CORPORATE/EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERISM**


Among the twenty-five companies Bollier discusses, are two that have developed innovative programs to encourage and support employee volunteerism. Hanna Anderson, a high quality durable children’s clothing mail-order business, created a children’s clothing donation program entitled “Hannadowns.” In 1993, as an outgrowth of “Hannadowns,” the company began a community outreach program; three nonprofit organizations are selected annually to receive cash donations, clothing and employee time. After General Electric purchased Borg-Warner Chemical in 1988, its subsidiary, GE Plastics, created “Share to Gain” as a team-building program to smooth the merger of the two work forces. Over five months, different staff teams renovated five nonprofit organizations in San Diego. “Share to Gain” succeeded both in raising staff morale and cohesiveness and in influencing a volunteer organization within GE called the “Elf on Society” to continue renovating community-based facilities on weekends.


This publication is a supplement to the 1990 manual Developing a Corporate Volunteer Program: Guidelines for Success (Points of Light Foundation, P.O. Box 79110, Baltimore, MD 21279. 40 pp. $10.00) and provides guidance and practical recommendations for companies that want to enhance their employee volunteer programs. The manual addresses questions that can help businesses assess the value of their programs. Some examples are: 1) How can employee volunteer programs help achieve the company’s ultimate corporate mission? 2) How can employee interests and community needs be better connected? and 3) How can this program align with the company’s philanthropic giving efforts? Also discussed are topics such as: evaluation methods employee volunteer managers can use to measure a program’s viability, the differences between a corporate driven program and an employee-run program, and tips on how to manage the day-to-day operations of an employee volunteer program more effectively. Anecdotes from specific companies’ experiences are included throughout the text, each chapter ends with summary questions, and the appendices provide a sample employee survey and more detail on the evaluation process.

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While large American corporations spend in excess of $64 billion annually to enhance their employees’ management skills, training in other critical skills is being overlooked. According to this article, some companies are using community service activities, including volunteering at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and food banks, serving on the board of trustees at a school, and taking a leadership role in a professional association or state or local chamber of commerce. Job-shadowing programs and mentoring are also discussed. In addition to enumerating the ways in which managers can benefit from participating in community service projects, the author notes that companies that encourage this activity are often regarded as socially responsible and progressive.


This book describes the accomplishments of employees from some of the largest corporations in the United States who have demonstrated unique creativity, compassion and motivation as volunteers. Each of the sixteen chapters focuses on a way in which these people sought to meet a specific community need. Some of the people profiled ran their own projects, while others both volunteered themselves and motivated their co-workers to become volunteers. Terri New from Continental Airlines created “Project Booklift,” a program that has shipped thousands of donated books to Czechoslovakia since the early 1990s. Chrysler Corporation’s Tony Mason inspired several hundred union plant workers in Detroit to become mentors to students, join activity committees, and renovate a nearby elementary school adopted by the plant. The final section of the book offers tips and guidance on how to initiate a corporate voluntary service program and how to get started as an individual volunteer.


A public-private partnership, the Boston Management Corporation (BMC), links volunteer consultants from over one hundred Boston corporations with city government departments to address some of the city’s issues and challenges. BMC was founded in 1989 with the goal of using specific management initiatives to precipitate organizational change in city government and to facilitate ongoing learning and training. The companies who supply volunteer consultants benefit from increased visibility in the community and from the opportunity to work with key government decision-makers. One of the partnership’s most effective programs was “The Safe Neighborhood Plan,” which, led by the Boston Police Department, the Mayor’s Office, and a multicultural team of facilitators, contributed to a twenty-three percent drop in violent crime in Boston during 1990-1992. BMC gives annual awards to city managers who have used the initiatives to improve customer service and to the corporations that provide staff consultants and trainers.


Many companies have begun to move beyond the one-time employee volunteer activity to a more sophisticated approach, customized to their employees’ interests, the needs of their community and the companies’ core businesses.
Romano highlights the following employee volunteer programs: WAVE and Dollars for Doers at Fannie Mae Corporation in Washington, DC; the Involvement Team at Farmers Bank and Trust Company; the Volunteer Connection at General Mills that began in the Twin Cities; Chrysler Corporation's World of Work elementary and high school education program; and the Allstate Foundation and Helping Hands at Allstate Insurance Company that focuses on neighborhood revitalization and safety. Also included is a discussion of the many benefits of corporate volunteerism as well as selected data gathered in a survey on employee volunteerism conducted by the Points of Light Foundation and the Conference Board.


Beginning with the supposition that one of the biggest gifts a corporation can give to nonprofits is people, Steckel and Simons present three case studies of companies that have active employee volunteer programs. Target Stores, a division of Dayton Hudson Corporation, has a team approach to volunteering. Through its Good Neighbor Program, teams of Target employees work on projects that benefit their communities. IBM provides paid release time, full salary, and benefits to staff who want to work up to one year for a nonprofit organization. More than one thousand employees have participated in the Community Service Assignments program, which has been in existence at IBM since 1971. The third company profiled is Nations Bank which has branches in 700 communities in nine states. Recognizing community and employee concern about schools and education, the bank began an employee school volunteer program in 1989. Employees are released two hours a week to volunteer in a school of their choice.


This report is based on speeches presented at the Strategic Opportunities in Corporate Community Activity: Internal Challenges, External Changes Conference held in 1995. It analyzes the impact business, societal and nonprofit trends have made on corporate giving programs, discusses how corporate philanthropy can become more strategically aligned with a company's goals, and provides an overview of some successful corporate philanthropy programs. Companies such as Marshalls, as part of their scholastic partnership program, and the James River Corporation, in their Community of Caring Program, have implemented employee volunteer mentoring programs to improve the quality of education in the cities where they are located. Meharry Medical College's "I Have a Future" program was created with assistance from employee volunteers and helps to prevent teenage pregnancy.


The Los Angeles office of the cable network HBO enlists its employees as biweekly mentors for young people between the ages of 9 and 20 through a link to a community program for inner city youth in south central Los Angeles. The goal of the program is to create an ongoing relationship between the young people and the volunteers and to help instill hope for the future by making the concept of jobs and careers more accessible. The human resources department, which coordinates the program, used aggressive marketing as well as word of
mouth to attract volunteers, yielding twenty-four the first year and thirty-four the second. One of the teenage participants stated that he benefited from the trust, respect and insight he gained about life's coping tools, as well as learning about the entertainment industry.


This article focuses on the companies rated as Industry Week’s 100 Best-managed Companies in 1999. All of the companies demonstrate social, environmental and community consciences as well as an interest in helping their employees balance work and family issues. At General Mills, for example, 80% of employees and 40% of retirees are involved in volunteer activities. Employees in twenty-two communities in which General Mills operates sit on Community Partnership Councils to identify programs designed to make a difference in those communities. Other companies have employee volunteers who assist nonprofit organizations in numerous ways such as: providing food and gifts for families at Christmas, paying utility bills, assisting with transportation, running clothing drives, and raising money through walk-a-thons. These companies also provide their own employees with on-site day care, free breakfast, fitness centers, interest-free housing loans, and flexible work schedules as well as striving for diversity in the workforce and managerial teams.


This report highlights corporate America’s efforts to create and sustain employee volunteer programs. Based on a survey of 454 U.S. corporations conducted by the Conference Board and the Points of Light Foundation in 1992, the report presents the following as benefits of corporate volunteer programs: 1) achieving the goal of competitive advantage through cost savings and by being a value-added endeavor; 2) enhancing a quality work force by improving worker skills and attitudes, attaining higher rates of employee retention and recruitment, and strengthening physical and psychological worker well-being; and 3) improving the company’s image (a public relations boost not always derived from monetary contributions). The survey also found that during hard economic times employee participation in volunteer activities actually increases, since people feel the need to do something meaningful. The appendix contains statistics and graphs summarizing the results of the survey.


This report from the 2000 Leadership Conference on Global Corporate Citizenship examines the ways in which corporate citizenship is becoming more significant for businesses. Simon lists the potential byproducts of corporate citizenship as: 1) improving a company’s reputation; 2) increasing financial gain; 3) adding to a company’s long-term performance; and 4) broadening a company’s capacity to learn, innovate and manage risk in a dynamic and complex business environment. Companies, such as Nike, Levi Strauss, Shell, The Body Shop, and Ben & Jerry’s Homemade, whose corporate citizenship practices have put them in the public spotlight are discussed in the report. The author also examines corporate citizenship in regard to “generation” challenges and other pathway scenarios. The appendix includes international standards such as the Global Compact Principles and lists governmental, non-governmental and collectively developed codes that impact corporate citizenship.