



# Effective Practices in Workplace Volunteering

**W**orkplace volunteering (also recognized as employee volunteering) is not just a buzzword describing a passing fad; it is a business practice that is here to stay as businesses realize they cannot afford to isolate themselves from the communities they serve. Employee volunteering is a planned, managed effort that seeks to motivate and enable employees to effectively volunteer under the sponsorship and leadership of the employer. Effective and sustainable employee volunteer programs meet company priorities, address employee interests, and target real community needs.

The Points of Light Foundation encourages business leaders to create environments that enable employees and retirees to volunteer in the communities in which they live and work. The Points of Light Foundation developed the *Principles of Excellence for Workplace Volunteering* to serve as guidelines for companies to build and enhance their employee volunteer programs.

There are three overarching areas of the Principles of Excellence: **A**cknowledge, **C**ommit, and **T**arget. Illustrating these steps in the following examples are previous winners of the *Awards for Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs*. The annual Awards honor those companies that have made employee and retiree volunteer efforts a central part of their operations. Since the Awards' establishment in 1993, the Points of Light Foundation has honored 62 companies for their award-winning employee volunteer programs.

**ACKNOWLEDGE that the workplace's employee volunteer efforts contribute to the achievement of its business goals.**

**Why:** Ensure program sustainability by aligning the program with core business values, thus laying the strategic foundation for the employee volunteer program.

**How:** Integrate the company's social vision with the business vision. Use mission statements, credos, or social policy statements, to illustrate the understanding that societal and community issues impact the company. Communicate this priority to internal and external stakeholders.

**Examples:**

- A large conglomerate forms initiatives to introduce the management of acquired companies to its culture of community involvement. The corporation also promotes its program through national and international employee publications, fact sheets, customer publications, internal and external web sites, the employee orientation program, and a citizenship report distributed internally and to the nonprofit community. Each member of the executive leadership serves as an executive sponsor for at least one volunteer project run out of the headquarters location.
- At an e-commerce company, the Vice President of Human Resources, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Chairman each sit on a volunteer steering committee.
- An aerospace company supports its volunteer programs through a national council of representatives from four geographic regions.

- A utility company communicates that volunteering is the responsibility of each employee by providing all new hires with a volunteer handbook. The company provides a volunteer hotline for employees to call for weekly announcements of volunteer activities.
- A manufacturer promotes volunteer opportunities to employees through an open house in which the nonprofit partners showcase the volunteer opportunities available.
- At a law firm, brochures on the company's volunteer program are located in each office reception area.

**COMMIT to establish, support and promote an employee volunteer program that encourages the involvement of every employee, and manage the employee volunteer program like any other business function.**

**Why:** Making an organizational commitment to the program is essential for its success and longevity.

**How:** Allocate sufficient resources to develop, manage, and sustain successful employee volunteer efforts. Manage the employee volunteer program with a business plan. Establish policies, procedures, and incentives that encourage and enable optimum employee participation. Develop volunteer projects that utilize the distinctive skills of the company and its employees to target and address community issues. Conduct evaluations of program to determine its effect on the company, employees, and the community.

**Examples:**

- At a law firm, staff members are given one hour per week, paid firm time, to tutor or mentor a community child. Participation in the program is made part of the evaluation of lawyers at the firm.
- At a utility company, management routinely matches the skill sets of their departments with community project needs. All employees are eligible for an annual incentive payment plan in which 20 percent of the payout amount is based on community involvement.
- At an aerospace company, volunteers are nominated for awards by coworkers and community agencies. Winners receive a medallion, a luncheon in their honor, and a \$5,000 contribution to the nonprofit organization of their choice.
- A banking company instituted a dollar-for-doers program; for every 100 hours of service that an employee contributes to a nonprofit within one year, the nonprofit becomes eligible for a monetary donation of up to \$500.
- A media company identifies the goals of its volunteer program and creates an annual business plan. In addition, quarterly and annual reports are created throughout the year to benchmark the programs.
- A financial services company has a number of supportive policies and incentives. The company provides release time of up to four hours each month for employees who work over 20 hours a week. The company uses its employees' financial skills by promoting financial literacy through presentations at local schools and teaching classes on financial issues for adults.
- A manufacturer offers employees with up to 40 hours of paid time per year for community service. The company's sabbatical program awards four employees annually to develop their professional skills while serving the community by spending three to six months working at an existing or start-up nonprofit organization.

## **TARGET workplace volunteering at serious social problems in the community.**

**Why:** Targeted volunteer efforts at community social problems will bring tangible results and outcomes for the program, employees, and the community.

**How:** Survey employees to determine their interests on which serious social problems they would like to work. Focus employee volunteer programs so that they address serious social problems. Analyze results from regular evaluations with nonprofit partners and employees to determine the program's outcome. Assess current partnerships based on agreed upon goals.

### **Examples:**

- A banking company surveys its employees twice a year in order to continually assess its practices, establish priorities, and develop new programs.
- A utility company stays apprised of community needs through extensive participation on nonprofit boards, town hall meetings, and work with their volunteer center, their corporate volunteer council, and United Way. The company measures the impact of its volunteer programs by assessing results against established objectives, monitoring levels of employee participation, evaluating numbers and geographical disbursement of completed projects, and tracking public perception of the company's community involvement.
- A conglomerate has taken an active interest in the local communities of offices abroad. Since the company opened an office in the Ukraine, it has been involved with repairing and rebuilding local run-down schools. This company evaluates each program individually and on an annual basis. Feedback is gathered from the nonprofit partners as well as the employee volunteers.
- To determine the most pressing needs of the education community, a manufacturer tied into a local school system's initiative on involving volunteers in enhancing students' learning experiences. In addition, on the health and human services front, the company relies on a local foundation's report on the state of the city's well being.
- A financial services organization is organizing community summits to solicit feedback from local nonprofit and community leaders.
- A healthcare company conducts a community needs assessment every three years to determine priorities. Every two years, the company surveys employees on issues of concern.

These are just a few examples of effective components to successful employee volunteer programs. The key is tailoring the program to meet the needs of your company and your community. For a list of past honorees of the *Awards for Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs*, please view the back page. For additional information on establishing and managing an employee volunteer program, contact the Points of Light Foundation's Corporate Volunteer Development Team at [CVDinfo@PointsofLight.org](mailto:CVDinfo@PointsofLight.org).

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# AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS HONOREES

## 2002

<b>IBM Corporation</b>	Armonk, NY
<b>John Hancock Financial Services</b>	Boston, MA
<b>Oracle Corporation</b>	Redwood Shores, CA
<b>Safeco Insurance</b>	Seattle, WA
<b>Salesforce.com/Salesforce.com foundation</b>	San Francisco, CA
<b>Universal Parks &amp; Resorts</b>	Orlando, FL

## 2001

<b>Cargill</b>	Minnetonka, MN
<b>EDS</b>	Plano, TX
<b>Legacy Health System</b>	Portland, OR
<b>MTV Networks</b>	New York, NY
<b>3M</b>	St. Paul, MN
<b>Washington Mutual</b>	Seattle, WA

## 2000

<b>Alibris</b>	Emeryville, CA
<b>The Boeing Company</b>	Seattle, WA
<b>Capital One Financial Corporation</b>	Falls Church, VA
<b>Holland &amp; Knight LLP</b>	Washington, DC
<b>Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)</b>	Caracas, Venezuela
<b>SRP (Salt River Project)</b>	Phoenix, AZ

## 1999

<b>Glaxo Wellcome, Inc.</b>	Research Triangle Park, NC
<b>LensCrafters</b>	Cincinnati, OH
<b>NEC Electronics, Inc.</b>	Santa Clara, CA
<b>Portland Trail Blazers</b>	Portland, OR
<b>United Airlines</b>	Elk Grove Township, IL

## 1998

<b>The Home Depot</b>	Atlanta, GA
<b>Samsung Group</b>	Seoul, Korea
<b>Southwest Gas Corporation</b>	Las Vegas, NV
<b>The Timberland Company</b>	Stratham, NH
<b>Time Warner, Inc.</b>	New York, NY
<b>United Technologies Corporation</b>	Hartford, CT
<b>Yakima Herald-Republic</b>	Yakima, WA

## 1997

<b>AT&amp;T Wireless Services, Inc.</b>	Kirkland, WA
<b>AXA</b>	Paris, France
<b>Chase Manhattan Corporation Gap, Inc.</b>	New York, NY
<b>UGI Utilities, Inc.</b>	San Francisco, CA
<b>Unirode Corporation</b>	Reading, PA
	Merrimack, NH

## 1996

<b>Bank of America</b>	San Francisco, CA
<b>Calvert Group</b>	Bethesda, MD
<b>Chicago Mercantile Exchange</b>	Chicago, IL
<b>Federal Express Corporation</b>	Memphis, TN
<b>First Federal Savings and Loan of Wooster</b>	Wooster, OH
<b>The Pillsbury Company</b>	Minneapolis, MN
<b>The Prudential Insurance Company of America</b>	Newark, NJ

## 1995

<b>Allstate Insurance Company</b>	Northbrook, IL
<b>Ames Rubber Corporation</b>	Hamburg, NJ
<b>Bonneville International Corporation</b>	Salt Lake City, UT
<b>Fannie Mae</b>	Washington, DC
<b>Miller Freeman, Inc.</b>	San Francisco, CA
<b>Memphis Light, Gas And Water Division (MLGW)</b>	Memphis, TN

## 1994

<b>Honeywell Inc.</b>	Minneapolis, MN
<b>General Mills, Inc.</b>	Minneapolis, MN
<b>Dayton Hudson Corporation</b>	Minneapolis, MN
<b>Tucson Electric Power Company</b>	Tucson, AZ
<b>Tosco Refining Company</b>	Concord, CA
<b>Spears, Moore, Rebman &amp; Williams, Inc.</b>	Chattanooga, TN

## 1993

<b>Shell Oil Company</b>	Houston, TX
<b>Tampa Electric Company</b>	Tampa, FL
<b>The Security Benefit Group of Companies</b>	Topeka, KS
<b>Adams and Reese</b>	New Orleans, LA
<b>Farmers Bank &amp; Trust Co.</b>	Henderson, KY