

2nd World Conference On Business, Economics And Management - WCBEM 2013

Do companies understand what employees want from their social engagement experience?

Dana Burr Bradley^{a*},

^a Center for Gerontology, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd, Bowling Green, KY 42101 USA

Abstract

Until recently, employee involvement with social engagement was often marginalized. Consider the current environment where interest in increasing diversity is increasing, and when ensuring that volunteers are satisfied with their experience is important. How do non-governmental organizations recruit volunteers of different backgrounds when little is known concerning what they hope to achieve? How can corporations support volunteer opportunities? This paper examines the “match” between what a volunteer expected and then received in his or her volunteer opportunity and strengthens our understanding of how differences and similarities could inform effective corporate volunteer programs.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Organizing Committee of BEM 2013.

Keywords: social engagement, volunteers, workplace, employee;

1. Introduction

Workers who volunteer through their workplace feel more positive toward their employer and report a strengthened bond with co-workers (United Healthcare, 2010). However, while businesses can play a key role in promoting volunteerism, only 25 percent of workers who volunteer do so through their employer,

- 84 percent of employed Americans surveyed who volunteer through their employer agreed that more people would volunteer if the employer helped provide the means and motivation.
- 88 percent of those who volunteer said the experience provides networking and career development opportunities vs. 75 percent of non-volunteers who said the same thing.
- 81 percent of those who volunteer through their employer said it strengthens their relationships with colleagues.
- 57 percent of employed Americans surveyed said their company does not encourage its employees to volunteer.
- 21 percent of employed Americans said they would not be a volunteer if their employer had not provided them the opportunity (United Healthcare, 2010).

* Corresponding Author: Dana Burr Bradley.
E – mail address: dana.bradley@wku.edu

Until recently, employee volunteering and giving often were relegated “to the margins of corporate citizenship,” (Boccalandro, 2009). When brought to the forefront, employees strengthen corporate citizenship from the inside out with compassion, promising ideas and unparalleled energy. Consider the current environment where the quest for diversity among volunteer workforces is on the rise and when ensuring that volunteers are satisfied with their experience is an emerging challenge for nonprofit organizations. How does an organization recruit volunteers of different backgrounds when little is known concerning what they hope to achieve from their experience? How can corporations hope to support rewarding volunteer opportunities if they pursue a “one size fits all” strategy? This paper examines the “match” between what a volunteer expected and then received in his or her volunteer opportunity. The subsequent analysis strengthens our knowledge bases of how differences and similarities could inform effective corporate volunteer programs.

2. Background

To recruit and retain a diverse volunteer workforce, a non-governmental (or non-profit) organization must know what prospective volunteers want to achieve from their volunteer work. A review of the prevailing volunteer literature suggests that little is known about the relationship between generational age and volunteerism. The focus of volunteer research related to ethnicity addresses participation and level of involvement of the volunteer (Mattis, et al, 2000; Musick, et al, 2000; Reddy & Smith, 1973; Rogers, 1999; Smith, 1994; Snowden, 2001; Stanfield, 1993; Steinberg, et al, 2002; Wallace, 2003). There is a dearth of research related to volunteer satisfaction and limited research examining work-related motivational factors.

To obtain a complete picture of volunteerism in the United States, especially among populations groups where formal activities may be less attractive, it is important to look beyond the confines of formal volunteering and explore a broader definition that includes informal volunteering and civic responsibility. Traditional surveys under-represent the volunteerism of African Americans and individuals of Hispanic origin because they do not include charitable behaviors that are considered civic responsibility by these ethnic cultures (Kutner & Love, 2003; Standfield, 1993; Steinberg, et al, 2002). For example, by asking probing questions concerning volunteer activities designed to capture both formal and informal volunteering, an AARP study of Americans over 45 showed an increase in participation of 36% for Non-Hispanic whites and 41% for both African Americans and respondents of Hispanic origin (Kutner & Love, 2003).

In addition to studying both formal and informal volunteerism, the methodology used to evaluate volunteer trends must be carefully considered. Increases shown in the AARP study as a result of additional probing provides compelling evidence that methodologies used to obtain the volunteer data can prevent a clear picture of who volunteers. A distorted view of volunteer participation can prevent nonprofit organizations from spending time attempting to recruit from a particular ethnic group. Despite studies showing a significant variation in volunteer participation among racial and ethnic groups (Harootyan & Voreck, 1994; Mattis, 2000; Stoll, 2001), other studies have also shown that volunteerism does not vary with ethnicity when controlling for socioeconomic factors (Reddy & Smith, 1973; Smith, 1994; Steinberg, et al, 2002). The incongruent results in the various studies related to ethnicity and volunteerism indicate other factors must also be considered when developing a volunteer recruitment and retention plan.

Motivation provides a basis for attracting and keeping a diverse volunteer workforce. Scholars have theorized a range of factors, including wanting to help society, personal growth and social privilege, that may help explain why people volunteer (Sokolowski, 1996; Clary et al, 1996; Morrow-Howell & Mui, 1989). Much of the prevailing literature on African-American volunteering is based on the premise that African Americans participate in voluntary associations because they historically were not allowed to be active in White America (Rose, 1944; Stanfield, 1993; Yearwood, 1978). The literature also indicates that volunteer participation by African Americans is influenced by their history of discrimination and racism (Nápoles-Springer, et al, 2000; Reddy & Smith, 1973). Preliminary research has examined motivations of ethnic volunteers within specific organizational settings. Studies of HIV/AIDS volunteerism have focused on the role of communalism and religiosity as primary motivators of African-American participation (Mattis et al, 2000; Christensen et al, 1999). However, these studies do not address what types of benefits might attract a particular ethnicity and generally suggest that people volunteer because they want to help others (Davis, 2000; Kutner & Love, 2003; Reddy & Smith, 1973; Rogers, 1999). A helpful vantage

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1116774>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1116774>

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