volunteering australia

"Two Way Street"

corporate volunteering in the not for profit sector

A Survey of Australian Not for Profit Organisations

Corporate Volunteering - Experiences and Attitudes
2004

Acknowledgements

Volunteering Australia would like to thank the not for profit organisations who participated. Thank you for your interest, knowledge and time.

Volunteering Australia would also like to thank the state and territory volunteering centres for their assistance in distributing the survey through their members.

The survey design, collection and analysis were generously provided pro bono by **Orima Research**. Their expertise and contribution made the research project possible.

The final report was produced by **Curly Solutions**.

Appendices

A. Volunteering Australia - Corporate Volunteering, Survey of Not for Profit
Organisations

Graphs

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> *"He came to our AGM all dressed up while the rest of us were busy trying to keep warm in our slippers. It might smarten us up a bit more"*
> *survey respondent*

This quote from one of the respondents to Volunteering Australia's survey of not for profit organisations regarding corporate volunteering, cleverly captures the very different conditions and perceptions that not for profit organisations and corporations often operate under, especially in relation to corporate volunteering.

Terms such as 'corporate social responsibility' and 'triple bottom line' are increasingly being used in corporate, government and community circles to describe the notion of social obligations owed by business to the broader community. Linked to this is an increased interest in corporate volunteering programs.

For corporations, corporate or employee volunteering is being seen as an important strategy for corporations to both engage with local communities and to build staff skills and morale.

> *'In these days of business pressure on profits, "time" gifts can have a very important message to the customers who also live in the community.' survey respondent*

Anecdotal information from some in the not-for-profit organisations suggested that in some instances business was attempting to engage their staff in corporate volunteering activities without necessarily understanding the potential impact that their requests or demands might have on the not-for-profit organisations.

As a result Volunteering Australia, with the support of Orima Research, set out to undertake a national survey of not for profit organisations gathering information about their experiences and perceptions of corporate volunteering.

The aim of the research was to gather information about not-for-profit organisations' experiences of and attitudes toward corporate volunteering to encourage and inform corporate volunteering partnerships and programs.

A self completion survey was selected for resource efficiency and 1,500 surveys were sent out across Australia to not for profit organisations varying in size, type and location. The return rate was 23%. All organisation types and

...onses were received from every state and

The survey (Appendix A) covered three core areas:

- Not for profit experiences of corporate volunteering programs,
- Not for profit perceptions of corporate volunteering; and
- demographic of the responding not for profit organisations.

The first section explored volunteering project type and design, organisational changes, forms of volunteering and ratings of organisational experiences and effects.

The second section gathered the perceptions of organisations with and without experience of corporate volunteering on topics including organisational capacity, success factors, difficulties and benefits, and looking for corporate partners.

The demographic profile of the respondent organisations provided useful insight into organisational (service) type, jurisdiction of organisation (national, state or local), positions within the organisation, numbers of staff and volunteers, and state and territory of location.

Key Findings

The results of the survey demonstrate very strong support for corporate volunteering within the not for profit sector, with nearly all organisations rating it a positive experience, worth the effort and one they will willingly pursue in the future.

The corporate sector itself is the key initiator of employee volunteering whilst the not for profits are the key designers of projects and programs. There was an even split between ongoing and short term projects.

Perhaps surprisingly most organisations agreed that no changes were required internally to involve corporate volunteers, though there was a very clear message that sufficient and relevant organisational capacity is essential. Capacity in this case consisted of sufficient personnel, managing or coordinating staff, and the ability to provide opportunities that suited the corporate partner as well as the not for profit organisation.

The most common motivation for not for profits to involve corporate volunteers was fundraising or sponsorship. This expectation was not as often met, but it

ving fundraising as the most common activity
to.

> **"We're only a small organisation. We're only interested if they want to donate money." survey respondent**

Not for profit organisations stated some of the benefits they received through involving corporate volunteers as raising community profile, raising funds, and forming future business partnerships. What has not manifested as a benefit, on the whole, is corporate volunteering assisting the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

The greatest difficulty across the board was seen to be the stress of organising volunteering experiences to suit corporate needs and wishes. The factor that has the greatest effect on organisational capacity was purely and simply lack of personnel. In addition the lack of internal support from the corporate partner, the difficulty of finding corporate partners, and the incompatibility of an organisation's work with corporate goals were stated as difficulties.

Not surprisingly the largest participation level was recorded by not for profit organisations with 20 or more staff and a paid manager of volunteers. Surprisingly these organisations with the greatest 'capacity' to involve corporate volunteers also represented as the most inflexible in terms of utilising volunteers in individual programs and in terms of utilising employee volunteers professional / technical skills. Noticeably professional skills were not sought after very highly across the spectrum of organisations.

There were differences in perceptions of what key success factors were expressed between organisations with experience of corporate volunteering and those without. In stark contrast was the fact that nearly 90% of organisations with experience are continuing to look for corporate partners whilst barely half of those without experience stated they were looking. There was a great sense of needing to know more about corporate volunteering expressed by many respondents. Knowledge sharing within the not for profit sector would be valuable.

It also appeared that some service types did not feel they were suitable for corporate volunteers due to client privacy, volunteering hours and importantly because corporate volunteers would need to undertake training to ensure client outcomes and duty of care.

> **"It is not easy to make a match between what the corporate volunteers could offer and what we needed especially in terms of organisation: days, hours, intervals/IOFI/ongoing rosters etc." survey respondent**

Given the swell of support for corporate volunteering expressed by the not for profit respondents, the drive and commitment apparent from the corporate sector and the growing evidence base built on experience there is no reason to doubt corporate volunteering is a popular and purposeful investment.

There are very real capacity issues for not for profits to be involved satisfactorily. Greater information sharing and support services are required by the not for profit sector. There is strong call for greater corporate coordination, engagement and resourcing.

It also appears important to ensure that the right motivations from within both sectors are driving the approach to engage corporate volunteers. A match is needed between the needs of the not for profits organisational development and its core service delivery outcomes and the corporates volunteering program aims and ambitions.

Volunteering Australia hopes that the information contained in this research report provides valuable information for corporations considering and managing employee volunteering programs, and likewise for the not for profits seeking corporate partners.

> *"It is important that any corporate volunteering program is rewarding, fulfilling and a win-win for all parties involved. They cannot be one way streets."*
>
> *survey respondent*

nd

What is a Corporate Volunteering Program?

For the purposes of this survey a corporate volunteering program was defined as:

> ±any program intended to encourage employees within a business to volunteer in a not-for-profit organisation. In some organisations corporate volunteering may be referred to as employee volunteering or staff volunteeringq

Corporate volunteering is a relatively new term and movement in Australia and whilst extensive literature on corporate volunteering abounds overseas in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, actual research within Australia on the subject is still in its infancy.

The corporate sector has begun to embrace employee volunteering as an ±at the coal faceqform of community involvement, representative of their desire to move from old style corporate philanthropy to community engagement. Corporations often arrive at employee volunteering through seeking to improve public relations or to maximise human resource development and company morale. Integral to the transition from philanthropy to volunteering and community engagement is deeper knowledge and understanding of the not for profit sector..

Anecdotal evidence indicates the not for profit sector is certainly willing to work with the corporate sector, and indeed already are, but fear increased work loads and having to manage differing values sets. Whilst there is recognition by not for profit organisations that corporate volunteering programs offer access to a new ±streamqof volunteers, they too often suffer from lack of experience and relationship with the corporate sector.

Why this Research?

Volunteering Australia identified the key contemporary issues for employee volunteering in Australia as:
- the knowledge, understanding and relationship divide between the sectors
- the fact that most developmental work around employee volunteering is taking place in the corporate sector with very little information being collected and analysed and preparatory work occurring within the not for profit sector in which employees are volunteering.

...es looking to corporate volunteering as a
...mber of objectives without understanding the
impact of corporate volunteering programs on not-for-profit
organisations
- better information and education about the not for profit sector for the
corporate sector
- The need for corporations that are encouraging their staff to participate
in their communities through volunteering to understand the
philosophical underpinnings of volunteering and the basic principles of
the movement

As result Volunteering Australia, with the generous pro bono assistance of
ORIMA Research, undertook a survey of not-for-profit organisations gathering
information about their experiences of, and attitudes towards, corporate
volunteering programs. Volunteering Australia hopes this research will
encourage better understanding of the needs of not-for-profit organisations for
companies interested in establishing (or continuing) corporate volunteering
programs and for other not for profit organisations looking to get involved with
corporate volunteering.

By increasing understanding of the needs of not-for-profit organisations it is
hoped that those relationships between businesses and not-for-profits based
on corporate volunteering programs will necessarily be healthier and more
sustainable partnerships.

Research Aims

The purpose of survey was to gain insight into not-for-profit organisations' attitudes and experiences relating to corporate volunteering programs. (*Volunteering Australia*)

The research set out to achieve:
- a first ever national ollection of information and opinions from a wide range of not for profit organisations regarding corporate volunteering in Australia
- information and opinion from both organisations with corporate volunteering experience and those with no experiences to date
- to identify some key not for profit organisational characteristics which interrelate with employee volunteering
- to identify reasons not for profitsqwere not utilising or succeeding with corporate volunteering

Conducting the research

ORIMA Research Pty Ltd conducted the survey on behalf of Volunteering Australia.

The survey was to be completed by the head of the organisation, manager of volunteers or any person within the organisation that was appropriate to complete a survey about corporate volunteering. Only one survey should be returned for each organisation. All information was treated as CONFIDENTIAL and was only seen by ORIMA Research staff.

A total of 1,500 questionnaires were randomly distributed to not-for-profit member organisations of the eight (8) state and territory volunteering centres[1]. The number of questionnaires distributed in each state and territory was weighted according to the size of their respective membership.

The Survey

Despite the very generous pro bono assistance provided by ORIMA Research in terms of survey design and analysis, the resources available to carry out the research were very limited. A self-completion questionnaire was chosen as the survey instrument primarily due to cost constraints.

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[1] Volunteering NSW, Volunteering ACT, Volunteering VIC, Volunteering TAS, Volunteering WA, Volunteering QLD, Volunteering SA and Volunteering Australia - NT

uestions. The survey was broken into 3 components.

- **PART A . Experience of corporate volunteering programs** . this section explored volunteering project type and design, organisational changes, forms of volunteering and ratings of organisational experiences and effects
- **PART B . Perceptions of corporate volunteering** . this section covered organisational capacity, success factors, difficulties and benefits, looking for corporate partners
- **PART C . Demographic profile of the organisation** . organisational description, jurisdiction in which the organisation operates, positions within the organisation, numbers of staff and volunteers, and state and territory of location.

Respondents with experience of corporate volunteering completed the entire survey whilst organisations without experience began at question 11.

Data Analysis

ORIMA Research provided data entry and analysis. The data was presented in the following formats:

1. Survey verbatim comments
2. Charting data from survey
3. Frequency and Cross tabulation results

Respondent profile

Of the 1500 distributed, 338 completed questionnaires were returned to Volunteering Australia by the due date, representing a 23% response rate.

20.7% of survey respondents **had** been involved with a corporate volunteering program while 70.8% of survey respondents **had never** had any involvement. A further 8.6% of survey respondents had not been involved but had been approached for involvement.

Welfare organisations were the largest respondent group in both the experienced (63%) and not experienced (48%) cohorts. The next largest respondent group was education / training and youth development organisations.

The greatest response (57.9%) came from state or local level organisations, and notably the local organisations rated highest in the without experience respondent group.

61.7% of respondent organisations with experience have a paid manager of volunteers whereas 50.9% of the not experienced organisations had no manager of volunteers. Over half (56.3%) of the experienced responses were completed by the volunteer manager. Conversely, 53.5% of the responses in the non experienced cohort were completed by either a chief executive officer or the administrator.

50.6% of the organisations with corporate volunteering experience have more than 20 staff, and furthermore 30.3% of respondent organisations with experience had over 500 volunteers working with them.

Every State and territory had an equal percentage of respondents in both the with and without experience cohorts, but they differed in their level of involvement with corporate volunteering.

...ement in corporate volunteering by State / Territory

State / Territory	Level of involvement with corporate volunteering as % of respondents from each state / territory
Western Australia	33.3
Australian Capital Territory	26.3
Northern Territory	24
Queensland	22.4
New South Wales	19
Victoria	15.8
South Australia	12.5
Tasmania	12

Category that best describes ±type‗of respondent organisation

Table 2 **– Respondent Service Types**

Category	% of respondents	
	With experience of corporate volunteering (n = 92)	Without experience of corporate volunteering (n = 259)
Arts / culture	5.2	9.3
Business / professional / union	5.5	5.6
Education / training / youth development	12.1	21.6
Emergency services	3.6	0.9
Environmental / animal welfare	6.1	4.4
Foreign / international	3.7	3.4
Health	7.9	21.7
Law / justice / political	0.8	8.2
Religious	4.8	1.6
Sport / recreation / hobby	2.0	8.1
Welfare / community	63.2	47.9
Other	3.7	11.1

Category that best describes ±level‗of respondent organisation

Table 3 – Respondent Level of organisation

Category	% of respondents	
	With experience of corporate volunteering (n =77)	Without experience of corporate volunteering (n =249)
National office of a national organisation	9.0	3.2
State branch / office of a national organisation	12.0	10.4
Local branch / office of a national organisation	8.7	7.4
State organisation	35.2	21.2
Local organisation	35.1	57.9

completing survey questionnaire.

Category	% of respondents	
	With experience of corporate volunteering (n = 76)	Without experience of corporate volunteering (n =259)
Chief Executive Officer	25.2	34.9
Manager of Volunteers	56.3	41.9
Administrator	11.4	18.6
Other	8.3	9.6

Table 5 – Staff numbers in organisations with experience of corporate volunteering

Paid Staff numbers	% of respondents
None	2.9
1 only	10
2-5	17.7
6-10	7.6
11-20	11.3
More than 20	50.6

Table 6 – Staff numbers in organisations with no experience of corporate volunteering

Paid Staff numbers	% of respondents
None	10.5
1 only	14.6
2-5	26.9
6-10	11.9
11-20	9.1
More than 20	27

In an effort to understand more about how corporate volunteering programs develop Volunteering Australia surveyed which party was the initiator of corporate volunteering.

Of the organisations who identified as having had experience in corporate volunteering, 41% said that the approach was initiated by the corporation and a further 24% stated they were approached by employees of corporations. Only 24% of not for profit organisations approached the corporation. Only 5% of organisations said that a consultant or broker had initiated contact between the not for profit organisation and the corporation, with Western Australia and Tasmania showing the highest percentage of broker usage.

When looking at the type of volunteering projects undertaken it was an even split between one-off projects and ongoing programs. 63% of the corporate volunteering projects were designed by the not for profit organisation, and only 21.8% by the corporation involved.

The rating of corporate volunteering as a positive experience, whilst high across all organisation sizes, was lowest in the two largest organisational staff numbers categories . 11-20 and more than 20 staff - and highest in the 2-5 and 6-10 staff categories.

Impact on Organisations

In considering the impact of corporate volunteering on not for profit organisations, respondents were asked to identify the changes made to the organisation in order to support the corporate volunteering program.

Interestingly most organisations said that no changes were required. Where changes were required, the following types of changes were identified:
- improved / additional equipment or tools
- changes to systems
- additional staffing resources
- extra training for existing staff ;and
- changes to staffing structure

rganisations to support corporate

CHANGES TO ORGANISATION TO SUPPORT THE CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM
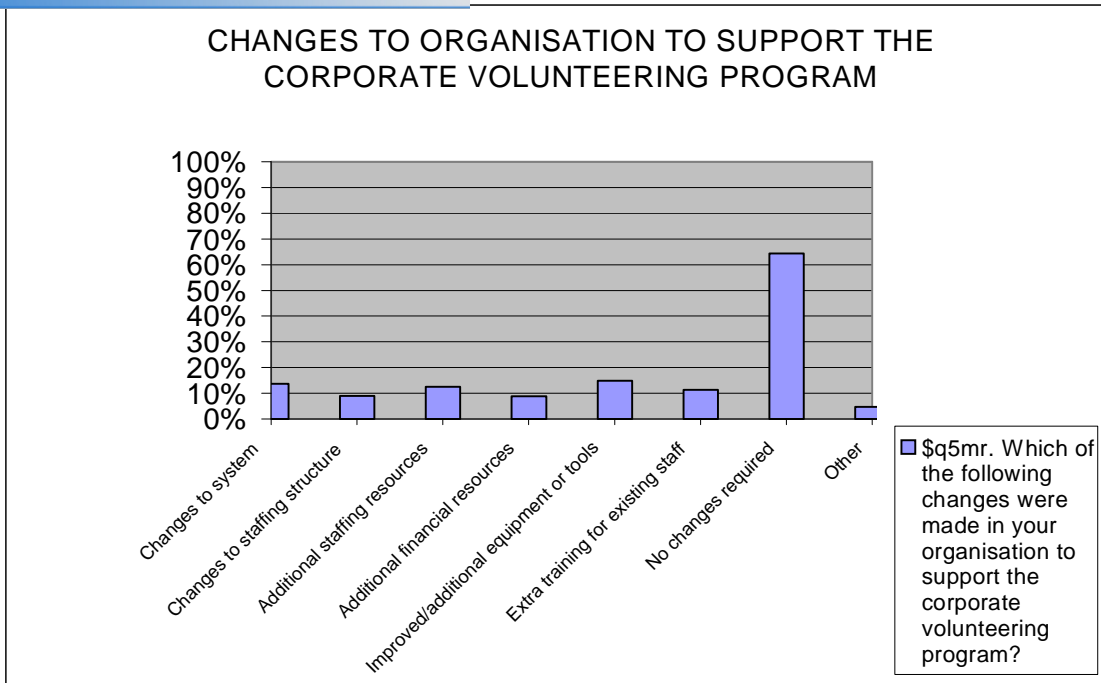
> *"It was wonderful and complimented the work that we do.*
> *It was mutually beneficial to both organisations." survey respondent*

The not for profit respondents were then asked to rate their agreement with a number of statements based on their experience of corporate volunteering.

The level of agreement with the following statements was very high:

- Our organisation would be willing to be involved in corporate volunteering again (**97%**)

- Corporate volunteering has been a positive experience for our organisation (**90%**)

- The rewards of corporate volunteering are worth the effort involved (**87%**)

- Corporate volunteering has lived up to our expectations (**77%**)

- Our involvement with corporate volunteering has raised our community profile (**75%**)

ate volunteering will be useful in forming
he future (**71%**)

■ Our involvement with corporate volunteering has helped us to raise funds (**55%**)

It is interesting that success or satisfaction with fundraising rates lowest, whilst it is stated as the most common form of corporate volunteer involvement (41%) and is also regarded by not for profit organisations as the key benefit being sought from involving corporate volunteers (42% of the experienced organisations / 48% of the not experienced).

> *"Corporate volunteering has the potential to bring positive results for our organisation, but it is based on a long-term relationship that requires our organisations to implement systems to support this on an on-going basis. Our organisation's experience of corporate volunteering is that it does not always result in immediate benefits." survey respondent*

When organisations were asked to rate their agreement with a number of statements about the specific **effects** of the corporate volunteering experience on their organisations, respondents were somewhat ambivalent particularly with regard to its effect upon recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Graph 2 – Impact of corporate volunteers on volunteer recruitment and retention
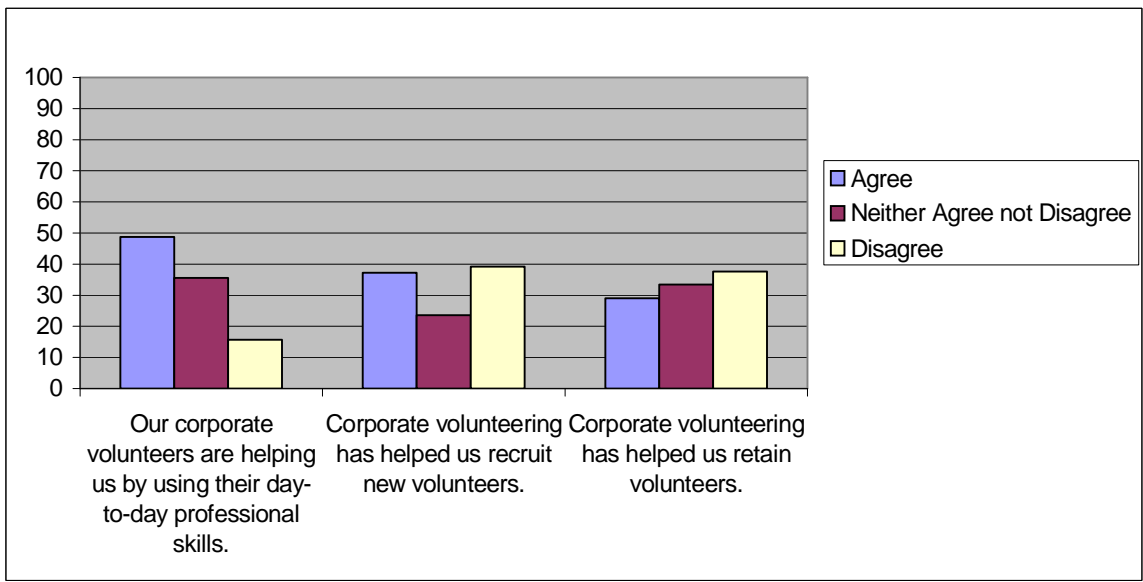
20 staff) were noticeable in their response to
helped to recruit and retain volunteers. 50%
disagreed that it had helped them recruit volunteers and 52.8% disagreed that
it had helped them retain volunteers.

Organisations were then asked for their preferences about the way in which
corporate employees would be involved in future volunteering programs.
Only 30% of respondent organisations agreed with the statement that they
would prefer to have corporate volunteers working as individuals rather than in
teams.

When asked about the use of employeesqprofessional skills, a higher
percentage (48%) agreed that they would prefer to have corporate volunteers
using their professional skills. Again a further 40% neither agreed nor
disagreed. The implications of these statistics are explored within the
discussion section with regards to different organisational approaches to
managing volunteers.

When asked whether their corporate volunteers were helping by using their
day-to-day professional skills over 50% of all organisations between 2 and 20
staff agreed, whilst in organisations over 20 staff the majority (59.4%) either
disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed.

**What effect does having a Manager of Volunteers have on corporate
volunteering?**

All organisations, with or without a Manager of Volunteers, rated highly
corporate volunteering as a positive experience, well worth the effort and an
activity they would be willing to be involved in again. However, differences
open up depending on whether the organisation has a manager of volunteers
or not, and if they do whether they are a volunteer or paid position.

Firstly, nearly half (47.1%) of the organisations without a manager of
volunteers feel they do no have the capacity to be involved with corporate
volunteering programs.

63% of organisations without a Manager of Volunteers believed that corporate
volunteering had raised community profile compared with up to 83% of those
with a manager. Dropping even lower again, only 36.8% of the organisations
without a manager of volunteers agreed that corporate volunteering had helped
them raise funds compared to up to 67% of those with a volunteer manager.

When asked whether their experience of corporate volunteering will be useful
in forming business partnerships in the future 79.5% of organisations with a

57.9% of those without agreed but only 25%
er of volunteers agreed.

Did corporate volunteering live up to expectations? 82% of organisations with a
paid manager of volunteers agreed whilst only 57.9% of those without a
volunteer manager agreed.

Again we see considerable differences between organisations when asked
whether corporate volunteering helped them to recruit new volunteers, pointing
perhaps to their motivations for corporate volunteers.

**Table 7 – The effect having a manager of volunteers has on whether
corporate volunteering impacts on volunteer recruitment**

Corporate volunteering has helped us to recruit new volunteers.		Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
	Volunteer manager of volunteers	83.3%	16.7%	0
	Paid manager of volunteers	34.9%	43.2%	18.2%
	No manager of volunteers	68.4%	15.8%	15.8%

When asked whether corporate volunteering helped retain volunteers and
again we see high rating in organisations with a volunteer manager of
volunteers (66.7%), lower in organisations with no manager of volunteers
(30%) and lowest was organisations with a paid manager of volunteers
(22.2%). In fact 48.9% of organisations with a paid volunteer manager
disagreed that retention was improved at all.

How are corporate volunteers being used?

Interesting results arose when looking at whether the corporate volunteers are
helping by using their day to day professional skills. 68.4% of organisations
without a manager of volunteers agreed but 61.4% of organisations with a paid
volunteer manager either clearly disagreed or neither disagreed or agreed.

Do organisations prefer corporate volunteers working as individuals? received
low ratings across all organisations with only 50% of organisations with a
voluntary manager of volunteers and 35% of organisations with no volunteer
manager agreeing.

However organisations that have dedicated internal resources, that is a paid
manager of volunteers, strongly disagreed or were ambivalent (75 %) about
having volunteers work as individuals and in addition 66.7% of these

were ambivalent to having corporate

al skills.

Would organisations rather have corporate volunteers working as individuals rather than teams? A mixed response across all organisations was fielded. However it was again the largest organisations that stood out with only 18.9% agreeing to this statement. Also noticeable was that no organisations in the 6-10 staff category agreed and 60% disagreed.

In addition only 27.8% of organisations with over 20 staff would prefer to have corporate volunteers using their professional skills, with the majority (63.9%) being ambivalent to this question. Over 50% of all other organisational size categories stated their preference to use their corporate volunteers for their professional skills.
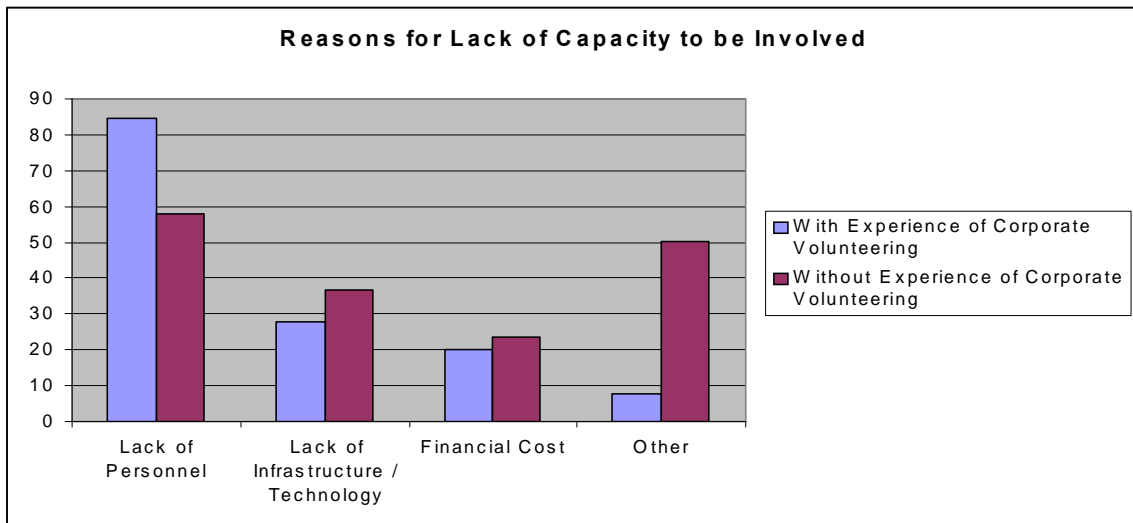
ns of corporate volunteering

Part B of the survey questionnaire asked all respondents, both organisations with and without experience of corporate volunteering, a series of questions aimed at eliciting their perceptions of corporate volunteering, both the difficulties and the benefits.

> *"Our perception has been that we are not large enough to interest a corporate volunteer program." survey respondent*

Respondents were asked whether they thought that their organisation had the capacity to be involved with corporate volunteering. Of those with experience 92% stated that they did, while of those without experience only 53% thought that they had the capacity to be involved.

Respondents who answered that they did not believe their organisation had the capacity to be involved were asked to identify the reasons for this. "Lack of personnel" was consistently identified as the predominating cause of lack of capacity to be involved (85% of organisations with experience / 58% of organisations without experience). Other reasons identified for lack of capacity were lack of infrastructure / technology, and financial cost.

Graph 3 – Reasons for lack of capacity to be involved

> *"We would willingly participate more often in corporate volunteering programs but are hampered by lack of infrastructure and funding to do so." Survey respondent*

34.4% of the organisations that believed their organisation did not have the capacity to involve corporate volunteers due to lack of personnel identified as having no Manager of Volunteers.

48.6% of the organisations that believed their organisation did not have the capacity to involve corporate volunteers due to lack of personnel have between 2-5 staff. Conversely 34.3% of the organisations who do not cite lack of personnel as an issue have more than 20 staff.

Perceived difficulties of involving corporate volunteers

Across all sized organisations the willingness to be involved in corporate volunteering was rated very highly. Not surprisingly organisations with no paid staff comprehensively stated that they did not have the capacity to be involved in corporate volunteering. The only other organisations that most evidently struggled with having the capacity for corporate volunteering had 2-5 staff.

All respondents were asked to identify what they considered the major difficulties associated with involving corporate volunteers in their organisation. The two highest ratings, across both organisations with and without experience, were stress of organising opportunities to suit corporate needs and difficulty finding corporate partners. Although the order was reversed between the with experience and the without experience groups.

ociated with involving corporate volunteers

Question	With Experience		Without Experience	
	choices	% of respondents	choices	% of respondents
What do you consider as the major difficulties associated with involving corporate volunteers in your organisation?	Stress of organizing opportunities to suit corporate needs.	66.5%	Difficulty of finding willing corporate partners	62.5%
	Difficulty of finding willing corporate partners	34.3%	Stress of organizing opportunities to suit corporate needs.	58.6%
	Incompatibility of organisation's work with corporate goals	12.8%	Incompatibility of organisation's work with corporate goals	28.2%
	Time constraints/limited resources	6.9%	Time constraints/limited resources	3.9%
	Other	3.0%	Other	13.9%

Organisations with a paid manager of volunteers had the highest rating for considering the +stress of organising opportunities to suit corporate needsqas the major difficulty associated with corporate volunteering (65.2%). Organisations with a voluntary position managing volunteers considered the greatest difficulty to be +finding willing corporate partnersq

When asked +what were the major difficulties associated with involving corporate volunteers in your organisation?qnearly all organisations rated the difficulty of finding willing corporate partners as the greatest challenge, except for organisations with over 20 staff in size where less than half agreed. The majority of organisations rated the stress of organising opportunities to suit corporate needs as a major difficulty excepting those organisations with between 11-29 staff.

Interestingly, whilst Volunteering Australia had anecdotal evidence that %ack of time and resources+was the most commonly stated reason for non-involvement with corporates, it was not supported by this research.. Only 6.9% of organisations with experience of corporate volunteering identified it as a difficulty, and only 3.9% of organisations without experience did so.

corporate volunteers

When asked to identify the main benefit that their organisation would seek to gain by involving corporate volunteers, respondents in both groups overwhelmingly identified "fundraising or sponsorship" as the main benefit sought.

> **What would be the main benefits your organisation would seek to gain by involving corporate volunteers?**
>
> **"Everything possible" survey respondent**

Graph 4 – Benefits sought through corporate volunteering
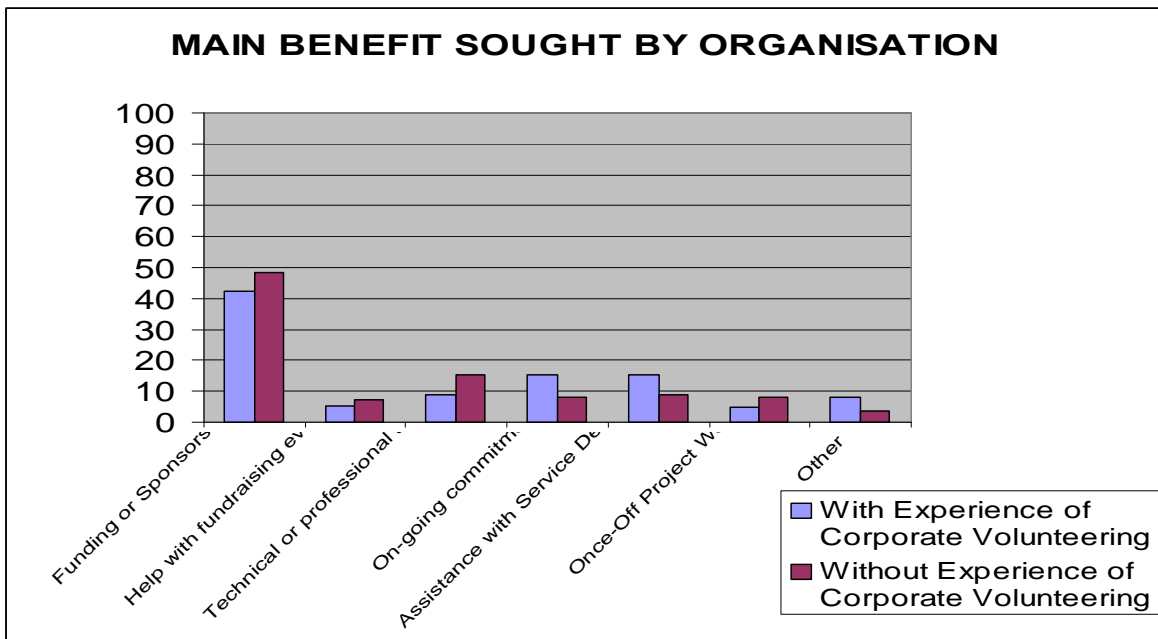
What was most surprising was how lowly "technical or professional" skills rated as a benefit sought, given the wealth of skills available within the corporate sector. Only 9% of those organisations with experience and 15% of those without experience rated it as a significant benefit.

"Support of volunteers by the corporate" was perceived as the most important factor in involving corporate volunteers, being in the top three for both organisations with and without experience.

Aside from this common priority, organisations without experience of corporate volunteering saw the other major issues also belonging to the corporation, whereas the organisations with experience saw the next priority factors as internal work and resource matters.

Table 9 – most important factors in involving corporate volunteers

Question	With experience		Without experience	
Which three of the following do you consider to be the most important factors in involving corporate volunteers?	Factor	Ranking - % of respondents	Factor	Ranking - % of respondents
	Support of volunteers by the corporate	59.6	On-going commitment by the corporation	50.8
	Appropriate work available for corporate volunteers	49.6	Dedicated liaison person within the corporation	38.6
	Sufficient resources within the organisation	31	Support of volunteers by the corporate	31.4

“Organisations' goals need to be similar and to have a partnership with like-minded people.” Survey respondent

The last question asked of both groups was whether they were presently looking for a corporate partner. 68.2% of those organisations with existing experience were looking whilst 83.5% of those organisations with no experience were not. The figure for the organisations with no experienced may be indicative of the difficulty they experience in finding corporate partners and as a result stop looking.

cussion

Is corporate volunteering a positive and worthwhile activity?

Overall the results of the survey present a more positive image of corporate volunteering programs from the perspective of not for profit organisations than perhaps originally expected.

The respondents to this survey overwhelming supported corporate volunteering, agreeing it was a positive experience and worth the effort, it had raised their community profile, it will assist them in forming future business partnerships, and expressed willingness to be involved again. Organisations without experience of corporate volunteering also saw specific benefits in being involved.

"Smaller charities benefit greatly from large coprorates being involved in projects or simple offers of help. The more corporates willing to help would greatly benefit society" survey respondent

How many not for profit organisations are doing it?

Only 20.7% of the respondents to this survey indicated that they have been and/or are involved with corporate volunteering. Very little variance was found between the experiences and perceptions in different states / territories.

Of those organisations with experience 68.2% say they continue to be actively looking for corporate partners. This could be interpreted as a measure of satisfaction, finding that a majority of organisations with prior experience continue to pursue corporate volunteering as a strategy. Alternatively, anecdotal information suggests that corporates do seek out one-off team opportunities that may not encourage / support repeat involvement because of the nature and parameters of their ±volunteer leaveqpolicies.

Conversely 83.5% of those organisations without experience stated they are not presently looking for a corporate partner. This fits with the high percentage of these organisations stating they do not have the internal capacity to involve corporate volunteers.

Who is initiating and designing corporate volunteering in Australia?

Interestingly the initiative for corporate volunteering is predominantly driven by the corporations or their employees. This finding is partly explained by the high

s who indicated that whilst they thought
...od idea didnq know quite what it was or how to
establish it or who (as in which corporates) they could or should approach.

"We were not aware that we could approach corporations regarding staff commitment" survey respondent

The high level of corporate initiative matches the rising awareness and action on Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Involvement programs. The flip side is that there is not comparable knowledge, resources and drive within the not for profit sector, (how is this conclusion reached from this research? . especially the statement re: ±comparable knowledgeqand ±driveq highlighting a sectoral capacity issue which could be addressed to improve the inclusion of corporate volunteers.

Corporate volunteering projects / programs were predominantly (63.7%) designed by the not for profit partner. This is understandable given they will be coordinating / managing the volunteering experience, however it would be a positive development if more projects / programs were jointly designed. The research did not seek to identify the reasons for this initiator / designer divide.

It was evenly split (Adam . took out 50/50 as I thought this sounded unprofessional) whether the corporate volunteering projects were designed for particular corporate volunteers or not. This is certainly not surprising when sat along side the statistics showing low levels of corporate volunteers using their professional skills and the preponderance for large organisations to prefer group and ±unskilledqcorporate volunteering activities.

What sort of activities are corporate volunteers engaged in?

This research found no evidence to support corporations being only interested in one off and short term projects. Current practice presented an even split between one off and ongoing projects, contrary to popular belief within the not for profit sector.

What was noticeable however was that less than half of the corporate volunteers were used for their professional skills, and the majority of organisations were not seeking them to volunteer their professional skills. This was most pronounced in the responses from the largest organisations with corporate volunteering experience.

The table below demonstrates that fundraising, administration / clerical work and repairs / gardening/ maintenance were the most common activities for corporate volunteers.

volunteers are engaged in

What form of involvement did the corporate volunteers have?	Frequency	% of respondents
Administration/ clerical work	**20**	**27.6%**
Befriending / supportive listening / counselling	12	16.5%
Coaching / refereeing/judging	2	3.3%
Day-to-day organising /coordinating / supervising	9	12.2%
Fundraising	**29**	**41.0%**
Guiding tours	4	5.8%
Lobbying / Advocacy /Political Research	3	4.7%
Management / committee work	9	12.6%
Performing / media production	1	1.7%
Preparing / serving food	11	14.9%
Protecting the environment	5	7.4%
Providing information	11	15.4%
Recruiting	4	4.9%
Repairs / maintenance / gardening	**15**	**21.3%**
Search & rescue / first aid /fire fighting	2	2.8%
Teaching / instruction	6	8.9%
Transporting people /goods	6	8.4%
Other	7	9.2%

This research identified that the not for profit organisations show a very high level of focus on seeking to raise funds through corporate volunteering. This is demonstrated above but even more strikingly in the statistics that follow concerning the benefits organisations are seeking to achieve.

In terms of locational comparisons Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia were the only states that identified the involvement of brokers. The research also indicated a more even balance across the types of activities corporate volunteers are involved in in Western Australia compared with other states. This may be a reflection of the involvement of the brokerage services, or it may demonstrate a more varied corporate volunteering campaign.

get out of involving corporate volunteers?

The survey showed that overall engaging corporate volunteers has not helped not for profit organisations overall volunteer recruitment or retention. The larger the organisation the lower was the positive effect corporate volunteering appeared to have on these factors.

This may point to unsustainable corporate volunteer programs, and may be a symptom of the lack of support and understanding within corporations reported by organisations. However, it could be opined that using corporate professionals for fundraising, administration and maintenance may not represent the sort or experience corporate volunteers want to continue either.

As previously identified, the most common benefit sought from corporate volunteering programs across all organisational types was fundraising or sponsorship. Is this expectation realistic when less than half of the volunteers are actually even dedicated to these activities? A lower rating was given to the question of whether corporate volunteering had actually raised funds.

> *"Providing infrastructure when it currently is stretched [is diifcult]….the main reason of the corporate volunteer is to gain profits or use us as an avenue of money-making." Survey respondent*

Is it fair to assume that the not for profit sector continues to see the driving purpose for engaging with corporations as 'raising funds'? In an era of promoting good corporate citizenship through greater community involvement it appears the not for profit sector may also need to transition from philanthropy to engagement.

This finding bears reflection by both sectors in terms of moving forward on developing potentially more productive partnerships. Should there be a more strategic approach from both sectors to involving professional volunteers? The question it also raises is do corporate volunteers wish to utilise their professional and academic skills when volunteering? Volunteering Australia hopes to explore this field of research in the future, examining the perceptions and experiences of corporate volunteers and companies with employee volunteering programs.

What this research did show was that the not for profit organisations did not rate the volunteering in professional capacity highly as a benefit sought anyway. Furthermore, less than a third of organisations expressed a preference for having corporate volunteers working as individuals rather than in teams, whilst anecdotal evidence suggests the corporations are demanding the group volunteering.

"...en a corporation approaches us with over 200 staff to help in a day. We struggle to give them things to do when there are so many" survey respondent

The research did identify a correlation between the larger organisations, and/or having a paid manager of volunteers with a lower preference for individual and professional skill volunteering.

More amorphous but extremely positive benefits for not for profit organisations arising out of corporate volunteering experiences are raised community profile (**75%**), usefulness to forming business partnerships in the future (**71%**) and importantly the willingness to participate and continue to involve corporate volunteers (**97%**).

What are the key factors for success?

"Our perception has been that we are not large enough to interest a corporate volunteer program" survey respondent

A core issue in success was the belief in organisational capacity to involve corporate volunteers. It was notable that 92% of organisations with experience agreed they had the capacity whilst only 53% of those without experience believed they had sufficient capacity.

Organisational capacity may also be manifest in an organisations confidence to pursue corporate volunteering when we see 68.2% of organisations with experience say they continue to actively look for corporate partners whereas only 16.5% of organisations without experience stated they are looking for a corporate partner.

The most important factor in involving corporate volunteers from the persepctive of the not for profit organisations is **support of volunteers by the corporate**. Not a lot of interpretation is needed with this statistic. It is clear that whilst the corporations and their employees are the chief instigators of corporate volunteering there are real concerns with the level of support from within the corporation after contact is made. Corporate volunteering programs clearly require dedicated coordination and resourcing from both parties for it to be a success.

"We believe this is an area which can be expanded in many corporations to being part of their own training program."
Survey respondent

...ed between the organisations with and without ...for profit organisations with experience rated internal (their own) issues as the other most key factors, whereas, respondents without experience of corporate volunteering perceived the most important factors to be external to the organisation and belonging to the corporate.

These perceptions as to what is most important to success may provide one reason why some not for profits have not participated to date. The fact that the perception differs between organisations with experience and those without experience supports the need for greater discussion and knowledge sharing about corporate volunteering within the not for profit sector.

What are the key difficulties?

Interestingly, %lack of time and resources+in not for profit organisations, often believed to be the foremost reason for not being involved with corporates, was not expressed in this research. Only 6.9% of organisations with experience of corporate volunteering identified it as a difficulty, and only 3.9% of organisations without experience perceived it as a difficulty.

One outstanding finding from this research was that most of the organisations with experience of involving corporate volunteers stated no changes were required of their organisations. This is a very positive message for the majority of the not for profit sector who have not participated to date. However this should be cross referenced with the fact that over 30% of the organisations with experience have 20 or more staff and over half have a paid manager of volunteers.

> *"Volunteers require expert supervision, which we do not have."*
> *Survey respondent*

The most highly rated reason, as high as 85% of organisations with experience, for not having capacity to engage corporate volunteers was the lack of personnel, Lack of personnel to coordinate and manage the corporate volunteering program is clearly a predominating issue both within the not for profit organisation and within the corporation.

 Commonly perceived difficulties associated with involving corporate volunteers were the stress of organising opportunities to suit corporate needs, the difficulty of finding corporate partners, and the incompatibility of organisations work with corporate goals.

Implicit in these concerns is the belief that corporates are seeking an experience tailored to their mission and needs rather than that of the not for

...ception that needs be honestly answered by all
...d in employee volunteering programs.

In addition %Support of volunteers by the corporate+was globally perceived as
the single most important factor in successfully involving corporate volunteers.

Particular responses noted that at involving corporate volunteers can be of
greater difficulties in certain service types and client groups. Difficulties
included the perception that the hours volunteers were available did not match
service hours, the need for specific training and vetting of volunteers to be
competent for one on one volunteering, client privacy issues , volunteer and
volunteer management training, and importantly consistency and commitment.

> **"Do they want to be involved in a "non warm fussy area"?" survey**
> **respondent**

A potential response to this is the provision of training for the corporate
volunteers in community organisational management and service provision.
Are corporations prepared to contribute to training for volunteer experiences?
Will a corporation and its employees provide the ongoing commitment
necessary for long term client outcomes? Are corporations prepared to be
involved in areas of need which do not immediately appear as marketing and
branding opportunities but may represent a greater learning curve or cultural
shift for employees in the long term?

Does size matter?

> **"Too busy. Too small."**
> **Survey respondent**

The information collected by this survey suggests the 6-10 staff organisations
present the most consistently high ratings across satisfaction, raising
community profile, raising funds, forming future business partnerships,
willingness to be involved, an ability / wish to use volunteersqprofessional
skills, and retention of volunteers.

Only 30% of respondent organisations agreed with the statement that they
would prefer to have corporate volunteers working as individuals rather than in
teams.

The organisations with experience involving corporate volunteers, with either
20 and more staff and/or 500 or more volunteers and/or a paid manager of
volunteers, indicate less concern for offering individual volunteering
experiences, less concern for using the professional skills of corporate
volunteers and state corporate volunteering has less effect on their recruitment

e was also a significantly lower percentage of
ff) expressing difficulty finding corporate
partners.

Therefore numbers of paid staff do appear to have a marked effect on the
experience and perceptions of corporate volunteering and the ability to find and
attract corporate partners. However the flip side of this capacity may be less
flexibility, less strategic use of the volunteers and less emphasis on retaining
the volunteers.

When asked whether their corporate volunteers were helping by using their
day-to-day professional skills over 50% of all organisations between 2 and 20
staff agreed, whilst in organisations over 20 staff the majority (59.4%) either
disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed. This most likely reflects greater
range of in-house professional skills that larger organisations have to draw on?

These characteristics within the not for profit sector provide useful guides for
corporations to best match their corporate volunteering program needs and
goals with appropriately sized and managed organisations.

> *"I'm not quite sure where to start. I would need to have a specific
> program organised to fit with organisations skills. For a small
> organisation, corporate volunteers could have tremendous impact. I
> would welcome the input, but would like to have the opportunity to
> plan and work with liaison person to ensure the success of any
> venture." Survey respondent*

What were the main differences between those organisations with experience and those without?

The most characteristic differences between the organisations with experience
and those without experience were numbers of paid staff, numbers of existing
volunteers, and the presence of a paid or at least voluntary manager of
volunteers. The fact that over 50% of the surveys from organisations without
experience were completed by either the Chief Executive Officer or the
Administrator may be read as an indicator of lack of infrastructure and
capacity.

Also notable was the 63% of the organisations with experience were welfare /
community not for profit organisations.

In terms of organisational perceptions many more organisations with
experience than without believe they have the necessary capacity to involve
corporate volunteers and were actively looking for corporate partners. The
organisations with experience saw the factors of success resting as much in

ation as the corporation, where as those
issues to lie mostly within the corporation.
This may mean two things. One, this indicates a gap between perception and experiences of corporate volunteering or are these statistics underpinned by a healthy caution exercised by many not for profit organisations in terms of exceeding their capacity? .

> *"The idea of corporate volunteering is excellent, provided it's coordination/organising does not impose or involve taking the time of already heavily burdened administration tasks. We can't afford to 'baby-sit' those who may want a little time away from the office, and we can't afford added administration to oversee or 'report back' to the corporation. Full support would be given to any volunteer, corporate or otherwise, and any involvement would be truly appreciated. But any commitment would largely need to be on the terms of the organisation concerned and not on the terms of the corporation."*
> *Survey respondent*

Volunteering Australia undertook this research with the aim of gathering information about the experiences and attitudes of not-for-profit organisations to corporate volunteering to encourage and inform corporate volunteering partnerships and programs.

With the generous pro bono support of Orima Research Volunteering Australia has been able to disseminate, collect and analyse the first ever data collection from the not for profit sector across Australia regarding corporate volunteering experiences and perceptions.

The survey responses have provided a wealth of information, which will benefit both corporate and not for profit sectors, helping us better understand:

- organisational characteristics associated with successful experiences
- key motivations and benefits of corporate volunteering
- the greatest difficulties and capacity issues; and
- the perceptions of organisations not yet participating.

Whilst there appears a relatively low participation rate at this stage we have seen that there is overwhelming support and positivism toward corporate volunteering within the not for profit sector and a great willingness to engage.

We have learnt that key factors involved in successful corporate volunteering relate to organisational capacity - in particular size and management resources, the reciprocal commitment and coordination of the corporation, and the match between organisational and corporate objectives and needs.

There is clearly difficulty for many not for profits just finding corporate partners, organising suitable volunteering options and the inevitable lack of personnel.

t this research provides a solid information
unteering dialogue between, and within, the
not for profit and corporate sectors. The next piece of work to be done is to
better understand the experiences and perceptions of the employee volunteers
and their corporations.

"Corporate volunteering has the potential to bring positive results for our organisation, but it is based on a long-term relationship, that requires our organisations to implement systems to support this on an ongoing basis."

Survey respondent