

Eight Steps to Start an Employee Volunteer Program



By following the eight steps listed below, starting an employee volunteer program can be straightforward and simple. These steps help to put processes and systems in place to ensure the employee volunteer program is successful and effective.

For more information or assistance in workplace volunteering, contact the National Corporate Volunteer Council Network at: CVCinfo@handsonnetwork.org

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1. Assess employees' interests and community needs. Survey employees to find out more about the employees' volunteer experience and specific volunteer interests. Contact your local HandsOn Action Center by calling 404-979-2900 or visiting www.HandsOnNetwork.org. Other resources may include the United Way, Chamber of Commerce or local government. These organizations often offer access to a community needs assessment and volunteer opportunities.
2. Identify business priorities and goals that the employee volunteer program can meet. A successful program reflects the culture and values of a company while adding value to business objectives. Use the business objectives as the beginning pieces of information for a business plan for your employee volunteer program.
3. Secure top management support. All levels of management should encourage employee participation. Identify senior managers to champion the program and to participate in volunteer activities.
4. Develop a program structure and program policies. Encourage participation from all levels of employees and think about setting up an employee steering committee to determine the focus of the program. Develop written company policies around volunteering. Learn from effective practices in the field of workplace volunteering. For further assistance, contact HandsOn Network at: CVCinfo@handsonnetwork.org for company program examples. Or join your local Corporate Volunteer Council to network and share valuable resources.
5. Align volunteering with financial contributions and in-kind support. Consider organization volunteer activities that support the same nonprofits which receive company monetary donations. Philanthropy dollars are stronger when there are volunteers to back it up.
6. Measure the program and evaluate results. Develop mechanisms to track employee participation and satisfaction with the program and overall outcomes of the program, as well as individual volunteering experiences. Is your program meeting its strategic goals outlined in your business plan?
7. Establish a recognition or awards program. Develop systems to reward and recognize employee volunteers whether it's a certificate of appreciation, mugs, t-shirts, or extra vacation time.
8. Publicize your efforts, both internally and externally. Communicate before and after the event through newsletters, Intranet, email, media releases, etc. Results of a volunteer activity are especially important in exciting employees to start or continue volunteering.