

Executive summary:

2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey

Many leaders within corporate America and the nonprofit community agree that skills-based volunteering provides a powerful tool to augment resource constrained nonprofits as well as an opportunity for volunteers to build skills and leadership experience.

New research from Deloitte indicates that skills-based volunteering not only has the potential to increase the competency of the volunteer over time, but also provide an edge for future employment opportunities. In a recovering economy where unemployment remains a challenge, especially for graduating college students and returning military personnel, skills-based volunteering provides a strategic bridge to gainful employment.

It's clear that the skills and experience gained through volunteering are respected and that they provide an edge for job candidates during the hiring process.

Although there is no one solution for the challenges associated with unemployment among college graduates and veterans transitioning into civilian life, volunteer bridging is a viable option that should be considered.

— *Evan Hochberg, national director,
Community Engagement, Deloitte Services LP*

Background

The 2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT survey was commissioned to explore the value human resources (HR) executives place on skills-based volunteering and how this influences hiring decisions. The survey also sought to better understand the receptivity of college seniors and military personnel to working or volunteering with a nonprofit organization in order to develop skills and increase marketability for future employment. The survey targeted HR executives as well as college seniors and members of the U.S. armed forces who were about to be discharged within the next 12 months. Interviews were conducted during February 1-8, 2013.

The volunteer bridging research hypothesis is that:

- Job seekers build their skills and leadership capabilities through skills-based volunteerism
- Organizations recognize skills-based volunteerism as a significant credential when considering candidates for hire (i.e., it is the experience that counts, whether paid or not)

While the advantages to the volunteer and the nonprofit organization are evident and direct, volunteer bridging has far-reaching benefits to our society as a whole both in terms of immediate impact as well as fostering a culture of volunteerism .

Why this particular topic and among these participants? Because despite recent progress, unemployment remains a challenge for our nation and is a significant issue among college graduates and returning military veterans.

The 2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey, ninth in the series of research studies exploring the impact of key volunteerism issues, demonstrates Deloitte's commitment to be a leading voice in helping our communities thrive.

Key research findings

The following is a summary and analysis of key research findings, which offer new insights regarding value placed on skills-based volunteering among HR executives and how that translates to decisions made during the hiring process. Further, at a time when many in our society are struggling to find gainful employment, this research offers compelling evidence that skills-based volunteering can enhance a job candidate's chances to be more favorably considered for employment.

Findings support that skills-based volunteering can increase a job candidate's chances to be hired

According to the 2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey, more than three out of every four HR executives take a job applicant's skilled volunteering experience into account when making a hiring decision; and believe it makes them a more desirable candidate.

HR executive hiring decision-making process

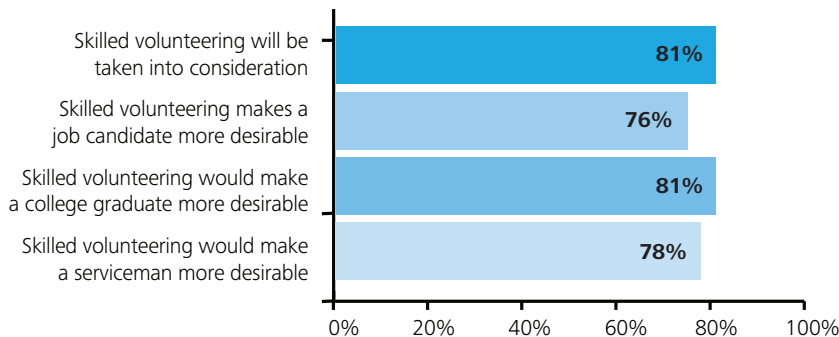


Figure 1: The skills and experience acquired through skills-based volunteering are favorably viewed among most HR executives.

HR executive view of volunteering within organization

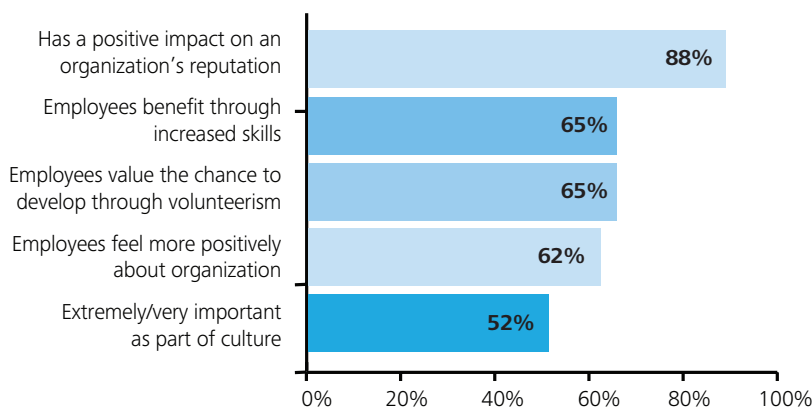


Figure 2: For an organization, most HR executives believe that volunteerism has a positive impact on reputation, is valued by and benefits employees; and about half consider it an important part of the culture.

Further, a strong majority of HR executives also responded positively when asked about whether volunteering to develop or improve skills would be valuable or recommended for college graduates (91 percent) and veterans (76 percent), respectively.

These and other survey findings indicate that skills-based volunteering can enhance a job candidate's credentials, potentially giving them an advantage over other applicants, and helping to increase their chances for gainful employment.

Most HR executives believe volunteerism has important benefits for their organization

Over the years, activities by organizations characterized under the heading of "doing good" have achieved greater recognition that they are also "good for business." Accordingly, both traditional and skills-based volunteerism is encouraged at many organizations through corporate citizenship programs.

After reviewing survey data seeking to better understand the value HR executives place on volunteerism within their own organizations, it is not surprising that skills-based volunteering is regarded by most HR executives as a positive factor in their consideration of job candidates. Responses indicate that most HR executives view volunteering as a positive contributor to the internal and, especially, external reputation of the organization, valued by and beneficial for their employees; and approximately half see it as an important element of their organization's culture.

Although less than half of college seniors and military personnel appear to think of volunteering at a nonprofit as a way for them to develop skills, leadership, and marketability for a future job, survey data supports an appreciation for the nonprofit experience.

When asked if they have ever considered volunteering at a nonprofit without pay in order to develop skills, leadership, and marketability, less than half of college seniors (46 percent) and military personnel (48 percent) responded positively. Further a little more than one-third of college seniors (39 percent) and military personnel (35 percent) described themselves as being willing to volunteer as long as it provided an opportunity to develop skills, leadership, and marketability for a future job.

However, there are a number of findings that lead toward a view that college seniors and military personnel about to be discharged are positively inclined toward nonprofits:

- Most college seniors (57 percent) and military personnel (63 percent) describe themselves as being willing to work at a nonprofit.
- Among the college seniors and military personnel who had worked or volunteered at a nonprofit in the past, virtually all (about nine out of ten or more) said they enjoyed the experience.
- The vast majority of college seniors (85 percent) and military personnel (89 percent) who worked or volunteered at a nonprofit said they learned something that benefited them.
- Very few college seniors (less than 10 percent) and even fewer military personnel (less than 5 percent) described themselves as never being willing to volunteer or work at a nonprofit.
- Nine out of ten college seniors and military personnel believe that if they did take a job at a nonprofit that future employers would look favorably on the work experience.

Conclusion

The value of skills-based volunteering is widely acknowledged by the nonprofit recipient. Further, the volunteer may also benefit through accelerated development reflecting expansion of skills or increased leadership experiences that might not be likely at their current place of work. However, the 2013 Volunteer IMPACT Survey indicates an important additional benefit — skilled volunteering can improve a job candidate's chances of getting hired.

Findings from the study are particularly pertinent with our nation's unemployment rate still high and especially for the selected targets — college seniors and military personnel about to transition back to civilian life. The data indicates that skills-based volunteering could serve as a bridge to an employment destination, i.e., volunteer bridging.

Although the potential value of volunteer bridging will vary by each job candidate's unique situation, it makes sense that it be considered as a strategic tool early on in order to embed the option into the job search process.

For college seniors or military personnel about to be discharged, while volunteering will always have value, the most productive use of volunteer bridging requires securing a volunteer opportunity where skills development and leadership experience align with the desired future employment job description.

For nonprofits to take advantage of volunteer bridging, they must offer meaningful skills-based volunteer opportunities that are relevant in the marketplace. Further, they would do well to target segments — like college seniors or veterans — who have talent but may be having trouble finding a job.

While only one tool that should be considered to increase the chances of being hired, volunteer bridging appears to be an innovative approach that benefits all involved as well as our society as a whole.

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- Education: www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/About/Community-Involvement/signature-issues/index.htm
- Military: www.deloitte.com/us/WarriorGames
- Pro Bono: www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/About/Community-Involvement/Pro-Bono-Service/index.htm

About this survey

The Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Research Series is a key component of Deloitte's commitment to building the business case for, and advancing the dialogue about, corporate skills-based volunteerism. The 2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey is the ninth in the series. For a complete archive of the Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Research Series, visit www.deloitte.com/us.

2013 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey Methodology

Results of 2013 Volunteer IMPACT Survey are based on online interviews with 202 HR executives, 202 college seniors, and 101 members of the U.S. armed forces who are to be discharged within the next 12 months. Interviews were conducted by a third party survey administrator between February 1– 8, 2013. The sample size of 505 at a 95 percent confidence level would equate to +/- 4.4 percent margin of error had this been a random sample.

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