

## Principles of Excellence for Workplace Volunteering Background

The Principles, initially established in 1992, were validated last year through research and focus groups and with input from an advisory task force comprised of more than 50 practitioners. The validation process was undertaken to ensure that these standards were relevant to the current business environment. The Points of Light Foundation confirmed that these Principles still apply in today's environment, but with even greater emphasis on cross-sector partnerships and a more deliberate effort around specific outcomes and sustainability to help define excellence in employee volunteer programs. These updated Principles will serve as the criteria for the Foundation's Awards for Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs and a basis for the new publication *Chief Executives Talk About the Business Value of Workplace Volunteering: the Principles of Excellence for Workplace Volunteering*.

### Principles of Excellence for Workplace Volunteering

- 1. Acknowledge that the workplace's employee volunteer efforts contribute to the achievement of its business goals.**
- 2. Commit to establish, support and promote an employee volunteer program that encourages the involvement of every employee, and manage the employee volunteer program like any other business function.**
- 3. Target workplace volunteering at serious social problems in the community.**

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that the workplace's employee volunteer efforts contribute to the achievement of the organization's business goals.

**Why:** Ensure program sustainability by aligning the program with core business values, thus laying the strategic foundation for the employee volunteer program.

**How:** Integrate the company's social vision with the business vision. Use mission statements, credos, or social policy statements, to illustrate the understanding that societal and community issues impact the company. Communicate this priority to internal and external stakeholders.

- The company (organization) recognizes that societal and community issues have a direct relationship to the organization's future success. This relationship is expressed through:
  - Organizational identity statements such as mission, vision, values statements, and/or
  - Organization, business or department goals.
- Employee volunteering is a key component in the organization's overall community involvement efforts.

3. The organization communicates its corporate social vision consistently to its external and internal stakeholders through means such as an annual report, posting on web sites, newsletter articles, etc.
4. Senior management participates in leading the volunteer effort and takes an active, visible role in the community.
5. The employee volunteer program brings strategic benefits to the organization and contributes to its business goals.

**COMMIT** to establish, support and promote an employee volunteer program that encourages the involvement of every employee, and manage the employee volunteer program like any other business function.

**Why:** Making an organizational commitment to the program is essential for its success and longevity.

**How:** Allocate sufficient resources to develop, manage, and sustain successful employee volunteer efforts. Manage the employee volunteer program with a business plan. Establish policies, procedures, and incentives that encourage and enable optimum employee participation. Develop volunteer projects that utilize the distinctive skills of the company and its employees to target and address community issues. Conduct evaluations of program to determine its effect on the company, employees, and the community.

6. The employee volunteer program is designed with a work plan including goals, resources, a promotional plan and recognition strategies, evaluation, etc.
7. The employee volunteer program is employee-driven and has input from senior management and community members.
8. The employee volunteer program is supported with policies and practices that encourage optimum participation. Policies and practices may include released time, flex time, continuous improvement practices for volunteer events, participation goals, recognition, funds for expenses or monetary grants to nonprofit organizations where employees volunteer, etc.
9. The employee volunteer program is managed to bring value to the organization. Value can be gained through teambuilding, employee leadership development, family-included events, enhanced community relationships, strengthened business relationships, etc.
10. The employee volunteer program is evaluated to determine the outcomes that it brings to the company, employees and the community.

**TARGET** community service efforts at serious social problems in the community.

**Why:** Targeted volunteer efforts at community social problems will bring tangible results and outcomes for the program, employees, and the community.

**How:** Survey employees to determine their interests on which serious social problems they would like to work. Focus employee volunteer programs so that they address serious social problems. Analyze results from regular evaluations with nonprofit partners and employees to determine the program's outcome. Assess current partnerships based on agreed upon goals.

11. The employee volunteer program has a focus on addressing serious social problems.
12. The organization develops employee volunteer partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, Volunteer Centers, Business/Corporate Volunteer Councils or grassroots agencies to leverage resources to meet serious, systemic social problems in the community. The result being that both the organization and the community view the employee volunteer program as a resource for the community.
13. The employee volunteer program engages in increasing its nonprofit partners' capacities of skills and resources to work toward their missions.