

Retiree and Guest Volunteer Engagement

According to Edgar Bronfman's *The Third Act: Reinventing Yourself After Retirement*, the United States possesses the fastest-growing, best educated and most vigorous population of older adults in the history of the world. The senior population today is more than twice what it was in 1960 and will double again in the next 20 years. According to the UN Population Division, one in five people are expected to be 65 or older by 2035, and by 2050, adults over 65 will outnumber the rest of the population in this country.

Retirees are a tremendous resource of talent and experience for nonprofit organizations. Engaging retirees in volunteer activities can help expand the pool of available volunteers, as well as strengthen relationships between the company and volunteers.

Guest volunteering, which includes family volunteering, can help workplaces address employee's work/life issues and still contribute to the community by providing quality time, strengthen communication and offer opportunities for family members to serve as role models.

Benefits of retiree and guest volunteer engagement:

- Builds employee morale and a positive attitude in the workplace. Improves public and community relations.
- Improves workplace by breaking down barriers among employees, reinforcing teamwork and building commitment.
- Provides a competitive advantage for the business by creating customer and employee loyalty and attracting new customers.
- Develops teambuilding, leadership, problem-solving, public speaking and organizational skills and contributes to knowledge and experience exchange.
- Increases communication with employee families, friends and communities.
- Supports familial value system, and enhanced quality time for families by allowing learning opportunities and positive role modeling for children.
- 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.

Disadvantages:

- Many companies don't have the capacity or expertise to plan and implement retiree or guest volunteering programs and instead tend to rely on nonprofits when looking for volunteer events and activities that can include the retirees or entire family.
- Designing of new volunteer engagement opportunities require high initial investment of staff and additional resources.
- Limited promotion and engagement of retiree and guest volunteering opportunities within the corporate civic strategy.

A Few Examples:

- At **Intel Corporation**, retirees play an important role in shaping the organization's corporate civic engagement. In 2008, the Intel Retiree Organization was created to serve and engage more than 3,300 retirees worldwide. In 2010, 145 U.S. retirees participated in Intel EVP activities, alongside active regular and part-time employees. Within the Intel Involved Matching Grant Program, the Intel Foundation matches the time that Intel employees and U.S. retirees spend volunteering in schools and nonprofits with a cash donation. For every hour that Intel U.S. retirees volunteer, the Intel Foundation will match with a grant once the organization reaches 20 hours for the year. Retirees can access volunteer opportunities posts and resources for locating opportunities, as well as read stories of inspiring retiree volunteer experiences on the comprehensive Intel Retiree Website.
- In 2010 alone, 13,900 **IBM** retirees engaged in EVP activities. Registered retirees have complete access to the company's On Demand Community site resources and program benefits. On Demand Community highlights the volunteer efforts of both employees and retirees by showcasing a volunteer of the month and presenting success stories that describe how volunteers are using On Demand Community resources to make a difference. IBM employees and retirees who volunteer their time and talent generously in their local communities are eligible for Celebration of Service grants which include Community Grants, Catalyst Grants, and Centennial Grants. For example within the Catalyst Grants Program, IBM is awarding 100 grants of \$10,000 to teams of at least 100 people which include at least 50 IBM employees and/or retirees who engage in a project that supports a qualified not-for-profit or educational organization and include some activity (kickoff, service event, celebration, etc.) on the Celebration of Service Day (June, 15 2011).
- **McKesson** welcomes family and friends to participate in employee volunteer activities. In 2010 more than 833 family and guest members of employees participated in EVP activities at McKesson.
- At **Goldman Sachs**, each May and June, offices around the world plan volunteer projects that would allow the total population of employees as well as friends and family members to take a day out of the office and spend it volunteering with local nonprofit organizations. The annual event is Community Teamwork, and projects range from feeding the homeless to working with the elderly and disabled.

Sources: 2011 and 2011 Points of Light Institute Corporate Engagement Awards of Excellence, www.intel.com, www.ibm.com, www.goldmansachs.com.

Request for survey data about retiree and guest policies:

In terms of data, there are many reports on national demographics, and somewhat limited reports and statistics. There have been informal surveys done by Points of Light and other organizations that give a sense of the utilization of retirees and guests in promoting citizen engagement in companies.

Eighty-eight percent of 2010 and 2011 Excellent EVPs* allow retirees and/or guests to participate in their activities. Companies which tracked retiree and guest volunteer participation, engaged on average more than 17, 172 retirees and 695 guests. Nonetheless, the range of participation ranges from 260,000 retirees (IBM) to two (UniSource Energy Services, Inc. (UES) and from 3,663 guest volunteers (The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc) to 25 (Cbeyond, Inc).

According to the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy's Giving Number 2010 Edition Report, retiree participation is often allowed, although sometimes with reduced caps and matching. Family and guest volunteering is often an "add-on" to employee volunteer activities rather than a separate volunteering practice. Successful retiree, family and guest volunteerism efforts require planning, communication, team-work with the nonprofit agency, and special considerations made to the varying ages of volunteers.

The information provided by 2010 and 2011 Points of Light Corporate Engagement Award of Excellence finalists backs the statement above. Twenty-one percent of companies that offer a formal retiree and/or guest inclusion do not track participation for any of the two categories. Thirteen percent don't track family or family engagement metrics.

The [Points of Light Corporate Institute](#) is the go-to resource for community-minded companies looking to build and expand effective employee volunteer programs. With our global network of 250 affiliates and a team of experts, we can help you create a customized volunteer program, engage your employees, learn best practices, network with other leading companies, and gain visibility for leadership and excellence.

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