
How to create a successful and sustainable corporate volunteer program

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS

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Introduction

Corporate volunteering has cemented itself firmly in the ethos of progressive organisations and nonprofits worldwide. It represents an intersection where businesses meet social responsibility, where personal growth aligns with collective betterment, and where passion melds with purpose. This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of corporate volunteering, offering insights, strategies, and real-world case studies to inform corporations and nonprofits.

We will uncover the global factors at play that are having an impact on volunteering numbers and the role corporate volunteerism will play in addressing the recruitment gap.

From a corporate perspective, the benefits of volunteering are discussed, highlighting its strategic importance alongside its philanthropic impact. The advantages nonprofits gain from these programs are also presented, illustrating the connection between nonprofit goals and corporate resources.

Concluding with practical examples, the experiences of a Brisbane based non profit who excel at building strong bonds with corporate partners and The London Youth Games who have tapped into the potential of community spirit within corporate organisations. This paper will help you understand that developing a Corporate Volunteer program will help your cause and making it sustainable will set you up for long term success.



WHAT IS CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING?

Corporate volunteering, also known as employee volunteering or workplace volunteering, refers to the activities and initiatives where employees of a business participate in volunteer work, often during their regular working hours, to support charitable, social, or environmental causes. This can be facilitated either directly by the corporation or in collaboration with nonprofit organisations. It's an initiative with enormous potential to positively impact on the corporation and its employees, the nonprofit, and the wider community.

Corporate volunteering can incorporate many activities, from one-off volunteering events to long-term partnerships between businesses and nonprofits. Companies often facilitate this engagement by providing opportunities for employees to volunteer during working hours, granting paid time off for volunteering, or organising company-sponsored volunteer events.

How corporate partners benefit from corporate volunteer programs

Employee engagement

Central to corporate volunteering is the involvement of a company's employees. Whether it's a single day dedicated to community service or a long-term project, the participation of employees is vital.

Organisational support

Unlike individual volunteering, corporate volunteering comes with the backing of the entire organisation. This includes logistical support, financial resources, and strategic guidance.

Alignment with values

A successful corporate volunteering program seamlessly integrates with an organisation's mission and values. It's an integral part of the organisation's broader commitment to social responsibility.

Measurable outcomes

Corporate volunteering is about delivering tangible, quantifiable results that positively impact the community. It's about achieving real, measurable change that benefits those in need.

Types of corporate volunteering opportunities

Skills-based volunteering: Corporate volunteering applies the skills and talents of employees to different situations. It encourages employees to use their expertise in new ways to address societal challenges. For example, a team from an IT company might help a local charity update its website.

Team-building volunteering: Corporations encourage collaboration by enabling groups of employees to work together on community projects. This approach enhances team dynamics as employees combine their strengths to achieve a common goal outside of the usual corporate environment. For instance, a marketing team might collaborate with a local school to organise a fundraiser, requiring them to harness their collective skills in event planning, promotion, and stakeholder engagement.

Board service: Senior professionals or executives serve on the boards of nonprofits, providing strategic direction and leadership.

Long-term projects: Some corporations embark on long-term volunteer projects, dedicating resources and personnel to causes for an extended period, often spanning months or even years.

Employee Choice: Corporations give employees a set number of hours annually to volunteer for a cause of their choice, encouraging individual choice in charitable activities.

The benefits of engaging with Corporate Volunteering Partners



ADDITIONAL TALENT

Human capital: One of the most immediate benefits is the influx of personnel. Large corporations can dispatch teams of volunteers, providing nonprofits with the necessary workforce for events, initiatives, and daily operations.

Skill infusion: Corporate volunteers often bring specialised skills and expertise from their professional backgrounds, be it in marketing, IT, finance, or project management. This diversity in skill sets can significantly enhance the capabilities of nonprofits.



ENHANCED VISIBILITY

Brand association: Aligning with a corporate entity can give nonprofits increased visibility due to the association with a well-known brand. This is especially beneficial for smaller nonprofits looking to expand their reach.

Media and networking: Corporate involvement can sometimes lead to better media coverage and opportunities to be part of corporate events, widening the nonprofit's network.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Direct donations: Corporate volunteer partnerships often pave the way for financial contributions, either directly or through platforms that convert volunteer hours into funds.

Sponsorship opportunities: Engaged corporations may eventually evolve into sponsors for specific events or programs, ensuring steady streams of funding.



CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Diverse representation: Corporate volunteers often represent varied demographic segments. Their involvement ensures a more inclusive and representative workforce, fostering deeper community ties.

Feedback loop: Corporate volunteers, due to their unique professional backgrounds, might provide constructive feedback on operations, strategy, or community engagement, helping nonprofits refine their approaches.



LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Repeat volunteering: Once employees have had a positive volunteering experience, they're more likely to volunteer again, either individually or as part of future corporate initiatives.

Strategic partnerships: What starts as a volunteering relationship can morph into a long-term partnership, with corporations getting involved in multiple facets of a nonprofit's operations, from funding to strategy.



BOOST INNOVATION

Technology access: Some corporations, especially in the tech sector, might offer tools, software, or platforms to nonprofits either for free or at a discounted rate.

Infrastructure support: In some cases, corporations might provide physical resources like event venues, office supplies, or transportation, reducing operational costs for the nonprofit.

Volunteering: the global picture

Globally, the landscape of volunteering has been undergoing notable changes, with a trend of decline becoming evident. Historically, many regions have prided themselves on vibrant volunteering cultures, where community involvement and selfless service were ingrained as societal values.

In recent years, a combination of changing work patterns, socio-economic shifts, technological advancements, and evolving generational priorities have contributed to a decline in volunteer participation. As community and grassroots initiatives grapple with these challenges, there is a pressing need to reevaluate and modernise traditional volunteering models to make them resonate with contemporary life and expectations.

A new wave of environmentally conscious and socially motivated volunteers is actively seeking opportunities to make a difference. As organisations strive to address issues of exclusion and gender inequality, they are actively encouraging women and girls to participate in volunteerism.

Studies indicate that women are more likely to engage in formal volunteer work compared to men, accounting for approximately 57%. This percentage increases even further when considering the estimated rates for informal volunteering, reaching 59%.¹

57%FORMAL
VOLUNTEERING**59%**INFORMAL
VOLUNTEERING

As we face the challenges of a “post-covid19” era, with global economic strains and climate change looming, it is essential for states and communities to reimagine how we engage volunteers, especially the next generation.

SOURCES

1. UNV, “Beyond averages: do gender disparities exist in volunteering?”

Reasons for the decline in volunteerism

- 01 Time constraints:** Modern lifestyles, characterised by long working hours and increased responsibilities, have left individuals with less free time for extracurricular activities, including volunteering.
- 02 Shift in social dynamics:** Traditional community structures, where volunteering was a norm, have evolved. Urbanisation and the breakdown of extended family systems can lead to reduced community engagement.
- 03 Economic pressures:** Economic downturns or individual financial pressures can deter potential volunteers, as immediate personal and family needs take priority.
- 04 Lack of awareness:** Many individuals are unaware of volunteering opportunities or how to get involved, resulting in missed potential.
- 05 Bureaucratic challenges:** In some regions, cumbersome processes, lack of clear guidelines, or bureaucratic red tape can discourage potential volunteers.

How corporate volunteering can reverse this trends

If non profit organisations, charities and mass participation event management teams are able to build long terms relationships with corporate sponsors and partners they can improve recruitment and retention of volunteers, through recognition of their efforts, smoother processes for paying out of pocket expenses and greater visibility of the impact that program is able to achieve.

Corporate entities can use their significant resources to run awareness campaigns, highlight the benefits of volunteering and connect their organisations to wider communities. Multinational corporations, with their global presence, can initiate volunteering programs that address international challenges, such as any one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

To improve global volunteering numbers is going to take a collaborative effort between those with a cause and the organisations that can provide support.

How to create a successful and sustainable corporate volunteering strategy for your non profit

This guide is designed to assist nonprofits in creating a comprehensive strategy for incorporating a corporate volunteering program into its initiatives. Through this program, a nonprofit can further its mission and deepen its community ties by capitalising on the expertise and dedication of corporate employees.

SETTING GOALS

Engage corporations: Identify and partner with corporations who share similar values and objectives to the nonprofit.

Employee engagement: Encourage employee participation in volunteering activities to connect them more deeply to the nonprofit's cause.

Skill utilisation: Tap into corporate volunteer's existing skillsets, like leadership, project management, and teamwork, to further the nonprofit's objectives.

Community impact: Make a tangible difference in the communities where the nonprofit operates by addressing social and environmental challenges through volunteer efforts.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Establish a dedicated corporate volunteering committee: Form a committee comprised of representatives from various areas of your organisation to oversee the program's implementation, execution and evaluation.

Partnership development: Connect with corporations that align with your organisation's values and goals and establish long-term partnerships with them to ensure sustained impact.

Volunteer database: Create a database to manage volunteer information, track volunteer hours and match volunteers with suitable opportunities based on their skills and interests.

Volunteer guidelines: Draft comprehensive guidelines that clarify the volunteering process for corporate employees.

ENGAGING CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Effective communication: Keep the lines of communication open to update corporate partners about the significance of their contributions.

Recognition and celebration: Acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of corporate volunteers through awards, certificates, or public acknowledgment.

Team integration: Design activities that mix your regular volunteers with corporate teams, encouraging unity and collaboration.

HARNESSING SKILLS

Skill-based workshops: Organise sessions where corporate volunteers can train your nonprofit's team in areas like project management, fundraising, or other specialties.

Peer mentoring: Facilitate programs where experienced corporate volunteers mentor your nonprofit's staff or other volunteers, sharing their knowledge.



EVALUATION AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Set key performance indicators (KPIs): Define measurable KPIs aligned with program goals such as volunteer participation rates, skills transferred or community outreach impact.

Regular reporting: Establish a reporting mechanism to track and analyse the program's performance.

Feedback and surveys: Conduct periodic surveys to gather feedback from both volunteers and your nonprofit's team to assess the program's effectiveness, make improvements and ensure alignment with the needs of the community.



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Budget allocation: Allocate adequate financial resources to support aspects of the program such as partnership outreach, volunteer orientation and recognition events.

Human resources: Assign dedicated staff members or local program coordinators responsible for volunteer management, project coordination and communication with the corporation.



SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Program evolution: Review and refine the program annually to ensure its relevance and alignment with evolving social needs and nonprofit objectives.

Measurement and impact analysis: Continuously evaluate the program's impact on the community and involvement level of corporate volunteers.

Sharing best practices: Encourage a culture where learnings and success stories from the corporate volunteering experience are shared and celebrated.

By integrating corporate volunteering into your nonprofit's strategy, you can open doors to meaningful collaborations, a stronger community presence, and an enriched volunteering experience. Regular evaluation and adjustments ensure the program remains relevant and continues to make a profound difference.

The role technology plays in corporate volunteering

The use of technology in corporate volunteering is crucial for improving efficiency, increasing engagement, and providing data insights. Using the right technology can profoundly enhance the volunteering landscape, making it more efficient, measurable, and impactful.



Why volunteer management software matters

Volunteer management software is one of the most important digital tools in running a successful corporate volunteering program. Volunteer management software is designed to centralise, streamline, and automate the entire process of volunteer management from recruitment and training to scheduling, communication, and feedback collection. By using a digital volunteer management solution, organisations save invaluable time and resources, and enhance the overall volunteer experience, leading to higher retention and engagement rates.

Rosterfy is a leading volunteer management software solution tailored to address today's volunteer management challenges. Recognising the complexities inherent in coordinating diverse volunteer groups, Rosterfy offers a suite of features designed to simplify the volunteer management processes. Rosterfy delivers more than just basic software features. Its intuitive interface and commitment to offering a tailored volunteer experience have cemented its place as an indispensable partner for organisations aiming to elevate their corporate volunteering initiatives.



The difference Rosterfy will make to your corporate volunteering program



Personalised invitation links for corporate teams: By generating customised invitation links, Rosterfy ensures that individuals from corporate teams are smoothly onboarded. These links, embedded with specific registration forms, allow tailored interactions based on the audience, ensuring that volunteers are placed into designated groups and assigned shifts seamlessly.



Empowering group leaders: Recognising the importance of leadership in volunteering, Rosterfy provides functionalities for a designated leader to manage their teams. From inviting members and scheduling shifts, to handling check-ins, group leaders can ensure seamless coordination, eliminating the common challenges associated with manual volunteer management.



Flexibility in advertising volunteering opportunities: With Rosterfy, there's a perfect balance between publicity and exclusivity. While some volunteering opportunities can be advertised for public visibility, others can be restricted to specific corporate groups. This dual approach ensures that opportunities reach the intended audience, allowing for better volunteer matching and event management.



Customisable content and targeted branding: Rosterfy's branding tools enable organisations to tailor their email templates, registration forms, and portal content. Such customisations ensure that communications resonate with specific corporate groups, enhancing the sense of connection and motivation to volunteer.



Reports and insights: One of the strongest points of technology in any domain is its ability to provide actionable data. Rosterfy excels here by tracking and analysing volunteering hours, showcasing the positive impact of corporate volunteering teams. These insights help corporates see their tangible contribution and provide a basis for further improvement and engagement.

Case Study: How The Common Good leverage corporate volunteering to increase their reach and impact

Background

The Common Good, an initiative of The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation, champions the cause of medical research in Australia. With an established network of corporate volunteers, they've successfully turned significant events into fundraising powerhouses, strengthening their commitment to the community.

The EKKA event

The EKKA event is a monumental occasion for The Common Good. Drawing close to 400,000 attendees, it becomes a fusion of community, rural life, and exciting activities. The key to its success is a team of approximately 1,700 volunteers, a significant portion being from corporate partnerships, all managed through the Rosterfy platform.

30%

ALMOST 30% OF THE
COMMON GOOD'S
VOLUNTEERS COME
FROM CORPORATE
PARTNERSHIPS



The Common Good's volunteer vision

While The Common Good's efforts involve supporting a broad spectrum of fundraising activities for health research, their corporate volunteering focus during events like Ekka is clear - create a seamless experience for volunteers while maximising fundraising. And it's a win-win. Corporate volunteers participating in the Ekka event contribute to the community and in return receive tangible benefits like free event tickets.

Facing challenges: Communication is key

For The Common Good, the primary challenge isn't recruitment; it's coordination. Managing a vast number of corporate volunteers for a massive event like Ekka requires impeccable communication and organisation. The Rosterfy platform enables The Common Good to automate many volunteer management functions, from onboarding to scheduling, which ensures a streamlined experience.

"A corporate relationship is exactly that, a relationship. It's about providing mutual value and those relationships really need to be nurtured."

CHLOE NGUYEN — GENERAL MANAGER MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIPS, THE COMMON GOOD

Corporate Relationships

Corporate volunteering is not just about numbers; it's about relationships.

The key, as highlighted by Chloe Nguyen, The Common Good's General Manager of Marketing and Memberships, is effective communication. Ensuring corporate partners understand the impact and significance of their contribution is paramount. By offering a top-tier volunteering experience and emphasising mutual benefits, The Common Good successfully retains and expands on its corporate partnerships.

Redefining the corporate volunteer experience with Rosterfy

In an ever-evolving volunteer landscape, offering a consistent and enriching experience is crucial. Rosterfy emerges as the tool of choice for volunteer management, transforming how The Common Good engages and manages its corporate volunteers, ensuring each event and initiative achieves its maximum potential.

The Common Good shows how strategic corporate volunteering can significantly enhance a nonprofit's reach and impact. Through structured management, effective communication, and the right technological tools, they've set a benchmark in maximising the benefits of corporate volunteering.

Interview: How the London Youth Games use Rosterfy to successfully manage their corporate volunteering program

In this case study, Ellie Reid, the Youth and Workforce Development Manager at the London Youth Games (LYG), shares insights into the LYG corporate volunteering program. This candid interview offers an insider's perspective on how the LYG effectively leverages Rosterfy's capabilities to streamline and optimise their corporate volunteering program.

“Rosterfy helps through being able to create Groups and assign a Group Leader. This means we can provide the organisation with autonomy in assigning shifts to their staff.”

ELLIE REID – YOUTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, LONDON YOUTH GAMES

How do Corporate Volunteers get involved with London Youth Games?

ER: There is a tailored approach to recruiting corporate volunteers as every organisation integrates volunteering differently. Usually, a staff lead at an organisation reaches out to myself through our website to learn more about opportunities. I'll set up a meeting to discuss how our corporate volunteering works, the opportunities available, and find the best process for both sides to recruit and fulfil volunteering positions.

What are the specific benefits of having corporate volunteers?

ER: LYG can gain access to larger groups of volunteers with less work required, especially for bigger events, to fulfil the volunteer positions. On average, these volunteers are more reliable as they are coming as a group through their work. It gives access to a different audience of volunteers which provides a more representative workforce. For example, corporate volunteers tend to be younger than individual volunteers.

Corporate volunteers can fill weekday positions whereas most individuals can only do weekends. When corporate volunteers come as groups, they bring a different dynamic. It is often with a lot of enthusiasm and energy.

Does corporate volunteering have any commercial benefits or impacts on fundraising for LYG?

ER: Corporate volunteering supports the development of mutually beneficial partnerships with sponsors and suppliers. A couple of organisations support us through 'Benevity' which provides us with donations when their staff volunteer with us.

How does Rosterfy help manage corporate volunteering?

ER: Rosterfy helps through being able to create Groups and assign a Group Leader. This means we can provide the organisation with autonomy in assigning shifts to their staff.

With Rosterfy we are able to provide different group members with different registration processes and dashboards meaning we can provide a more tailored approach for corporates.

With corporates on Rosterfy, they can also get access to general volunteering opportunities, if they would like to volunteer with us outside of their organisation.

About Rosterfy



Rosterfy exists to connect communities to events and causes they are passionate about through volunteer and paid workforce management technology.

Our proven end to end technology allows charities, events and nonprofit organisations to recruit, register, screen, train, manage and report with ease, replacing manual processes with automations to better engage and retain your volunteers and paid staff. If you'd like to learn more about how Rosterfy can work for you, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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