



Corporate social responsibility and employee volunteerism: What do the best companies do?



Cynthia S. Cycyota^{*,1}, Claudia J. Ferrante¹, Jessica M. Schroeder¹

United States Air Force Academy, HQ USAFA/DFM, 2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 6H-130,
USAF Academy, CO 80840, U.S.A.

KEYWORDS

Corporate Social Responsibility;
Employee volunteerism;
Stakeholder engagement;
Corporate reputation;
Community involvement;
Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Abstract Employee volunteerism as a practice of corporate social responsibility aids corporations by strengthening employee satisfaction and retention internally and by strengthening corporate reputations and connections with stakeholders externally. Of particular interest are the specific practices and procedures used by companies to encourage and support volunteer activities of their employees. We reviewed publicly available documents of *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For ranking to gain insight into how these *best* companies practice employee volunteerism and whether they link employee volunteerism to their corporate social responsibility strategy. We propose a connection of the position and importance of employee volunteerism in the corporate practices of social responsibility. Our findings suggest that many highly regarded companies specifically link employee volunteerism to their corporate social responsibility strategy. These companies also utilize similar practices to encourage and support employee volunteerism. We highlight the practices that managers could consider to support their corporate social responsibility efforts and offer several suggestions for future consideration.

© 2016 Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Volunteerism: inside and outside the organization

Volunteerism by the employees of corporations is an important factor in the process of attracting and retaining employees as well as a strategic component of corporate reputation and performance. Many companies, including 90% of Fortune 500 companies, have employee volunteer programs that support and/or subsidize employee volunteer activities and community outreach on company time

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: cynthia.cycyota@usafa.edu (C.S. Cycyota), claudia.ferrante@usafa.edu (C.J. Ferrante), jessica.schroeder@usafa.edu (J.M. Schroeder)

¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

(Points of Light, 2006; Rodell, 2013). Volunteerism is an opportunity for firms to address the demands of stakeholders, contribute to the concerns and interests of the community, provide opportunities for employee engagement, and encourage senior organizational leaders to imbed socially responsible behavior within core businesses (Clarke & Butcher, 2006).

Employers' support for employee volunteerism is both noteworthy and compelling, and it gives rise to additional questions. Wilson (2000) identified the lack of attention paid to the contextual effects of volunteering, to include the impact of community, organizational, and regional characteristics on the decision that an individual employee makes to volunteer. It is also necessary to consider the relevant dynamics between the actions and attitudes of the employee who advocates for policies that facilitate employer-sponsored volunteerism and the attitudes and reactions of the internal and external audience. Research has clearly called for more attention to be paid to the business context and the broader environment in which employer sponsored activities are occurring (Van der Voort, Glac, & Meijs, 2009) along with the many facets of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Janssen, Sen, & Bhattacharya, 2015). We contend that the range of potential benefit from employee volunteerism has not been fully explored and that the specific links between employee volunteerism and a firm's corporate social responsibility strategy have not been studied.

Employee volunteerism is often linked to CSR; however, we believe volunteerism should be considered a distinct and unique component of CSR that can provide the opportunity to link the macro (external) efforts of a corporation to strengthen corporate reputation and create community-based support with the micro (internal) benefits of employee engagement and satisfaction in a multi-level approach (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Taken together, these elements represent a well-balanced public sphere wherein employees are able to actively support public concerns while simultaneously improving their reputation and outreach of the company (Andrews, 1987).

The compelling questions that we ask are how corporations deploy the concept of employee volunteerism and if they intentionally include it as part of their CSR strategy. We explore the employee volunteerism practices of highly regarded firms and examine the relationship between the explicit company association of employee volunteerism with CSR and how the companies convey those practices to stakeholders. We review the volunteerism literature related to our questions, explore the internal and external benefits companies reap by

encouraging employee volunteerism, and explain our methodology and results. We conclude with outlining several opportunities for organizations interested in starting or improving their employee volunteer programs (EVPs).

2. What do we know about employee volunteerism?

2.1. Definition of employee volunteerism

We define employee volunteerism in a manner consistent with McGlone, Spain, and McGlone (2011): the deliberate and active giving of one's time, energy, skills, or talents to a charitable organization without receiving payment in return. Employer-supported volunteerism, in particular, is defined as the active support, through a variety of means, for employees volunteering with charitable organizations. We have not deemed monetary or material charitable contributions as acts of volunteerism. This is consistent with the three key components of individual or private volunteerism laid out by Rodell (2013):

- It is an active giving of time and/or skills rather than more passive support through monetary donations (Musick & Wilson, 2008);
- It is a planned activity as opposed to a reactive act of helping (Clary & Snyder, 1999);
- It occurs in the context of a volunteer or charitable organization (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

2.2. Internal benefits of employee volunteerism: Motivation, skill development, and satisfaction

Understanding the motivations and attitudes behind volunteerism is integral to sustaining an organizational culture conducive to CSR engagement. At the employee level, motivations found for volunteering include altruism, meaningfulness, organizational citizenship, role variety, relational and social task characteristics, networking, and personal reasons. One motive, altruism, was noted as significant by more than 50% of the participants in a study conducted by Pajo and Lee (2011). Similarly, Pelozo and Hassay (2006) found that volunteerism is motivated by one or more of three main desires: to help one's employer, to help others, and to help oneself.

The attitudes and motivations toward CSR are especially evident in the Millennial Generation,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1013868>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1013868>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)