answer these questions, the first study of the MGSM CSR Partnership Network focused on corporate volunteering. The study covered participation rate, motivations and barriers, satisfaction levels, and the likelihood of participating in the future. Employees also indicated what would help them to continue or start volunteering through their workplace. The results provide us with keys to increasing participation in corporate volunteering and to understanding employee engagement.

¹ Aaronson, 2003.
² While volunteering usually implies free will and no monetary reward, in corporate volunteering we often see compulsory and/or paid options for volunteering. Hence a broad definition of volunteering is used here.

IBM: CHANGING THE WORLD

IBM believes that a company culture based on core values not only helps the business, but also defines the role that we can and should play in society.

IBM’s volunteer and community service initiative, ‘On Demand Community’, enables IBM employees and retirees to find volunteer activities and equips them with a wide range of resources to help schools and community organisations. In Australia, more than 5000 employees have been engaged in the program, providing over 385,000 volunteer hours since program inception in 2003. Through its community grants program, IBM has contributed in excess of $1,000,000 to Australian schools and community organisations via more than 500 donations to organisations where IBMers volunteer their time.

The Corporate Service Corps was launched in 2008 to help provide IBMers with leadership development while delivering high quality problem-solving for communities and organisations in emerging markets. The program empowers IBM employees as global citizens by sending groups of 10-15 individuals from different countries with a range of skills to an emerging market for four-week community-based assignments. During the assignment, participants perform community-driven economic development projects working at the intersection of business, technology, and society. Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) is one of the not-for-profits that supports the program and works with the needs of the organisations and communities in the developing and emerging economies within which teams are placed. Since its launch in 2008, The Corporate Service Corps program has sent over 2400 participants on over 200 teams to more than 30 countries around the world.
To capture corporate volunteering and employee engagement, an online survey was designed and sent out to employees in ten companies and organisations during May-June 2013. The survey included questions on private giving, workplace giving, knowledge of corporate volunteering, employee engagement and job satisfaction, as well as several background variables. Employees who already participate in corporate volunteering were asked to detail their motivations, satisfaction and likelihood of continuing. Non-volunteers were asked to detail barriers, likelihood of participating and likely motivations for joining in the future. In addition, we examined CSR attitudes and employee engagement among all participants.

In the survey overall, 4,127 employees participated. Over one half (58%) were females and 83% were full time workers. As for job level, 32% were at a professional job level, 27% were middle managers, 19% were in administration, 8% were senior managers, and 8% were junior executives, with 6% ‘other’. Regarding income levels, 45% were earning $75,000-$150,000; 27% were earning $35,001-$75,000; 14%, over $150,000; 11% preferred not to say and 3% were earning less than $35,000. Most participants (69%) were born in Australia, with 19% born in other English speaking countries and 12% born in non-English speaking countries. As for education levels, 31% had bachelor degrees; 27%, postgraduate degrees; 22%, trade qualifications/ diplomas; and 19%, high school certificates. Finally, 35% were 35-44 years old, 28% were 45-54, 23% were 25-34, 10% were 55-64, and 3% were under 25. Only 0.5% were over 65.
Private volunteering

The 4,127 employees who participated in this study demonstrated high levels of private giving of time and money (i.e., outside the workplace). Over 79% had donated money to a charity in the last 12 months, with the most popular target being international aid and development. In addition, 38% donated in-kind donations, particularly to community and welfare organisations. Over half the employees (52%) also volunteered their time, with sports and recreation being the most popular target and, finally, 24% raised money for a cause, especially for sports and schools. On average, per year, the participating employees privately donated $850 and volunteered for 45 hours.

Of the 4,127 employees who participated in the survey, nearly 90% knew that their employers had corporate volunteering programs in place.

Awareness of workplace volunteering

Moving from private giving to workplace giving and in particular, volunteering, the employees in the selected companies demonstrated a very high level of awareness of corporate volunteering opportunities. For example, nearly 90% knew that their employers had corporate volunteering programs in place and 84% were aware of information provided by their employer about volunteering opportunities. Some specific options in corporate volunteering, such as paid leave for volunteering and group volunteering had approximately 80% level of awareness, while awareness of the option of skill-based volunteering was far behind with only 54% awareness. Job level was significantly and positively related to corporate volunteering awareness: the higher in the organisational hierarchy, the higher the level of awareness, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Corporate volunteering participation

One of the key findings of this survey is the gap between awareness and actual participation. While four out of five employees were aware that they could get paid leave to volunteer, only one out of four had done so. Although one half of employees knew that there were skill-based volunteering opportunities in their workplace (that is, volunteering that utilises the same skills one uses for paid work), only one tenth had actually participated. The most popular volunteering option was team or group volunteering (in which 35% had participated), followed by paid leave volunteering (27%), individual volunteering organised by the employer (17%) and skill-based volunteering (10%). Of the survey participants, 40% had not taken part in any corporate volunteering in the previous 12 months.
who also volunteer privately but only 54% among those who do not volunteer privately. In addition, 80% of the participants involved in corporate volunteering said that after starting to volunteer through the workplace, their private volunteering remained at the same levels, while an additional 15% reported their private volunteering had increased. Corporate volunteering therefore appears to be contributing to an increase in volunteering time in general.

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Participation in corporate volunteering is becoming a tradition in some organisations, with one third of employees (32.5%) volunteering for more than five years and nearly half (45.8%) volunteering for periods of between 1 and 5 years. The remainder (21.7%) had started volunteering in the previous year, but in some organisations this last group was much bigger, as corporate volunteering had been introduced only relatively recently.

Employees who participated in corporate volunteering did so for 17 hours per year on average (the median was 15). However, people in senior management and at partner level reported 22 hours per year. Interestingly, lower levels of education were related to a higher number of volunteer hours (with those with school level education volunteering for 19 hours per year). On the other hand, low-income earners (less than $35,000pa) volunteered for only 11 hours per year, and females volunteered for fewer hours than males (16 vs. 18, respectively). Younger employees (under 25) also volunteered for less time (13 hours per year).

NAB: BUILDING SUPPORT AND CAPABILITY

In Australia, every one of NAB’s 28,500 employees receives a minimum of 16 hours paid volunteer leave each year. NAB’s Employee Volunteer Program was introduced in 1998 and is now widely recognised as one of Australia’s leading corporate volunteer programs. NAB has spent the last 15 years encouraging and rewarding best practice in volunteering, by recognising the exceptional efforts of its employees in the local community and by helping community organisations to establish processes that make the most of volunteering experiences.

As their volunteers have evolved, so too has the NAB Employee Volunteer Program. While NAB aims to continue to deliver more than 16,000 general volunteer days to the community each year, the emphasis is now on increasing the levels of skilled volunteering. NAB knows that skilled volunteering opportunities contribute to the personal and professional development of employees, as well as to building capability and knowledge within community organisations.

NAB is also investing in research to better understand the social and economic return of volunteering in the wider economy and community.

NAB is always working hard to ensure that it focuses on the future and continues to be a leader in corporate volunteering. NAB has been called upon to share best practice models with other organisations in Australia and has recently introduced new web-based technology to better service community groups by automatically matching employees’ skills with specific community needs and volunteer opportunities.
Of the employees who participated in this survey, six out of ten took part in corporate volunteering. As we aim to unlock the potential of corporate volunteering, it is important to understand why they do so and what makes them want to continue to do so in the future.

Participants were given a list of motivations that are specific to corporate volunteering (as opposed to private volunteering) and were asked to rank them on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important). When ‘important’ and ‘very important’ were combined, the number one reason for participating was ‘it is fun’. Employees enjoy volunteering through the workplace, and this was ranked highly by people who participated in team volunteering. However, when examining only the ‘very important’ motivation, the number one reason to participate was ‘it makes work more meaningful’.

‘When I question if my work is really contributing significantly to improving the world (i.e. not just capitalism), at least by volunteering I feel I am contributing to matters that are important and align to my life values.’  (workplace volunteer)

The survey allowed participants to detail in their own words additional motivations to volunteer through their workplace. Many participants detailed general motivations to volunteer, such as wanting to help others and having a good feeling when one does. Some of the most common words used were: community, help and opportunity. Some participants also mentioned that corporate volunteering is compulsory in their organisation or is needed for performance review. Here are some of the open-ended comments:

- ‘When I question if my work is really contributing significantly to improving the world (i.e. not just capitalism), at least by volunteering I feel I am contributing to matters that are important and align to my life values’
- ‘(Corporate volunteering) provides an opportunity to give back to the community, which I would otherwise be unable to do due to personal time constraints’
- ‘It is a way to help others and think it is good that company wants to invest back into community, whether it is individual or team it still helps’
- ‘It provides a break from work while helping others’

The number one ‘very important’ reason to participate was ‘it makes work more meaningful’.
Motivations and employee background variables

Employees from different backgrounds and groups had different motivations (Figure 4) and, interestingly, females tended to rank motivations higher than males (true for all motivations except ‘I do not have the time to volunteer outside work’). The biggest difference was found in the meaningfulness motivation: 27% of females ranked ‘it makes work more meaningful to me’ as very important, versus only 17% of males. In addition, younger employees (under 25) ranked this motivation a lot higher than older employees (45 and over); younger employees also ranked ‘it is fun’ a lot higher than older employees. Employees at professional levels ranked the meaningfulness motivation significantly higher than did senior level employees (26% vs. 20%), as did people who were born overseas compared to those born in Australia (27% vs. 20%). Income levels made no difference.

Likelihood of continuing, satisfaction and support of corporate volunteering

When asked about the likelihood of continuing to volunteer through their workplace in the future, 62% said they were ‘very likely’ to do so, and an additional 25% said ‘likely’, making a remarkable 87% likelihood of continuation. Males were significantly more likely than females to participate in the future (90% vs. 84%). Furthermore, one third of workplace volunteers were very satisfied with their volunteering experience, and one half were satisfied, making 83% satisfaction. Males, older employees, high-income earners and people with school level education were more satisfied than others.

Workplace volunteers were also asked how likely they were to recommend corporate volunteering to their friends. On a scale of 1 to 10, 40% chose ‘10’ – extremely likely. Based on this question, we grouped participants into three categories – ‘Champions’ (7-10), ‘Neutrals’ (4-7), and ‘Objectors’ (0-3). As can be seen in the pie chart, the level of support was extremely high, with 75% being ‘champions’. Even higher percentages of ‘champions’ were found among females (79%), people aged 25-34 (78%), and employees in administration/support roles (82%).

83% of workplace volunteers were satisfied, 87% were likely to continue.

As the likelihood of continuing and the levels of support were so high, it is important to understand what motivations workplace volunteers have to continue volunteering in the future. Once more, the sense of meaningfulness played a vital part: ‘Feeling that we are doing something meaningful’ was indicated by 90% as ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to impact their decision to continue in the future. This was followed by ‘making a real difference in the community’ (87%). ‘Family volunteering opportunities’ (in which employees bring their children and families along to participate in corporate volunteering) and ‘Recognition when I volunteer’ were the least likely to impact continuance. Younger employees (under 25) ranked some of these motivations a lot higher than the 45-54 age group. Support from their manager, volunteering with their friends and skill-building opportunities were more important to younger employees, as well as recognition and communication. Furthermore, support from employer and from managers and volunteering with friends were significantly more important to females than to males, as was getting paid leave to volunteer.

Open suggestions for other motivations included:
- ‘Being able to see the benefits that my volunteering creates for the recipient organisation’
- ‘Volunteering in my own community (currently not available to me)’
- ‘Having volunteer work fit in with my roster. Also having volunteering opportunities outside of work hours’

**FIGURE 5: SUPPORT FOR CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING**

- **Champions**
- **Neutrals**
- **Objectors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Champions</th>
<th>Neutrals</th>
<th>Objectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</table>

**FIGURE 5: SUPPORT FOR CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING**
Non-volunteers

While 40% of the surveyed participants did not volunteer through their workplace, we assume that the actual proportion of non-participants is much higher, due to an over-representation of volunteers in the survey. It is therefore crucial to understand who does not participate and why, as well as their likelihood of taking part in volunteering in the future and what might support them to do so.

Our findings show that low-income earners, people in professional level roles and people who were born overseas are less likely to participate in corporate volunteering than others. There are many studies showing that volunteering in general is related to level of income, and this seems to be the case with corporate volunteering as well. Low-income earners may have less time to volunteer or be less emotionally available. Being born overseas may mean that one has a different volunteering culture or attitude towards corporate volunteering.

The most common barriers to workplace volunteering were not being asked, being too busy and preferring to volunteer privately.

Past workplace volunteers

Of all the people who indicated that they did not participate in corporate volunteering in the previous 12 months, 44% were past volunteers (used to participate and stopped). As many of them were middle managers or part-time workers, it is possible that promotion and change of employment arrangements may have led them to stop participating. Indeed, the most common reasons to stop volunteering were given as less available time, moving to another organisation/role, not being asked to volunteer again and the program being stopped. However, background variables also played a part in the importance of these four top reasons. Part-time employees, middle managers and people who were 45-54 had less available time than in the past. Younger employees (25-34) quit because of transition to another role or organisation. In addition, females marked ‘less available time’ higher than males.

Respondents were able to detail in their own words additional reasons for stopping volunteering. Many detailed ill health, duties as caregivers, parental leave, timing and lack of organisational support:

- ‘I had signed up in last 12 months but felt pressured by manager to cancel due to work commitments’
- ‘I normally complete these as team days and this has not happened in the past year’
- ‘I volunteered at the end of last year, but the day was cancelled and not reorganised’

Barriers to volunteering

Employees who never participated (non-volunteers) also detailed their barriers to volunteering. The most common barriers were not being asked (38%), being too busy (36%), preferring to volunteer privately (31%) and preferring to donate money than to volunteer (21%).

Certain barriers were more likely to be influential depending upon the respondent’s background. Males and professional level employees were significantly more likely than females to cite being too busy and to prefer private volunteering. Professional level employees were more likely to feel that they spent too much time with their peers already, to say that they had not been asked and to not feel supported by their manager. Employees born overseas were more likely than those born in Australia to prefer private volunteering, to say that they had not been asked, to not feel supported by their manager, and to feel that there had not been any opportunities to match their skills.

Open ended comments on barriers included issues of time, timing and geography, as well as:

- ‘Workload is too heavy to volunteer during work time’
- ‘The volunteering opportunities are organised through head office and I work at a remote site’
- ‘The volunteer program which was supposed to be organised for my team never happened’
- ‘Requirement to form a team of 3 people or more, didn’t hear or find anyone in my team that is interested in volunteering’
- ‘My manager needs to authorise and I know that she won’t, so why waste my time asking?’
- ‘I would like to go with fellow colleagues, not on my own’
- ‘I am not aware of paid leave for volunteering in our organisation. If there is, then they do not promote it’
Overcoming barriers

However, 60% of non-participants and past-participants indicated that they were 'likely' (38%) or 'very likely' (22%) to participate in the future. Females were more likely than males to participate in the future (26% 'very likely' vs. 18% of males). Younger employees were also more likely to participate in the future (for example 67% of employees under 25 were 'likely' and 'very likely' compared to 47% of the 55-64 age group).

As for overcoming barriers, nearly one-half (49%) of employees who did not currently participate in corporate volunteering indicated that they would, if given the opportunity. Another important key was having more time (48%). As such, employers can find solutions that work with the time challenges of their employees such as volunteering during working hours, on the weekend, or with their families. Support from their managers was also highly important as was being asked by a colleague. Recognition was the least important element in overcoming barriers to participation and fewer than 4% said that nothing would induce them to volunteer.

In the open comments of employees, the four top words were: opportunities, organised, family and location. Many detailed in their own words what could help them start to participate. These included opportunities that were in the right time and place, that were organised for the employees and that were communicated effectively. Employees also mentioned:

- ‘As simple as being aware of what is available in terms of volunteering opportunities and just being able to turn up (i.e. not having to organise anything)’
- ‘Feeling like it makes a difference’
- ‘Being sure that the work carried out was truly valuable to the organisation concerned’
- ‘It being removed from our appraisals’
- ‘Transport provided to and from volunteering’

Nearly one-half of employees who did not currently participate in corporate volunteering indicated that they would, if given the opportunity.

QANTAS: INCREASING THE VOLUNTEERING FOOTPRINT

Since Qantas was founded in the Queensland outback in 1920, the iconic Australian airline has played an active role in helping and improving the communities in which it operates. Whether assisting Australians in times of natural disaster or flying medical patients and supplies throughout their network, Qantas employees are always willing to lend a hand.

Qantas’ spirit of volunteering gained global momentum in 1979 when a long haul flight attendant founded the Qantas Cabin Crew Team. Realising that he could use his days off overseas to assist locals in need, Laurie Curley rallied other cabin crew together to volunteer for charity projects. Today more than 700 Qantas employees are involved in projects in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Thailand, India, the Philippines and Australia.

The Qantas Foundation aims to build a sustainable future for all Australians. Its recently released community grants program, Side by Side, encourages employees to participate in grassroots volunteering in their local communities. Qantas Community initiatives are made possible by the long-term support of the Qantas board, its CEO and senior leadership team, as well as employees and customers across the world. Moving forward, Qantas is committed to increasing its volunteering footprint.
Engaging Employees in CSR and CSR as a Key to Employee Engagement

CSR attitudes

Employees who work for the companies of the MGSM CSR Partnership Network expressed very strong positive attitudes towards CSR. It appears to be very important for employees, both volunteers and non-volunteers, to work for a company that is ‘socially responsible’; there was 78% agreement with this statement (with 28% choosing ‘strongly agree’). Of those who participate in corporate volunteering, 82% agreed it is important for them to work for such a company, compared to 72% of non-volunteers.

In addition, a high number of employees (71%) agreed that their company engages with the community primarily to help make a difference. Again, this was significantly higher among volunteers than among non-volunteers (76% vs. 64%). Thirdly, over half the employees agreed that management is involved in giving (58%) and that their company engages with the community for the reasons that this engagement is strongly linked to its business strategy (64% volunteers compared to 56% non-volunteers). These are very positive attitudes towards CSR, showing that employees in these companies are engaged and aware. It also demonstrates that CSR has to be strategic; it has to be tied to the company’s strategy, and the leadership must be involved.

It appears to be very important for employees, both volunteers and non-volunteers, to work for a company that is ‘socially responsible’.

Organisational commitment and employee engagement

Using the Meyer & Allen Organisational Commitment Scale (affective commitment)\(^3\), we further found relatively high levels of organisational commitment among those surveyed. 61% of employees indicated they would be happy to spend the rest of their career with their current employers. In this global and short-span working environment, this is remarkable. However, when examining the relationship between employee engagement and corporate volunteering, the results were even more outstanding. Employees who volunteer through the workplace were significantly (\(p<.000\)) more committed to remain compared to those who had not volunteered (64% vs. 57% respectively). While 38% of workplace volunteers feel as if their organisation’s problems are their own, only 31% of non-volunteers agreed with this statement. The scale includes some reverse statements to assure consistency. As such, we have measured the number of people who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the reverse statements. While 58% of employees disagreed with ‘I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation’, workplace volunteers disagreed more than others. The same results appeared for ‘I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation’ and ‘I do not feel like part of the family in my organisation’. For all the employee engagement indicators, workplace volunteers were significantly more engaged than non-volunteers. In addition, people who volunteer privately also showed higher levels of engagement.

Table 1: CSR Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree + strongly agree</th>
<th>Volunteers (Agree + strongly agree)</th>
<th>Non-volunteers (Agree + strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me to work for a company that is highly involved with the community</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company engages with the community primarily to help make a difference</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management is involved in giving</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company engages with the community because it is strongly linked to its business strategy</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees who donate through the workplace-volunteering program should be openly recognised by the company</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company engages with the community primarily for image and reputation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering and donating money are an individual choice and should not be part of my company’s community engagement program</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and giving should be separate</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company engages with the community primarily to please employees</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Job satisfaction

We also asked respondents about their satisfaction regarding various aspects of the job. Levels of job satisfaction were generally high, with the strongest sources of satisfaction being relationship with others in the workplace (83% of respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with this aspect), achievements (79%) and being part of the organisation (75%). However, for almost all aspects of job satisfaction (except for salary, for which there were no differences), workplace volunteers were significantly more satisfied than non-volunteers. Unsurprisingly, the biggest difference was found in levels of satisfaction with the organisation’s responsibility and sustainability; while 72% of workplace volunteers were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with this aspect, only 57% of non-volunteers were. In addition, workplace volunteers were much more satisfied with leisure activities than were non-volunteers (37% vs. 28%).

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS (PWC): ENGAGING EMPLOYEES

PwC believes in the collective responsibility of business, government and the community to create a sustainable future together. They act responsibly by using their skills and resources where they are most relevant to society.

Volunteering provides PwC people with the opportunity to spend one work day each year to undertake either:

- Skilled volunteering, which allows employees to utilise core skills when engaging with a charity, such as mentoring, communications, marketing, technology advice, reviewing business plans, IT or event management.

- Unskilled volunteering, which involves hands-on, team-based volunteering in the community such as tree planting, sorting Christmas toys & food hampers, working bees.

Through undertaking skilled volunteering and mentoring in the community, PwC employees are able to use their experience to make a meaningful difference to those in need, while developing a greater understanding of broader societal issues. Of the staff at PwC, 96% say that the corporate responsibility activities make them proud to work at PwC, and 66% say it is a factor in their decision to stay with the firm.

Employees who volunteer through the workplace had higher organisational commitment and job satisfaction than those who had not volunteered.
Tying People, Participation and Performance: Key Recommendations

The CSR Partnership Network’s first study examined participation and the impact of corporate volunteering. The participants of this survey were not only generous in giving through the workplace but also in providing us with keys to increasing participation in corporate volunteering and making us aware of its positive impact on the volunteers, the community and their employers.

Closing the gap – from awareness to participation

There is a remarkable level of awareness of corporate volunteering, with up to 90% of employees aware of some corporate volunteering options. However, there is a large gap between knowing about corporate volunteering and actually participating in it. To decrease the gap, employers need to create opportunities to participate that offer flexibility regarding time and location and to communicate with employees about these options as much as possible. It is important to ask people directly to participate. Furthermore, based on the qualitative and the quantitative analyses, support from direct managers can make a real difference to participation levels.

Creating meaningful experiences

The common theme in the findings of this study is the sense of meaningfulness that employees seek. Firstly, the most important motivation to participate in corporate volunteering was ‘it makes my work more meaningful’. Although corporate volunteering is typically not directly related to usual roles and tasks, volunteering can make these tasks and roles more meaningful. Corporate volunteering provides a social purpose that younger employees, in particular, are now interested in. In addition, when asked what would make them continue to participate in the future, participants cited ‘feeling that we are doing something meaningful’ and ‘making a real difference in the community’. For employees who do not participate, some of the open-ended comments included this sense of meaningfulness, expressed in, for example, ‘feeling like it makes a difference’.

It is essential to measure and communicate the outcomes and impact of the volunteering work that is done by the employees. These are not always easy to measure, but reporting on inputs alone (how many employees volunteer for how many hours) does not resonate with employees as much as the outcomes of services (e.g., delivering 20,000 meals) and the social impact (e.g., reducing food insecurity). It is most important to communicate these results to employees. This will assist in recruiting new participants and increasing levels of satisfaction among existing participants.

Increasing participation

To increase participation in corporate volunteering, employers need to have two strategies: to ensure continuance of participation and to recruit new participants. The three groups of participants in this survey (volunteers, non-volunteers and past volunteers) provide us with the keys to both strategies.

The two most vital issues around corporate volunteering as portrayed by the survey participants are accessibility and meaningfulness. Corporate volunteering needs to be accessible to the employees in terms of location, time and communication. Too many employees did not participate simply because they were not aware of corporate volunteering opportunities or were not asked. A better range of volunteering options or allowing the employees to choose the location and time of volunteering could help to overcome these barriers. In addition, using word of mouth, corporate volunteering champions and online communication could help spread the word. As for meaningfulness, it is important to create opportunities that leverage what the company and the employees are good at. Tying corporate volunteering to the competitive advantage of the firm can have a stronger impact, as can creating skill-based volunteering. This would not just assist in increasing participation but would also allow the company to create strategic CSR, shared value and a stronger social impact.

In addition, leadership is a key. It is important for employees to know that the leadership is involved in giving time and money and this in turn can impact their decision to participate. Over one-half of the survey participants agreed that leadership is involved in giving, and this perception could be leveraged to increase participation.

Volunteering as a key to employee engagement

Employee engagement has become the holy grail of employers. Along with increasing awareness that monetary incentives are not enough to create emotional engagement and affective commitment comes the increasingly popular notion of the need for a social purpose in the workplace. Not all roles and jobs can provide a sense of social purpose and meaningfulness, but using the same skills to help other people and the community can. As such, it is reassuring to learn that the primary motivation among workplace volunteers is that it makes their work more meaningful.

We also found that corporate volunteering is significantly related to levels of affective organisational commitment, employee engagement and job satisfaction. Volunteers were more likely than non-volunteers to feel engaged, to desire to remain in the organisations for the rest of their career and to be satisfied with almost every aspect of their jobs. High retention rates are vital for a strong organisation and organisational culture. They assure organisational learning and knowledge and can help companies reduce the high costs involved in turnover, recruitment and selection. Because of these benefits, the power of volunteering cannot be underestimated.
Conclusion

Through a multi-sector research process, the first annual study of the MGSM CSR Partnership Network revealed high levels of awareness of corporate volunteering and a good participation rate. It further reveals a very high likelihood that those who already take part in corporate volunteering will continue to volunteer and a very high likelihood that those who do not yet take part will join.

Not only are the respondents very likely to participate in the future, they have also provided their employers with the keys to unlocking participation: through accessibility and meaningfulness. As the relationship between corporate volunteering and employee engagement is so strong, increasing participation through meaningful and strategic CSR is vital for the success of businesses and the communities in which they operate and possibly thrive.

Key recommendations:

- Employers need to create flexible opportunities to participate and to communicate with employees about these options to decrease the gap between awareness and participation.
- It is essential to measure and communicate the outcomes and impact of the volunteering work done by employees as they look for meaningful volunteering opportunities that will make a real difference.
- Corporate volunteering needs to be accessible to employees in terms of location, time and through clear communication.
- Support from the direct managers and involvement of the organisational leadership are essential to increasing participation in corporate volunteering.

Creating meaningful volunteering experiences for employees is the untapped tool for engaging employees and increasing their satisfaction and retention.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY: MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Macquarie University’s corporate volunteering program is designed to make it easy for individuals or teams to undertake volunteering within the community. By building partnerships with charities/not-for-profits within the areas of environment, animal welfare, and community health and wellbeing, Macquarie University endeavours to ensure that there will be something of interest for all participants.

Volunteering is important to Macquarie University for the many benefits that staff can gain. Benefits include connecting with others, enhancing social and relationship skills, team building, providing career experiences. As well, volunteering can be fun and fulfilling. These benefits also positively impact the university, because as team cohesiveness increases, staff ‘feel good about doing good for others’. Furthermore, Macquarie University is perceived as a strong community member by giving back. It has become an employer of choice. And it has successfully increased staff retention rates.
BROOKFIELD JOHNSON CONTROLS: A BETTER WORLD
Brookfield Johnson Controls has strong values, which are followed at all times across the company; Integrity, Customer Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, Innovation and Sustainability. As such, Brookfield Johnson Controls is committed to providing the opportunity for its employees to participate in volunteering activities within the community. Its philanthropic outreach efforts address charitable and community needs through financial grants and global employee volunteer programs.

Brookfield Johnson Controls offers its eligible employees 16 hours of paid leave to volunteer. Its volunteer program is flexible to ensure a wide range of interests can be met and employees can choose a not-for-profit or a community organisation, which is meaningful to them.

AMP: COMMITTED TO THE COMMUNITY
Volunteering and raising money for charity are very much part of AMP’s culture – a culture that has been fostered and driven by AMP’s ‘committed to community’ ethos. The AMP Foundation, AMP’s charitable arm, puts this ethos into action by encouraging and supporting AMP personnel who are passionate about supporting their local community and causes that they care about. Through a volunteering program managed by the AMP Foundation, AMP employees can give their time and expertise for the benefit of the community, by taking part in team, individual or skilled volunteering, or by having their fundraising or regular giving dollar-matched. It’s an incredibly popular program and, in 2012, more than 2,000 AMP employees volunteered in a range of grass-roots organisations.

AMP’s comprehensive Volunteering Program incorporates several elements, such as payroll giving, fundraising, ‘unsung heroes’, mentoring and project volunteering. The AMP Foundation organises volunteer projects for teams and individuals within and outside of work hours. This also includes encouraging employees to donate blood. They recognise that providing volunteering opportunities to corporate employees does carry a cost and that’s why they are happy to cover the cost of physical resources and materials that a community organisation may incur. The AMP Foundation donates $3,000 to a charity where AMP employees have volunteered more than 80 hours of their own time or where they serve on the board of a charity.

Finally, AMP senior leaders mentor leaders from the non-profit sector through a 12-month mentoring program run by an AMP Foundation partner, United Way. Employees are able to mentor high school students from disadvantaged areas through the Smith Family’s iTrack program.
NAB Employees have worked on skilled and unskilled volunteering projects with Sacred Heart Mission since 2007

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