Employee Volunteering Report

A Global Study of Employee Motivation to Engage in Corporate Volunteering Programs

2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Biography of Researchers

Jonathan E. Booth, the London School of Economics and Political Science. He received his Ph.D. in human resources and industrial relations at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. Dr. Booth's research interests include corporate social responsibility and employee volunteer programs, workplace aggression and forgiveness, among other topics. His work has been published in journals such as: *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* and *Human Resource Management*.

Jessica B. Rodell, Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia. She received her Ph.D. and MBA from the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business Administration. Dr. Rodell's research interests include employee volunteering, justice, and emotions. Her work has been published in journals such as: the *Academy of Management Journal* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Questions regarding the results of this study should be directed to Dr. Jessica Rodell at jrodell@uga.edu.

Research Questions

In conjunction with United Way Worldwide, the research team designed this project in order to address three general questions about employee volunteering and corporate volunteering programs:

1   **What motivates employees to become involved in Corporate Volunteering Programs?**

2   **What features define Corporate Volunteering Programs, and, how do they affect employee volunteering?**

3   **What are the benefits of these programs for companies and employees? And, how are they tracked?**

Definitions

Employee Volunteering: Giving time or skills during a planned activity for a volunteer group or organization.

Employee Volunteering Program: Formal programs for employee volunteering that are hosted by employers.

Corporate Volunteering: Employee volunteering conducted through a corporate volunteering program.

METHODOLOGY

United Ways Involved

Australia
- United Way Australia

Brasil
- United Way Brasil

Canada
- United Way of Greater Toronto

India
- United Way Mumbai

USA
- Greater Mankato Area United Way, Inc.
- Heart of Florida United Way
- United Way of Asheville & Buncombe County
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
- United Way of Central Indiana
- United Way of Central Jersey
- United Way of Central Kentucky
- United Way of Central New Mexico
- United Way of Central Ohio
- United Way of Dane County
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati
- United Way of the Greater Dayton Area
- United Way of Greater Lafayette
- United Way of Greater Milwaukee
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey
- United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc.
- United Way of King County
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley
- United Way of Palm Beach County
- United Way of Salt Lake
- United Way of Siouxland
- United Way of Tarrant County
- United Way of the Midlands in Omaha, NE
- United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona
- United Way of Yellowstone County
- United Way Worldwide

Study Design

Each participating United Way recruited local companies with employee volunteering programs to participate in this study. At each of the participating companies, the coordinator of the volunteering program provided information about the details of the program. The coordinator also identified a set of employees who volunteered through the program, as well as a set of employees who did not volunteer through the program. These employees provided information about their attitudes, motivations, and behaviors regarding volunteering.

52 **Companies Participated**
On average, 3 companies per United Way

237 **Employees Participated**
On average, 4 to 5 employees per company

186 Volunteered through the EVP
**51** Did not volunteer through the EVP

PARTICIPANTS

Demographics

Unless specifically noted, the following demographics refer to employee volunteers, non-volunteers, and coordinators of corporate volunteer programs.

Age: 43 years old (ranging from 22 to 66 years old)

Gender: The majority of employees (volunteers or not volunteers) were male, while the majority of coordinators were female.
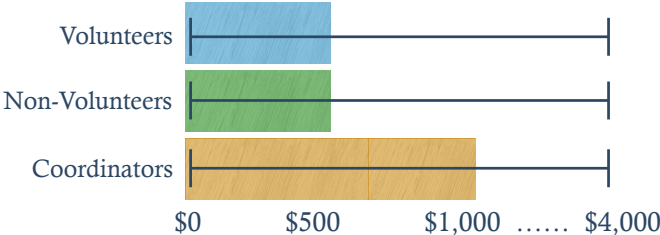
Employees

Coordinators

35%
Female

65%
Male

30%
Male

70%
Female
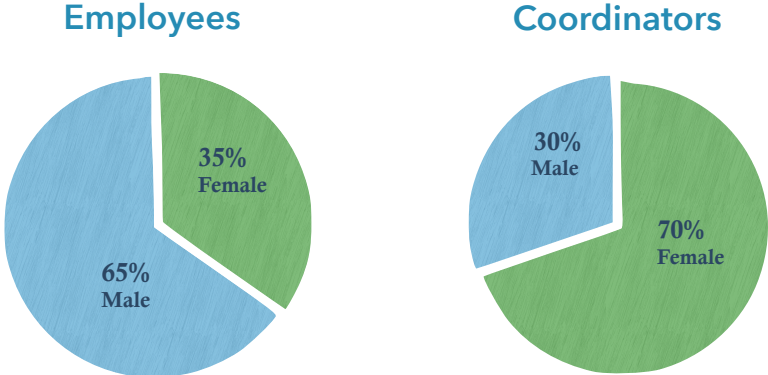
Education: The majority of participants – **76%** of employees and **90%** of coordinators – held at least a college degree.

Marital Status: 15% were married or living together, **74%** were single, and **11%** were no longer with their partner.

Race: 80% were Caucasian, **6.7%** were African American, **4.7%** were Asian, **4.0%** were Hispanic.

Donation Level: On average, monetary donations to charity from employees who volunteered were very similar to those from employees who do not volunteer (approximately $500 a year). Coordinators of employee volunteering programs reported donating approximately double that ($1,000 a year).

Income Level: Employees (volunteers and non-volunteers) earned an average of $60,000 a year, and coordinators earned an average of $80,000 a year.

Personality

Employees provided information about various aspects of their personality. Prior research has suggested that the typical volunteer is prosocial – concerned about others – agreeable and extraverted. In the current sample of employees and coordinators, however, there were no personality differences between those who volunteered and those who did not volunteer.
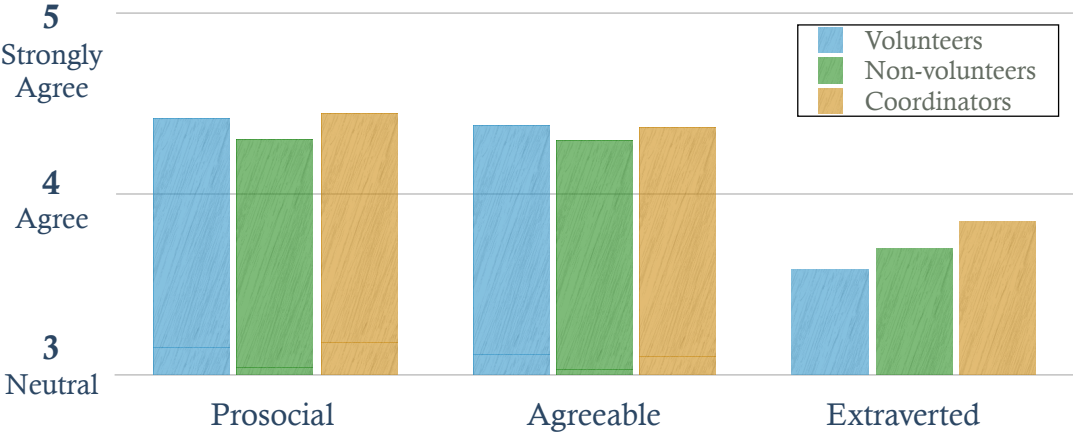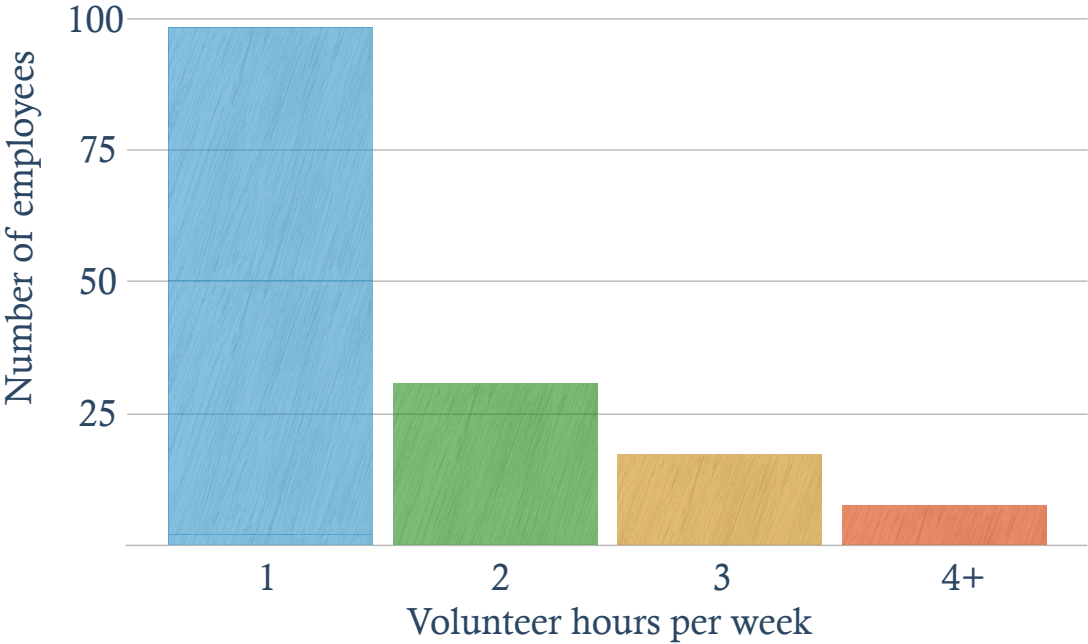
EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering Rates

The 160 employees who volunteered rated the extent to which they volunteered and provided the typical number of hours volunteered each week.
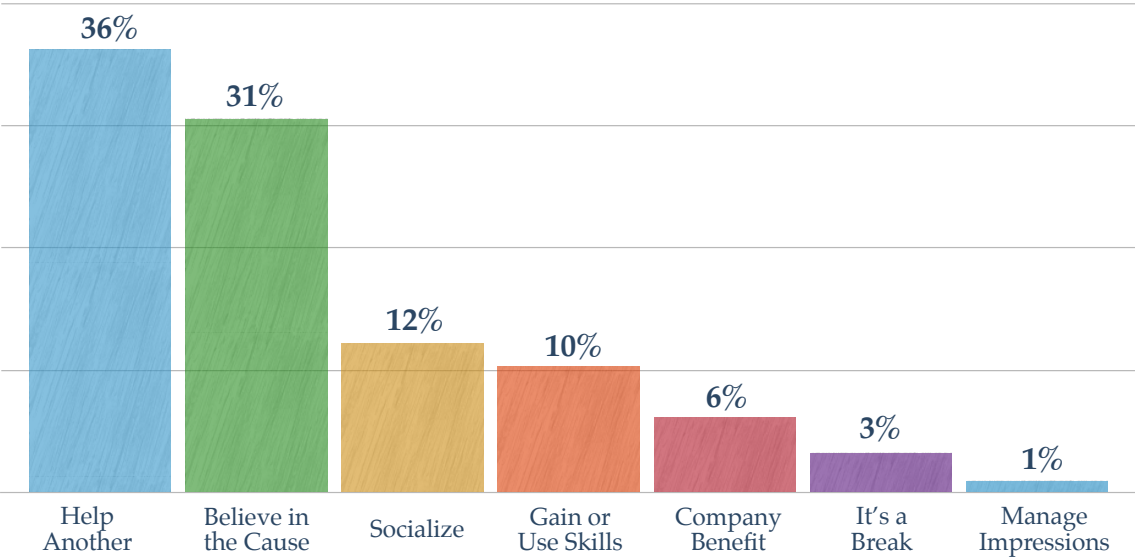
- 44% of these employees claimed that they volunteered "Often" or "Very Often."

- On average, employees volunteered 1.5 hours each week, which ranged from one hour per week to twelve hours per week.

On average, employees volunteered

1.5 hours

each week

Employee Motivations for Volunteering

Employees listed a variety of reasons for volunteering, ranging from a belief in the cause to an opportunity to either social, gain or use skills, or benefit their employer.

36% Help Another
31% Believe in the Cause
12% Socialize
10% Gain or Use Skills
6% Company Benefit
3% It's a Break
1% Manage Impressions

Ultimately, two motives emerged as the best (and only significant) predictors of employee volunteering:

- **Belief in the cause of the volunteer group**

- **Opportunity to either gain new skills or apply existing job skills**

"I participate when there is something I feel is going to be worth while & needs support or awareness"

I volunteer to…"use the finance and management skills that I have developed"

Workplace Benefits of Employee Volunteering

One of the most important questions for companies implementing an employee volunteering program is whether the employees and the company will benefit from the experience.

Based on employee reports of their work attitudes, we saw that the more employees' volunteer, the more they are satisfied with their job, committed to their employer, and intend to continue volunteering in the future.
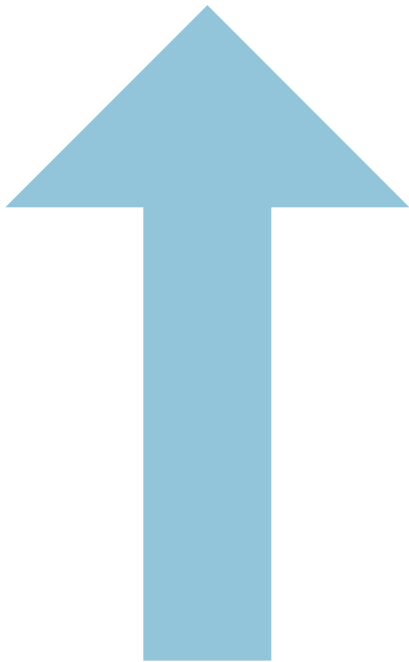
Job Satisfaction
- Employees who volunteered "very often" reported **6%** higher levels of job satisfaction compared to employees who volunteered "sometimes."

Company Commitment
- Employees who volunteered "very often" reported **5%** higher levels of commitment to their companies compared to employees who volunteered "sometimes."

Intention to Volunteer Next Year
- Employees who volunteered "very often" reported **68%** higher levels of intentions to volunteer next year compared to employees who volunteered "sometimes."

Comparison were on a self-rated scale of volunteering, responses ranged from 3 (sometimes), to 4 (often) and 5 (very often)

Employee Motivations for *not* Volunteering

Despite the prevalence of employee volunteering through corporate programs, there is a subset of employees who do not participate. Similar to our approach with employee volunteers, we asked these non-volunteering employees a series of questions about their reasons for *not* volunteering.

The results suggest that the majority of these employees are aware of volunteering opportunities and are often asked to participate. Instead, the vast majority indicated that they specifically said "no" and/or that they were simply not motivated to participate.
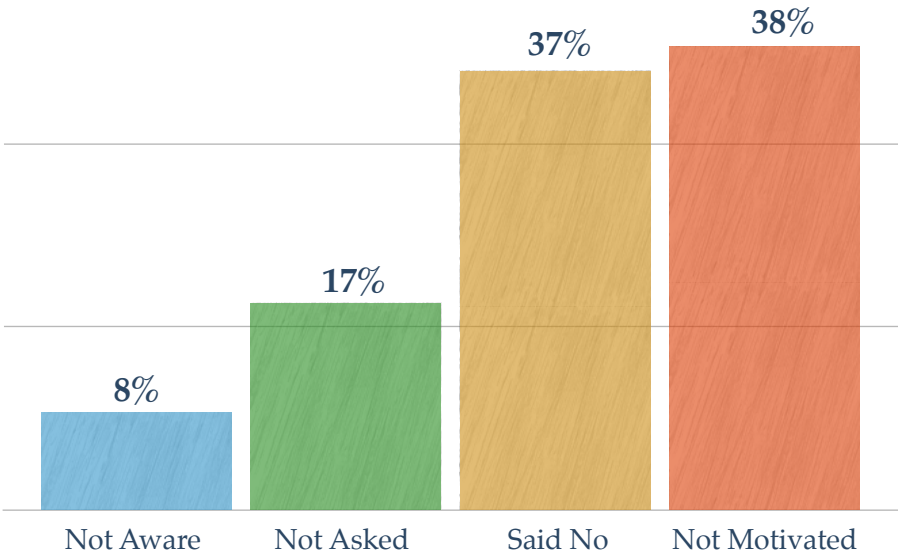
Two main reasons emerge for employees' decisions *not* to volunteer.

- **Anxiety about engaging in new experiences**

- **Desire to keep work and home activities separate**
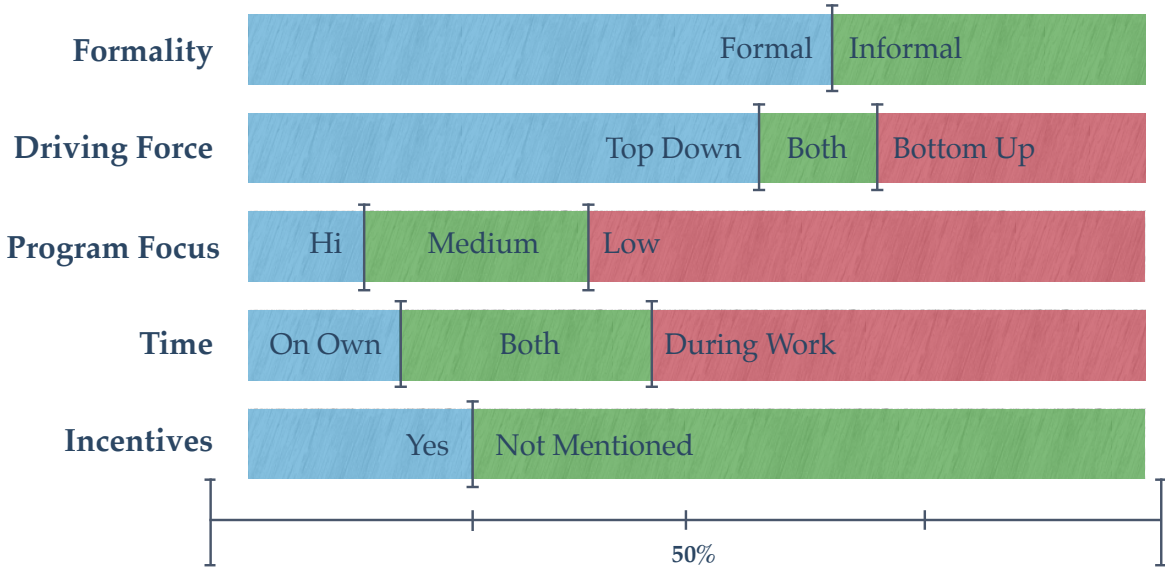
EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMS

Motives for Programs

Coordinators of employee volunteering program provided information about the structure and motivations for the program. The most commonly cited motivations for hosting an employee volunteering program were to:

- Build a relationship with the community

- Provide a bonding experience for employees

- Signal values to the community

- Enable employee to gain skills

Typical Structure of Programs

Coordinators most frequently described their program as a formally constructed, "top down" program decided by the company rather than the employees. Most programs incorporated many volunteering opportunities rather than focusing on a specific cause. The majority of programs also provided employees paid time-off to volunteer.

Formality	Formal	Informal	
Driving Force	Top Down	Both	Bottom Up
Program Focus	Hi	Medium	Low
Time	On Own	Both	During Work
Incentives	Yes	Not Mentioned	

50%

Employee Opinions of Programs

Employees – both volunteers and non-volunteers – had overwhelmingly positive opinions of their company's employee volunteering program.

"There are many opportunities…and there is always involvement from upper management

"It's great! I think it's wonderful that they let employees participate during company hours."

82.7%
Positive

12.1%
Mixed

5.2%
Negative
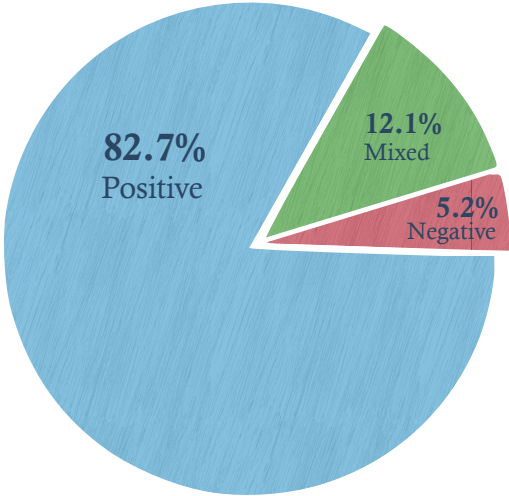
"We do not have a cohesive program, but I think having one would be nice."

"Employees are asked to volunteer to much."

Company Support for Employee Volunteering

Volunteers and non-volunteers had very similar interpretations of their company's level of support for employee volunteering. Yet, they all perceived more support at a global level than they did at a tangible level.

81%

Espoused Company Support
"Volunteering is encouraged by my employer."
"My employer endorses volunteer opportunities."

12%

Tangible Company Support
"My employer's reward system encourages volunteering."
"My employer publicly recognizes those who volunteer."
"My employer promotes volunteering in the company mission."
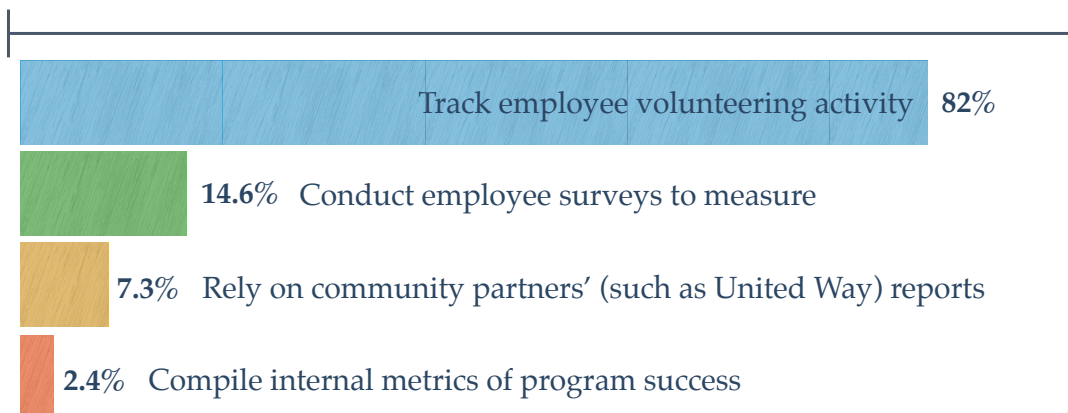"My employer's hiring process discusses volunteer opportunities."

Tangible Company Support

Perhaps the largest discrepancy in opinions about company support for employee volunteering is seen when comparing employee – either volunteer or non-volunteer – and coordinator opinions about the specific types of tangible support that the company provides for employees.
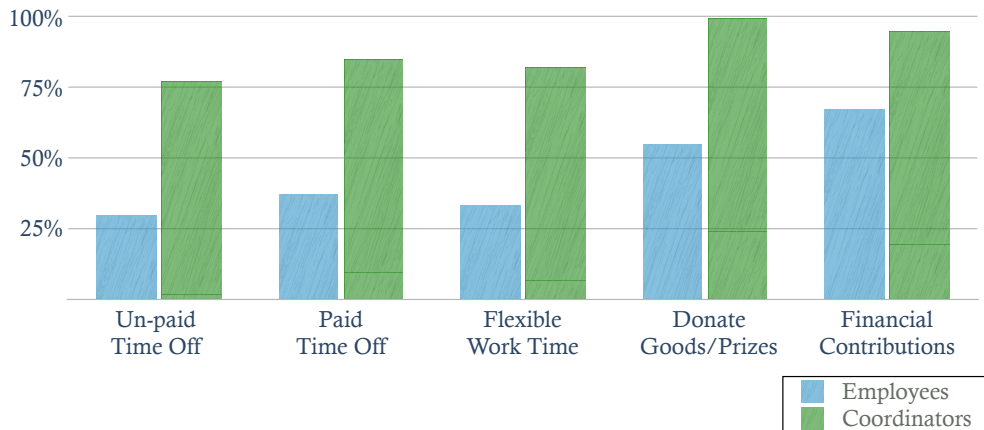
Volunteering Tracking Efforts

The vast majority of company coordinators noted that they tracked employee participation in the volunteering program. Although they also believed that these programs were a success, only a minority of companies collected data to evaluate the program.

Track employee volunteering activity **82%**

14.6% Conduct employee surveys to measure

7.3% Rely on community partners' (such as United Way) reports

2.4% Compile internal metrics of program success

Employee Volunteering Report

2015