



## What Makes Your Employees Tick?

Understanding Your Workforce and Engaging Employees in Service

Summer 2015

## Understanding Your Workforce and Engaging Employees in Service

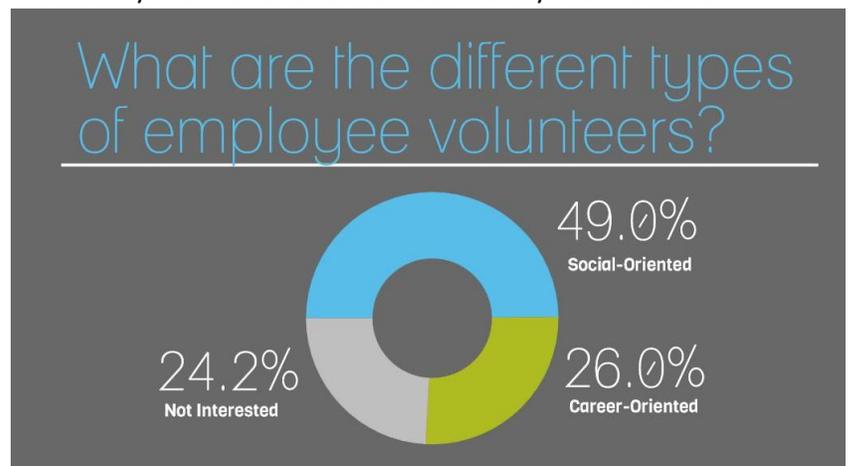
What drives your employees to volunteer at work? Is it providing company-organized volunteer opportunities? Offering paid time off to volunteer? Or perhaps senior executive support for your program? Understanding the key drivers behind why employees volunteer will help companies boost overall engagement and performance. In fact, Gallup's [State of the Global Workplace Report](#)<sup>1</sup> shows that organizations with engaged employees are more profitable and have more satisfied customers and employees.

So how can CSR leaders fully take advantage of volunteering to enhance employee engagement? Through a series of Learning Labs in 2015, Points of Light's Corporate Service Council (CSC) discussed new research and effective practices to understand what drives employees to volunteer and how to best engage them in service. More than 25 CSC companies participated in the Labs as contributors and learners. Global and regional companies like Mondelēz International, CEB, The Advisory Board Company, Belk and nationally-recognized author and consultant Alice Korngold shared their insights and best practices.

### What are the Different Types of Volunteers?

Through these Learning Labs, we discovered that there are three types of employee volunteers:

1. **Employees who are social-oriented.** These employees are motivated by opportunities they believe will be fun, that allow them to volunteer with family and friends and are motivated by the mission of nonprofits and having a direct impact. They represent nearly 50% of employees.
2. **Employees who are career-oriented.** Career-oriented employees are motivated by opportunities to build new skills, and seek out volunteer opportunities that will help them advance their careers. These represent over a quarter (26%) of employees.
3. **Employees who can't be convinced to volunteer.** These employees are generally uninterested in volunteering and may not believe that it creates an impact. They represent nearly a quarter (24.2%) of employees. Knowing that there is a set of employees who may not be convinced will help you set realistic participation goals for your program.



## What Drives Employees to Volunteer at Work?

Social and career-oriented employees look for different things when deciding whether to volunteer at work. The illustration below provides a snapshot of the various activities, policies and programs that resonate the most with these different types of employees.



Social-oriented employees will look for company-sponsored volunteer events where they have the chance to volunteer with their peers, friends or family. Days of Service activities featuring “hands-on” volunteering, including park cleanups, home-builds, kit-packing projects or helping out at the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter would appeal to social-oriented volunteers.

Career-oriented volunteers, on the other hand, would be more motivated by skills-based or pro bono volunteer opportunities that allow them to build their skill-sets, network with others in the company and advance their careers. They would be very interested in activities including mentoring, board service, being part of a pro bono consulting project, a hackathon, or participating in an international volunteer

assignment. Career-oriented volunteers are also strongly motivated by formal recognition of their service accomplishments, and look for opportunities to volunteer during work hours, or right after work.

Policies and practices that appeal to both social and career-oriented employees are paid time off to volunteer, employer matches of employee charitable contributions, and strong nonprofit partnerships.

Surprisingly, we found that the following practices do not drive participation in service:

1. **Manager participation and senior executive communication:** They don't drive participation, but their support is necessary, especially if employees will need their supervisor's approval to participate in volunteer activities.
2. **Sharing participation measures:** This is important for tracking purposes, but doesn't drive participation.

3. **Long-term relationships with partners:** Strong relationships with nonprofit partners makes program management easier and will likely lead to greater impact, but does not drive employees to volunteer.

## Effective Practices to Engage Social and Career-Oriented Employees

The following are a set of effective practices to engage all types of volunteers in service:

*Offer a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, appealing to both social and career-oriented employees.*

- **The Advisory Board Company**, a mid-sized technology, research and consulting company based in Washington, DC, reached 100% employee participation in 2013. To kick off the challenge, the company's CEO, Robert Musslewhite, challenged everyone in the company to volunteer. To reach the goal, the Community Impact team activated grassroots leadership throughout the company to champion volunteering, offered volunteer time off, strong resources and a wide variety of both "hands-on" and skills-based activities. For example, employees could serve food at Miriam's Kitchen, or even create a pitch deck for a nonprofit, pro bono. A central factor of their success was that they had a "finger on the pulse of employee interests." To maintain their success, The Advisory Board has created a program called Cause Communities, which empowers employees to volunteer for any cause area they are passionate about.
- 
- We gave our associates three ways to participate in our 125 Days of Service—on-site, in-store and on personal time.*
- Jessica Graham, VP of Communications and Community Relations Belk
- To appeal to their more career-oriented employees, **Mondelēz International** launched [Joy Ambassadors](#),<sup>2</sup> an international corporate volunteer program that sends employees from around the world to serve and experience life in cocoa-farming communities in Ghana, the birthplace of [Cocoa Life](#), the company's cocoa sustainability program. This two-week skills-exchange program gives employees a first-hand look at the challenges and opportunities in securing a sustainable cocoa supply. In turn, the Ambassadors share their own diverse business skills — from agronomy and R&D to operations, procurement and marketing — with the cocoa farmers.
  - **Belk**, the nation's largest family-owned department store, engaged more than 50% of its employees during its 125 Days of Service Celebration in 2013. With a majority of its employees being front-line workers in sales or operations positions, offering activities they could do in stores, on company time, or even on their own time, was a critical success factor. Belk brought its tagline "Modern. Southern. Style." into its service celebration by partnering with schools to do beautification projects, including painting classrooms, creating murals and landscaping. Volunteers also created reading mats in Belk stores for elementary school students, assembled bookcases and organized book drives. The company also

# CSC Learning Lab Brief

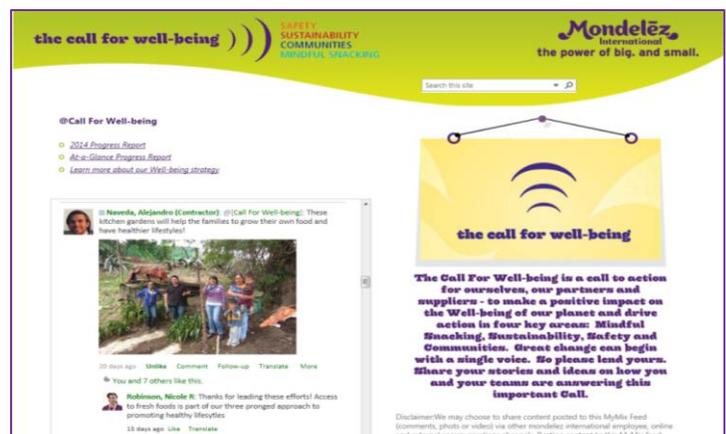
counted personal volunteering that associates wanted to do on their own time. In total, more than 10,000 associates completed 304 projects and volunteered 21,000 hours.

## *Secure management buy-in and support for your programs.*

- Securing both executive and middle-management buy-in and support for volunteering—while not a driver of participation—is critical for success. This is especially true for middle-managers, whose support is needed to allow many employees to participate in service activities. Ahead of its 125 Days of Service, **Belk** brought all store managers from across the country to its headquarters to train them, set expectations and distributed toolkits to help them share volunteering opportunities and messages with their teams. This made all the difference when it came to activation at the store level.

## *Offer policies and programs that resonate with career and social-oriented employees.*

- **Paid time off policies** for volunteering are attractive to both career and social-oriented employees. The Advisory Board and Belk both offer volunteer time off, as does 65% of Points of Light's Corporate Service Council, the premier platform for advancing global volunteerism.
- **Offer recognition opportunities.** Formal recognition like a CEO award may work best for career-oriented employees, and simple incentives, like T-shirts and certificates—which Belk gives to employees who volunteer—can work for social-oriented volunteers.
- **Find fun ways to share service stories.** Mondelez International encourages employees to share service stories via its internal social media site (above). Employees post photos and smartphone videos of the ways they are helping answer the company's [Call for Well-Being](#). During its recent Global Volunteer Month, Mondelez International launched a "Selfie Campaign" for all employees to take photos of themselves gearing up for service.
- **Use pro bono programs and board service as a talent development strategy.** Pro bono programs—specifically, international corporate volunteering— can be ways that companies provide learning and development opportunities for employees, and ways leaders can develop a global mindset. **GSK's PULSE Volunteer Partnership**, for example, is a program that sends employees on three to six-month fellowship engagements with global health organizations in emerging markets. Employees have reported gaining a wealth of leadership and business competencies as a result of their fellowships. 100% report gains in flexible thinking, 92% are more open to empowering others and 89% are more likely to put the customer at the heart of their decisions. In fact, **73% of managers of global pro bono participants indicated that employees had developed leadership skills as a result of their experience.**



# CSC Learning Lab Brief

Board service can also be an effective way to cultivate leadership development and to strengthen communities where employees live and work. Specifically, companies can achieve the benefits of leadership development and community engagement when they:

- Match professionals to nonprofit boards based on each individual's qualifications and interests.
- Train and prepare their executives and professionals for effective board service.
- Support their executives and professionals with company contributions—financial and otherwise.
- Integrate the company's nonprofit board matching program with corporate strategy, including stakeholder engagement and leadership development.



*73% of managers of global pro bono participants indicated that employees had developed leadership skills as a result of their experience.*

## Conclusion

CSR leaders can capitalize on new research revealing what motivates employees to volunteer at work to maximize the impact of their volunteer programs by first understanding whether their employees are social or career-oriented. From there, offer volunteer activities that will appeal to these distinct volunteer groups. This can include “hands-on” activities, including assembling bookcases for students or painting classrooms to offering international pro bono fellowship opportunities, like GSK’s PULSE Volunteer Partnership. For career-oriented volunteers, pro bono projects like this, or board service opportunities, also represent excellent ways for companies to connect employee volunteerism with talent development strategies. From there, tailor policies, communications and recognition to support and encourage volunteers to participate in service programs. The research and practices documented in this brief help us to understand that effective employee volunteerism takes place within an ecosystem—with drivers and supporting, enabling policies playing important roles in driving the greatest value for your organization.

## Corporate Service Council

The Points of Light Corporate Service Council (CSC) is the premier global platform for advancing corporate volunteerism. Since its inception in 2005, the CSC has convened an elite group of companies to leverage the power of corporate volunteerism to create change in communities. CSC members include more than 75 of the world's largest and most successful companies. To learn more about the CSC, visit:

[www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute/corporate-offerings/corporate-service-council](http://www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute/corporate-offerings/corporate-service-council) or contact [corporateinstitute@pointsoflight.org](mailto:corporateinstitute@pointsoflight.org).

### About This Brief

These findings are drawn from a series of Learning Labs held in 2015, featuring presentations of CSR and employee volunteer leaders and practitioners from Corporate Service Council member companies and partners.

Thanks to the following speakers for providing their expertise and support in making this series possible: Adam Brinegar, CEB; Rachel Tappis, The Advisory Board Company; Jessica Graham, Belk; Kelly France, Mondelēz International; Amanda MacArthur, PYXERA Global and Alice Korngold, Korngold Consulting LLC.

For additional resources on employee volunteerism, please visit: [www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute/resources](http://www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute/resources)

The [Points of Light Corporate Institute](http://www.pointsoflight.org/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.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/). To use or distribute this resource, please attribute publication to the Points of Light Corporate Institute. For more information, please visit [www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute](http://www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute) or contact The Points of Light Corporate Institute at [corporateinstitute@pointsoflight.org](mailto:corporateinstitute@pointsoflight.org).

<sup>1</sup> State of the Global Workplace Report, Gallup, 2013. [www.gallup.com/services/178517/state-global-workplace.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178517/state-global-workplace.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> "Mondelēz International Employees Serve and Learn from Communities around the World in Big and Small Ways," Mondelēz International 2013. <http://ir.mondelezinternational.com/releasedetail.cfm?releaseid=809437>