

A. Step by Step Guide

For Establishing an Employee Volunteering Program

1. Gauge the level of interest of your staff in volunteering and the sorts of roles they might be interested in doing.

Apart from making your employees feel good about working for your business, two other important objectives include:

- Team building
- Developing skills and experience (for example, leadership, communication, project management)

Volunteering should always be a question of choice but the success of your program will ultimately depend on how much your employees embrace the opportunity.

A survey of ORIMA's staff revealed that while 75% were interested in volunteering through work, most preferred to do volunteering projects which were once-off and unrelated to their professional skills.



B. Staff Survey Questions

2. Determine which causes or organisations you want to support.

Do you have a preference for supporting smaller organisations or are you looking for a strategic fit with your business (for example, an arts supply store might support a community arts group, or a toy store might support a children's charity)?

Helping not-for-profits reminds them that someone cares about what they do. Carl from Mortgage Choice has seen a need in his local community for better transport options for disabled people and is hoping to focus on supporting this cause in the future. His advice for other small business owners is to make some time for volunteering, seek out groups to support through volunteer resource centres and the local council, and then find one you can get passionate about.



E. Selecting Not-for-Profit Partners

3. Consider what your objectives are and what sort of volunteering will help you achieve them.

Through your volunteering program, are you aiming to:

- Make a substantial contribution to changing problems in your community?
- Network and gain exposure within the community?
- Build team cohesion?
- Develop employee skills or give younger staff opportunities to gain experience?

Carl prefers sponsoring the not-for-profits he supports rather than donating money, as it enables active involvement and delivers opportunity for promotions. Some things he looks for in exchange for sponsorship from not-for-profits include having the opportunity to give presentations at events, signage and recognition through newsletters and websites.

4. Set targets and determine when low periods in the business are likely to be.

ORIMA's Director, Liz is careful not to make time-pressured staff feel burdened by volunteer work so it's important that the program is flexible and enables staff to contribute in their areas of interest and capability.

Matt and Tony from Creative Junction are selective about how they give their time to not-for-profits, by identifying which causes they wish to support, and predetermining how much support they can give. Matt in particular regards his contribution not as an expense. His focus is on meeting his goals in supporting charities, and he measures the value of his support through how many hours he is able to donate. By tracking his contribution he is able to feel a sense of achievement from his efforts and time.

D. Setting Targets

5. Communicate with the not-for-profit organisation from the outset.

Adopt an open approach to communication with the not-for-profit partner. Discuss what their needs are and how you could best support them. Help them define exactly what their needs are. Can you supplement the support with in kind donations, financial assistance or the use of office equipment and meeting room space? Find out what they might be able to offer you in return. This could include providing lunch for your staff after they have undertaken the volunteering activity, sending out a media release, giving you exposure on their website, or having your signage at their events.

Good communication is a fundamental ingredient for a sustainable volunteering partnership and will help you smooth over any differing expectations.

6. Make a realistic assessment of each other's capacity.

Try to determine this at the beginning. For example, if they're looking for a new business plan will they have the time to regularly meet with you, and contribute to its development? How achievable are the actions laid out in the plan?

7. Manage any risks.

Check with your insurer that workers' compensation can be extended to your employees while they are volunteering. If your staff are volunteering during work hours and the volunteering has been encouraged and promoted through the business it is generally considered an extension of their employment.

Check that the not-for-profit has adequate insurance and follows appropriate health and safety procedures. For more information read Volunteering Australia's *Insurance & Risk Management for Corporate Volunteers* which is available on the website www.volunteeringaustralia.org.



F. Risk Analysis Checklist

8. Clarify with the organisation the length of the project, the expected outcomes and what amounts of time you can reasonably contribute.

If there is a discrepancy between the length of the project and the length of volunteer time available, work with them to break the assignment down into stages and develop processes for handover. Perhaps there will be opportunities to transfer the volunteer's knowledge and expertise to staff within the organisation which will help build their self-sufficiency.

9. Recognise efforts and evaluate the success of the partnership.

Upon the completion of the volunteering project, thank the staff who volunteered and the not-for-profit for the opportunity to partner with them. Evaluate the program by seeking their feedback on how they perceived the success of the program.



H. Measuring and Evaluation

10. Exiting a partnership.

If you've been involved in a complex project with a not-for-profit but are no longer able to continue supporting the organisation, make sure they are equipped to continue the work. Ensure you have transferred to them the knowledge they need to maintain the project. Advise them on what you think the next steps should be (for example, if you have been helping them with a business plan, how do you suggest they go about implementing it?)