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Debatte

THE END OF EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING: A Necessary Step to Substantive Employee Engagement in the Community

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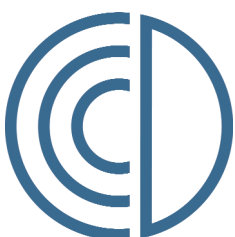
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CCCD – the Center for Corporate Citizenship Germany is a non-profit organisation at the interface between business, academia, and politics. In cooperation with leading companies, both domestic and foreign, academic institutions and civil society organisations, CCCD acts as a think space and competence centre, providing a platform for dialogue; acting as catalyst and host.

In this capacity, the CCCD arranges forums for exchange between corporate citizens, business, academia, politics and civil society, supplies and carries out applied research, facilitates learning processes through debate and skilling opportunities, and supports cooperation between businesses and partners from civil society, academia, and/or politics. Using workshops, publications and public events, CCCD also acts as a driving force for the corporate citizenship debate in Germany and for the practical efforts by businesses taking an active role in society.

CCCD is the German partner of the Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College, USA, as well as a partner of Business in the Community, UK.



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Executive Summary

If one is to believe a growing number of civic sector leaders, employee volunteering has the power to dramatically strengthen our communities, mitigate humanity's most stubborn problems and elevate civilization to new heights. Not just any employee volunteering will accomplish this feat, however. Only employee volunteering deliberately designed to efficiently draw from the strengths of its host company or – in other words – *strategic volunteering*, will unleash this awesome potential for good.

Sadly, the formidable force for good contained within employee volunteering is largely untapped. Research finds that distressingly few employee volunteer programs are configured to effectively draw on the companies' strengths in order to substantively support the civic sector. Most programs are scarcely different from a random collection of individuals volunteering on their own. Companies typically back their employee volunteers with nothing more than facilitation and encouragement. Thus, they forgo the opportunity to build a strategic, or high-impact, program. Meanwhile our civic sector challenges – from crime to AIDS epidemics – remain largely unaided and unimproved, despite the immense potential of employee volunteering.

Community involvement managers face a terrific challenge in guiding employee volunteering toward a more strategic model. On the one hand community involvement managers are increasingly, and appropriately, charged with developing a strategic program: one that is logically designed to maximize impact on the civic sector. Such a strategic program necessarily accrues business benefits, might not be entirely voluntary and cannot uphold the personal qualities of the volunteer experience. On the other hand, their programs are about "volunteering" which, at least in most of our minds, means that the activities are altruistic, voluntary and personal. Most community involvement managers try to resolve this tension between "strategic" and "true" volunteering by attempt-

ing to balance their employee volunteer programs so that they accomplish both. However, this results in compromised programs on both counts. Volunteering – with its altruistic, voluntary and personal character – cannot blossom within the hard confines of a strategic model. Conversely, the business quest for a strategic program that is designed to maximize effectiveness can never thrive when the program is expected to honor the idealistic tenets of volunteering. As a result, our employee volunteering underperforms.

To maximize civic sector impact involves ending "employee volunteering" as we know it. Instead, we need to design strategic employee community engagement programs – avoiding the term "volunteering" itself – that don't try to live up to the ideals we assign to volunteering and, therefore, can draw from the full prowess of business. The purpose of strategic employee community engagement is to fully leverage the business context to generate the greatest amount of societal benefit, not to offer true volunteering. Such employee community engagement makes evidence-based decisions on what to support and not support, even if this results in disregarding needs at the company's doorstep; chooses civic sector issues that support the business, even if this is blatantly nonaltruistic; and otherwise applies strategic processes to what was formerly called employee volunteering. The well-being of the planet will be affected by businesses' ability, or inability, to make this transition from employee volunteering to employee community engagement.

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, said that "every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." The bright beginning of the last century, employee volunteering, has completed its shining moment. Now we need the courage to end employee volunteering as we know it in order to begin a more effective and impactful era of employee community engagement.

I. The planet's greatest untapped force for good

If one is to believe a growing number of civic sector leaders, a resource exists that can dramatically strengthen our communities, mitigate humanity's most stubborn problems and elevate our civilization to new heights. Michael Bürsch, founding member of the CCCD in Germany and former member of the German Parliament, states that this resource has immense power to help meet "every single one of the great challenges we are facing in politics and in society." In the United States, Aaron Hurst cites a study conducted by the organization he heads, the Taproot Foundation, that dubbed this resource the "\$1.5 billion opportunity," referring to the value it could add to the U.S. civic sector in a single year. In the United Kingdom, Chris West, director of the Shell Foundation, calls it "the way forward" because it represents one of the best hopes for effective international development.¹ These are just a few of the voices in an increasingly loud chorus heralding the powers of this great resource.

This resource is not hidden, but plainly visible. It is not rare, but plentiful. It is not remote, but ubiquitous. Each of these experts might be focusing on particular aspects of this resource and might call it something different, but they are all referring to the same underlying force. They are referring to the ancient and very human tradition of helping our neighbors, but they have added a modern twist that adds impact: employer support.

Whether we call it employee volunteering, corporate volunteering or employer supported volunteering,² experts from a variety of disciplines are looking at the large workforces and broad competencies of business and reaching the same conclusion: the human resources contained within the corporate sector can be engaged in our communities to solve our most difficult social problems and improve our lot as a civilization.

But it is also now clear that not just any employee volunteering has the power to transform the world. Indeed, if dropped at the site of a common employee volunteer project – for example, a group of bank employees clad in company T-shirts, wielding shovels and pushing wheelbarrows on the grounds of a local nonprofit – Bürsch, Hurst and West would most likely shake their heads and say, "That's not what I had in mind." Bürsch would explain that this project misses the mark because effective employee volunteering supports sociopolitical structures for civic engagement. Its value is greater than simply accomplishing prescribed civic activities.³ Hurst would say that the \$1.5 billion opportunity lays in repurposing workplace strategic management skills to support nonprofit partners, not in using employees for unskilled volunteer tasks. And West would say that for employees to effectively support

civic sector causes, their volunteering needs to concentrate in areas that reflect company competencies, and be conducted with carefully selected nonprofit partners.

In other words, these thought leaders share a rallying cry: employee volunteering needs to be strategic to be high impact. That is, employee volunteering has to be deliberately designed to efficiently draw from the strengths of its host company if it is to help "meet all our challenges," offer "\$1.5 billion" worth of value, or "point the way forward" per Bürsch, Hurst and West's respective visions.

And this is where the tune changes from hopeful to heartbreaking. The enormous potential for good contained within employee volunteering is largely untapped. Most employee volunteer programs are similar to the one described above: scarcely different from a random collection of individuals volunteering on their own. Companies typically contribute very little to employee volunteering beyond basic facilitation and encouragement. Thus, they forgo the opportunity to build a strategic, or high-impact, program.

The Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs ("Drivers of Effectiveness") developed by the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship are the only evidence-based standards that measure how well an employee volunteer program is designed to make a positive impact on the civic sector, as well as on the business. Research on the Drivers of Effectiveness finds that distressingly few employee volunteer programs are configured to effectively put the companies' strengths in service of civic sector issues. Only 8 percent of surveyed Fortune 500 companies have compliance levels of 50 percent or more with the Drivers of Effectiveness. In other words, 92 percent of Fortune 500 respondents fail to exhibit even a simple majority of the strategic practices listed in the Drivers of Effectiveness. Indeed, on average, Fortune 500 respondents exhibit only 26 percent of these practices. The majority of Fortune 500 respondent employee volunteer programs lack even the most basic strategic elements expected of any business endeavor, such as written goals and measurement systems to track progress toward those goals. Lest we think that the problem is limited to Fortune 500 companies, non-Fortune 500

1 Tomkins, Richard, "Should Today's Companies Be Doing More To Make Society Better? - Part 1; Stories –Philanthropy," Financial Times. (London, UK: Jan 17, 2009. pg. 22).

2 This paper will use the most common term, "employee volunteering."

3 Boccalandro, Bea, Mapping Success in Employee Volunteering: The Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs and Fortune 500 Performance (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, US: Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, 2009).

U.S. respondents, Canadian respondents and German respondents (the three main countries represented in the database) all had average compliance rates with the Drivers of Effectiveness of under 30 percent.⁴ Clearly, there is ample room for improvement when it comes to making our employee volunteer programs more strategic.

The business sector’s failure to generate strategic employee volunteering is costly to society. Our civic sector challenges – from teenage crime to AIDS epidemics – remain largely unaided and unimproved despite the immense potential of employee volunteers.

4 www.volunteerbenchmark.com.

Figure 1. The Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs

| Driver | Indicators |
|---|---|
| <p>Driver 1: Cause-effective Configuration</p> <p><i>Highly effective Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs (EVGPs) are structured to support social causes and nonprofit partners productively</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Cause focus: Focuses on causes for which the company is especially well suited to support 1.2 Asset leveraging: Leverages the company’s assets to support the EVGP 1.3 Philanthropic integration: Is integrated into the company’s philanthropic program 1.4 Productive partnerships: Has procedures and systems to support effective partnerships with nonprofit/government organizations served by the EVGP |
| <p>Driver 2: Strategic Business Positioning</p> <p><i>Highly effective EVGPs are internally positioned to contribute toward business success</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Business goals: Has employee-accessible written goals that explicitly state the business benefits the program promotes 2.2 Aligned infrastructure: Benefits from procedures/practices/guidance from department(s) charged with the business goals the EVGP program seeks to promote 2.3 Resonant cause(s): Focuses on cause(s) that connect to the business 2.4 Integration with corporate citizenship: Is integrated into the company’s overall corporate citizenship/social responsibility plans |
| <p>Driver 3: Sufficient Investment</p> <p><i>Highly effective EVGPs receive company resources commensurate with corporate efforts of similar scope (this driver not applicable to companies with fewer than 3,000 employees)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Strong team: Has at least one full-time paid professional position for every 10,000 employees, and not less than two total, to manage the program (not organize events) 3.2 Adequate operating budget: Expends at least \$30 per employee in operations, and not less than \$500,000 total (operating budget excludes salaries and grants) 3.3 Grant support: Company grants to nonprofits in support of employee volunteering total at least \$100 per employee (e.g., dollars for doers, team grants, other grants tied to volunteer events, but not matching gift grants unless they are limited to organizations where employees volunteer) |
| <p>Driver 4: Culture of Engagement</p> <p><i>Highly effective EVGPs benefit from companywide facilitation and encouragement of employee involvement in the community</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Facilitative procedures: Has universal procedures/practices/guidance to facilitate employee involvement 4.2 Formal encouragement: Has universal procedures/practices/guidance to create interest and enthusiasm for employee volunteering 4.3 Business department support: Business units supported by EVGP, per the EVGP’s business goals, promote employee involvement 4.4 Middle-management outreach: Educates middle managers on the relevance of the EVGP to their responsibilities 4.5 Senior-management modeling: Has senior executive public participation 4.6 Accessible information: Makes information on how to get involved easily available |

| Driver | Indicators |
|--|--|
| <p>Driver 5: Strong Participation</p> <p><i>Highly effective EVGPs have meaningful levels of involvement from the majority of employees</i></p> | <p>5.1 Majority participation: Involves at least 50 percent of employees in EVGP-supported volunteering</p> <p>5.2 Substantial scale: Generates at least eight hours, on average, of volunteering per employee per year</p> |
| <p>Driver 6: Actionable Evaluation</p> <p><i>Highly effective EVGPs track their efforts, hold themselves accountable to their outcome goals and implement evidence-based improvements</i></p> | <p>6.1 Participation metrics: Tracks employee participation in EVGP volunteering</p> <p>6.2 Volume metrics: Tracks employee EVGP volunteer hours</p> <p>6.3 Employee feedback: Collects employee feedback</p> <p>6.4 Nonprofit feedback: Collects nonprofit partner feedback</p> <p>6.5 Business outcomes metrics: Tracks business outcomes</p> <p>6.6 Social sector outcomes metrics: Tracks community outcomes</p> |

Source: Mapping Success in Employee Volunteering: The Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Fortune 500 Performance by Bea Boccalandro, Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, 2009.

II. Superimposing strategy on employee volunteering is self-limiting

As a codification of the practices that research indicates lead to civic sector and business impact, the Drivers of Effectiveness lay out a path to strategic employee volunteering for community involvement professionals to follow. Of course, the Drivers of Effectiveness have their limitations. As evidence-based practices, they only cover researched areas and they do not apply equally well across all companies, for example. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that moving toward greater compliance with the Drivers of Effectiveness will increase the strategic value and impact of employee volunteer programs.⁵

However, despite the path set out by the Drivers of Effectiveness, realizing the strategic value of employee volunteering is not a simple matter of superimposing strategic practices on our volunteer programs. This approach will likely backfire by eroding support from many of our most committed employee volunteers, senior managers and members of the employee base. Indeed, community involvement professionals might even feel uncomfortable nudging the employee volunteer programs they manage toward a more strategic incarnation. That is, our current conception of volunteering is not sufficiently plastic to allow for movement toward a strategic employee volunteer program, as illustrated below.

Imagine your company currently offers a “release time policy” establishing that employees are entitled to 16 hours of paid time a year to volunteer for a nonprofit organization of their choosing, in the same way they are entitled to vacation time and medical leave. Chances are, no one would consider this policy anything other than a company endorsement of good-hearted volunteering.

Now imagine you add an evaluation component to this employee volunteer program. Under the supposition that those employees connected to their communities are better at selling, you track which sales force employees use release time and compare their sales performance with that of similar employees who do not participate. How do you feel about this? How might employees react to the program now? Some might claim that their privacy has been invaded by linking their personal volunteer data to work performance data. Others might find offense in their company attempting to profit from their altruistic volunteering. As the steward of the program, you might feel conflicted about its duality.

Next, imagine you redesign the program to serve as a leadership development tool. Instead of 16 hours of release time for volunteering per year, it is now one

month. However, this release time is open only to the minority of employees whose job performance is in the top 20 percent. How many employees would embrace this service program without hesitation? It’s likely that some would think, “Why does the company assume that only top-performing employees are willing or capable of helping their communities?” As the community involvement manager, you might find it challenging to answer this question.

Finally, let’s imagine a few more changes to your employee volunteer program. The company now selects which nonprofits employees will serve, what project they will work on and who their team members are. Furthermore, the program only serves nonprofits in developing countries considered high-potential growth markets for the company’s commercial products. Some employees will now most likely vociferously complain that the company is not supporting their volunteering, but rather pursuing its own aims through the employee volunteer program. Some might even accuse the company of misleading employees by cloaking a corporate program in a volunteer program shell. Again, these claims have merit and put community involvement professionals in a quandary.

In other words, the evolution of the program described above would have resulted in offended, distanced, skeptical and even oppositional employees at all levels; and may have led to your own discomfort as a community involvement manager. However, all of these adjustments are reasonable steps toward complying with the Drivers of Effectiveness. That is, they were good ideas in terms of making the program more strategic and, thus, higher impact. Indeed, by executing such changes, you would have created an employee volunteer program similar to one of the most strategic and respected: IBM’s Corporate Service Corps, a program through which employees perform community-driven economic development projects in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America; working at the intersection of business, technology and society.

5 The Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship’s Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs Benchmarking Survey Tool supports companies in applying the Drivers to their own case by: scoring their program against the ideal, per the evidence-based Drivers of Effectiveness for Employee Volunteering and Giving Programs; identifying their program’s strengths and weaknesses so that they can better develop strategic plans, garner internal support and make operational decisions; and comparing their program to desired groups of respondent companies, such as the Fortune 500, retail companies or international companies. Use of the tool is free of charge, courtesy of Bank of America. Go to tool: www.volunteerbenchmark.com.

Ironically, the strategic modifications that can make employee volunteering less attractive to many volunteers make the program more effective at serving worthy caus-

es – whether helping victims of domestic violence, reducing the spread of malaria or helping children obtain an education.

III. Understanding the tension between true and strategic volunteering

As seen above, transforming a volunteer program from hands-off support for employees' personal volunteering to a focused and structured company-defined program can undermine support for the program. Even senior managers – who can halt progress with a few utterances – can be skeptical of a charitable effort turned strategic. Understanding why the popularity of employee volunteering tends to deteriorate as the program becomes more strategic is the first step toward managing this resistance respectfully and productively.

Our distaste for strategic employee volunteering reflects a tension between our preconceived, and somewhat mythical, notion of "true" volunteering and the volunteering of a strategic employee volunteer program. While this tension between true and strategic volunteering is affected by culture, geography, politics, demographics and other factors, it also appears to be widespread, if not universal. Volunteering is certainly not uniform across the globe. In some cultures volunteering is informal and conducted largely between individuals. Other cultures have strong civic sector institutions that offer formal volunteering. The character of the volunteering itself also varies, including how it relates to family, religion and other social organisms. Nevertheless, volunteering is a human phenomenon, not a cultural construct. In every culture across the globe individuals "volunteer," per a commonly accepted definition: working on behalf of others or a particular cause, without payment for time and services.^{7,8}

Virtually every workforce in every global location, then, has been exposed to the concept and the practice of volunteering in civil society – although many would know it by another term. Therefore, whether you are managing employee volunteers in Germany, Japan or Peru, your program is likely affected by preexisting notions of volunteering. Furthermore, while other aspects of volunteering vary greatly, preconceptions on the essential nature of volunteering are remarkably consistent across cultures, nations and other dimensions.⁹ Humans generally expect volunteer acts to be altruistic, voluntary and personal. Yet, these preconceived notions of "true" volunteering are in conflict with the strategic volunteering that employee volunteer programs are expected to offer. Each of these points of tension is described below.

Altruism versus win-win

Many people, including many we hope to engage in employee volunteering, consider selflessness a key criterion for establishing whether an act is truly volunteering. We

believe the essence of volunteering is service to others without regard for personal gain or, at least, not much regard. In reality, research has found that many of those we consider volunteers are not motivated solely, or even principally, by altruism. What researchers have called "egoistic" motivators such as building social networks, developing skills, improving their curriculum vitae, etc., account for much of the volunteering currently taking place in our communities.¹⁰ Nevertheless, our beliefs do not reflect reality. We hold firm to our idealistic view that ulterior motives degrade the purity of volunteering. For example, researchers have found that people across the globe, including in Canada, India, Italy, Netherlands and the United States, consider anybody who receives benefits from volunteering less of a volunteer.¹¹

However, virtually all corporate citizenship experts – including Harvard University's Michael Porter and Boston College's Brad Googins and Phil Mirvis – consider business benefits an imperative for best-practice corporate citizenship endeavors, including employee volunteer programs. Research supports their claim. The Drivers of Effectiveness establish that the employee volunteer program that does the most charitable good is one that also serves the business. Serving business interests ultimately leads to more sustainable programs of greater scale and charitable impact. Conversely, dedicating resources to an employee volunteer program that does not generate a business return puts the company at a competitive disadvantage and is, therefore, not sustainable. Stan Litow, vice president of Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs at IBM, explained that while Corporate Service Corps,

7 Randle, Melanie and Sara Dolnicar, "Does Cultural Background Affect Volunteering Behavior?" in *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*. (Binghamton, NY, US: Apr 2009. Vol. 21, Iss. 2; pg. 225).

8 Handy, Femida, Ram A. Cnaan, Jeffrey L. Brudney, Ugo Ascoli, Lucas C. M. P. Meijs, and Shree Ranade, "Public Perception of 'Who is a Volunteer': An Examination of the Net-Cost Approach from a Cross-Cultural Perspective" in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2000.

9 Handy, Femida, Ram A. Cnaan, Jeffrey L. Brudney, Ugo Ascoli, Lucas C. M. P. Meijs, and Shree Ranade, "Public Perception of 'Who is a Volunteer': An Examination of the Net-Cost Approach from a Cross-Cultural Perspective" in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2000.

10 Hartenian, Linda S. Bryan Lilly, "Egoism and Commitment: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding Sustained Volunteering" in *Journal of Managerial Issues*, Spring 2009. Vol. 21, Iss. 1; p. 97.

11 Handy, Femida, Ram A. Cnaan, Jeffrey L. Brudney, Ugo Ascoli, Lucas C. M. P. Meijs, and Shree Ranade, "Public Perception of 'Who is a Volunteer': An Examination of the Net-Cost Approach from a Cross-Cultural Perspective" in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2000.

described earlier, had lofty civic sector goals, it was only sustainable because it was “grounded in leadership development and business strategy.”¹¹

Business benefits might be a hallmark of an effective employee volunteer program, but they are also an affront to our conception of true volunteering. As a result, community involvement managers rightly hesitate to accrue business benefits and employee volunteer programs remain less strategic and less effective than they might be. A German company representative, for example, explained that she could not invite the media to volunteer events because employees would not tolerate their “altruism being exploited for PR gains.”

Another way employee volunteering is a slight to altruism is its penchant for “paying” volunteers. Although exception is sometimes granted for living expenses and other stipends, virtually all definitions of volunteering from across the globe state that volunteers cannot accrue financial reward.¹³ Yet, paid time off for “volunteering” is often a desirable component of high-impact employee volunteer programs. There is no doubt, for example, that the school-focused community involvement of U.S. company UGI Utilities is enhanced by a policy that allows employees to volunteer during paid time, as it allows more children to be served. But those UGI employees are not technically true volunteers.

Making an employee volunteer program more strategic often bumps up against our belief, whether accurate or not, that true volunteering is – and should be – altruistic. Thus, movement in a strategic direction produces resistance from many individuals.

Individual free will versus project effectiveness

Virtually every definition of volunteering contains the requirement that the act be, not surprisingly, voluntary.¹⁴ Personal choice is a defining element of volunteering. However, a strategic program sometimes eliminates or at least diminishes individual choice regarding participation. Similarly, it often makes decisions, such as which causes to support and how to best serve them, based on efficiency and not on participant personal preference.

Pursuit of ways to effectively leverage employee time and talent for the benefit of the civic sector can naturally lead to practices that strongly encourage or even require employee volunteering. Many companies have compulsory board service for executives, and some even include volunteering in department or employee scorecards. Furthermore, a strategic employee volunteer program often includes practices, such as days of service or department team-building events that leverage the collective strength of employee volunteering by requiring that an entire

group participate in the “volunteer” event. Clearly, these practices, while perfectly reasonable methods for achieving greater strategic value, diminish the voluntary nature of the service.

A corollary of the free-will tenet of volunteering is that true volunteers decide not only if they will volunteer, but what they will contribute. That is, most people believe that true volunteering occurs when compelling need moves us into action for the benefit of others. Any company with a narrow cause focus – for example, the environment or elder care – violates this conception of true volunteering. However, a cause focus is a key component of a strategic employee volunteer program, clearly associated with greater impact.

In other words, our efforts to generate strategic employee volunteering can, and often do, clash with our views that volunteering is, and should remain, voluntary.

Personal versus professionalized experience

Volunteering has become increasingly professionalized over the past few decades, meaning it has become more structured, disciplined and results oriented.¹⁵ Despite this civic sector trend, many workplace volunteers are resistant to undermining the distinct warm and personal character of volunteering with procedures, metrics and other instruments of effectiveness. However, these are precisely the practices that a strategic program needs for proper management. That their employers are the ones imposing these practices only intensifies resistance from employee volunteers. Illustrating how oppressive some employees consider the application of professional tools on their volunteering, a German employee described measurement efforts under way as a “prison of quantitative data,” and a Canadian employee considered a 30-minute web-based orientation to the volunteer activity as so burdensome and formal as to be “anathema to the free spirit of giving.”

The personal versus professionalized tension also shows up around skills-based volunteering, where workplace skills

12 Hamm, Steve, “The World Is IBM’s Classroom” in *BusinessWeek*, March 12, 2009, accompanying interview video at http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_12/b4124056268652.htm.

13 Handy, Femida, Ram A. Cnaan, Jeffrey L. Brudney, Ugo Ascoli, Lucas C. M. P. Meijs, and Shree Ranade, “Public Perception of ‘Who is a Volunteer’: An Examination of the Net-Cost Approach from a Cross-Cultural Perspective” in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2000.

14 Cnaan, R. A., Handy, Femida and Margaret Wadsworth, “Defining Who is a Volunteer: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations in Nonprofit an Voluntary Sector Quarterly” in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 1996, 25, 364–383.

15 Putman, Robert D., *Bowling Alone* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

are repurposed to offer higher impact services to the civic sector than “extra-pair-of-hands” volunteering. Although skills-based volunteering is a logical way to increase the effectiveness of employee volunteering, many program managers report employee resistance. While employees are often enthusiastic about the big team events where they paint walls, pick up trash and engage in other unskilled tasks, some are less agreeable to volunteering in roles similar to their workplace responsibilities. This is not surprising considering that many individuals consider volunteering an opportunity for leisure and, therefore, seek activities different from their daily experiences.¹⁶

A final area of resistance for some employees is the examination and evaluation that comes with a strategic program. There is a sense that volunteering is more a ritual performed in one’s private life than a project to be scrutinized by one’s employer. For example, a group of Peruvian employees expressed discontent at being asked to complete a survey tracking impact. They explained that volunteering was a “very private and human endeavor” and “about relationships,” and not something to be submitted to institutional scrutiny and judgment. Similarly, an American employee explained that she objected to evaluation of the volunteer program because “you don’t look a gift horse in the mouth.”

In other words, some employees are attached to the personal and less structured nature of the private volunteering they have done in the past; and are not keen to participate in more strategic volunteering that diminishes, by necessity, these qualities.

Given the three ways that strategic employee volunteering chips away at the most hallowed tenets of our concept of true volunteering – that it is altruistic, voluntary and personal – it’s not surprising that we are skeptical, or at least wary, of an employee “volunteer” program that is strategic. It does not matter that our conception of “true” volunteering is largely myth in that not even civic sector volunteering fully lives up to the standards we have for it. When a business’ pursuit of greater strategic design tramples on our vision of true volunteering, regardless of the accuracy of that view, many of us are offended and even resistant. Ironically, this attempt to protect the sanctity of volunteering undermines our ability to tap into the latent power of employee volunteering that Bürsch, Hurst, West and many others believe can elevate volunteering to heightened levels of greatness.

16 Stebbins, Robert A., and Margaret M. Graham, ed., Volunteering as Leisure / Leisure as Volunteering: An International Assessment, Wallingford, Oxon, UK: CAB International, 2004.

Figure 2. Key points of tension between true and strategic volunteering

| | Employees are most comfortable with “true” volunteering characterized by... | But to maximize impact, the company needs to promote “strategic” volunteering characterized by... |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Motivation | <p>Altruism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Benefits only the civic sector cause ■ Volunteers are not paid | <p>Win-win return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Benefits the company, as well as the civic sector cause ■ Volunteers can be paid |
| Selection criteria | <p>Individual free will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation is voluntary ■ Selection of cause is by the volunteer ■ Tasks are selected/defined by the volunteer | <p>Project effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation can be expected or compulsory ■ Selection of cause can be made by the company ■ Tasks can be defined by the company |
| Nature of the experience | <p>Personal giving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience is often unstructured ■ Service performed is often of an unskilled nature ■ Privacy is high and scrutiny is low (often) | <p>Professionalized service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience is structured ■ Service performed is often of the skilled nature ■ Privacy is low and scrutiny is high |

IV. Why our attempts to balance true and strategic volunteering fail

Community involvement managers have the unenviable task of managing inherently conflicted employee volunteer programs. On the one hand they are increasingly, and appropriately, charged with developing a strategic program: one that is logically designed to maximize impact on the civic sector and the business. On the other hand, their programs are about “volunteering;” which, at least in our minds, is a personal experience based on altruism and determined by free will. This conflict between true and strategic volunteering is not merely a theoretical artifact. It is a professional challenge. Participants have brought it up in every Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship Course on employee volunteering over the last three years. Interviews and surveys with 42 community involvement managers from Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States revealed that 98 percent found the tension between strategic and true volunteering a job challenge.¹⁷ Clearly, the true-strategic tension in employee volunteering is a thorn in the side of community involvement professionals.

Today, most community involvement managers try to balance their employee volunteer programs to serve the expectations of both true and strategic volunteering. Eighty-three percent of the 42 interviewed community involvement professionals said they managed the true-strategic volunteering tension by “balancing” the two values. One respondent described his job as “balancing what is nice and what is business ... and not letting either trample over the other.”

Balancing true volunteering with strategic volunteering is unlikely to upset stakeholders on either side of spectrum and is, therefore, low risk. Yet, while an employee volunteer program that balances true and strategic tendencies will not get managers in trouble, it will also never reach the heights of efficiency required for employee volunteering to live up to its awesome potential for good.

True volunteering and strategic volunteering might not be mutually exclusive, but they are in direct conflict often enough to chronically undermine one another. From limiting the civic sector causes to tracking business benefits, aligning employee volunteering with strategy almost always undermines the program’s spirit of true volunteerism. Similarly, from supporting employee interest in causes in which the company has no particular expertise to ensuring no employee feels their private experiences have been inappropriately shared, respecting the cherished values of true volunteering often undermines the strategic value of the program. The result is that true volunteering and strategic volunteering often cannot coexist

in the same experience to any significant degree. Volunteer experiences that balance true volunteering against strategic volunteering are most often a serious compromise on both fronts. Community involvement then, is crowded with disaster response efforts that ship unhelpful items collected by employees to disaster response agencies; projects that set up computer labs that the recipient nonprofit cannot maintain; and with other volunteer efforts that do not serve civic sector causes effectively.

The experience of an American company that thought it was successfully balancing true and strategic volunteering illustrates the limitations of this approach. The company implemented a dollars-for-doers program, offering employees grants for the organizations where they volunteer 20 hours or more, with openness to any cause and a hands-off approach. When the CEO sent notes to known volunteers, per dollars-for-doers records, and to their supervisors thanking them for their service, dozens of employees complained that it was unconscionable that their private volunteer records had been shared with individuals who had authority over their careers. Coming from the perspective of true volunteering, these employees had a valid complaint. We don’t expect our employers to freely share HR information pertaining to our medical leave or vacations. If volunteering is viewed as a personal endeavor that we do as private citizens, the company had violated customary standards of privacy. On the other hand, how can a company be expected to manage a program, much less make it strategic, if its most basic records cannot be openly shared with key stakeholders? Similarly, a representative from a German company lamented that she had no way of emailing employee volunteers for feedback because participation records were deliberately not kept in order to accord employees the privacy they expected in relation to volunteering. Clearly, as long as community involvement managers are expected to ascribe to the values of true volunteering, their hands will be tied in terms of managing in a way that generates substantive value.

The fallacy of balancing our way to success is evidenced by the fact that, as covered earlier, this is the most common approach to moving our programs toward greater strategic value, yet the current state of employee volunteering is overwhelmingly not strategic. As mentioned earlier, the overwhelming majority of the 400-plus survey respondents of the Drivers of Effectiveness Benchmarking Survey Tool, the most rigorous test of the strategic value of

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17 Boccalandro, Bea. Surveys and interviews administered to 42 community involvement managers as background for this paper, unpublished, 2009.

an employee volunteer program, have fewer than 50 percent of the identified strategic practices (the indicators under each Driver) in place.¹⁸ Experts across the globe, including Harvard's Michael Porter, agree that corporate-community involvement as currently practiced does not effectively leverage what the business can offer.¹⁹

Balancing the true-strategic tension might be the best short-term option for community involvement professionals charged with managing an employee volunteer program, however it is not an effective long-term solution to the conflict between true and strategic volunteering. Balancing will not properly honor true volunteering, nor will it effectively tap into the force for good embodied in employee volunteering.

18 www.volunteerbenchmark.com.

19 Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer. "Strategy and Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility" in *Harvard Business Review*, December, 2006. Reprint R0612D. p. 2.

V. BEYOND EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING TO EMPLOYEE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Resolving the tension between true and strategic volunteering requires a bold new conception of strategic employee volunteering distinct and separate from the concept of true volunteering. Only a program that is free from the expectations we ascribe to volunteering will be able to reach high strategic value and, thus, great impact. This new strategic employee volunteering has the purpose of fully leveraging the business context to generate the greatest amount of societal benefit. It does not aim to offer true volunteering.

As established above, a business' attempt to offer true volunteering hinders its ability to effectively serve the civic sector. A company can't leverage its business prowess to support community involvement without having the freedom to use its business skills, to focus on the causes it has the capacity to support, to eliminate charitable efforts that its evaluation finds are ineffective, to resist responding to every heartbreaking civic sector need, to make community involvement compulsory and to engage in other practices that may be anathema to true volunteering.

Another reason to abandon our attempts at true employee volunteering is that business is not an appropriate host for true volunteering. The vested interest of employers, the sometimes-controlling workplace policies and the professionalized culture naturally stifle employee charitable response. Healthy skepticism leads employees to wonder how measurements of volunteer activities will affect their performance reviews – or even if the volunteering itself is a way for the company to compel them to do something they aren't willing to do as part of their jobs, such as represent the company positively to reporters, for example. Clearly, even very talented community involvement professionals are set up for failure if they are expected to offer true volunteering in the workplace.

Indeed, by trying to offer true volunteering, businesses might be doing more harm than good to the future of volunteering. Volunteering is a dynamic concept that evolves per the manifestations we create for it. If we insist that employers continue to try to offer volunteering, we are likely to erode the concept of volunteering into a more self-serving, conflicted and stilted version. Instead, businesses might best support global volunteering by not meddling with it. The natural home for true volunteering is the civic sector, which has the mission alignment, knowledge, and neutrality to more effectively live up to our expectations of true volunteering.

For our civic sector to best benefit from the employee contributions of time and talent, then, we need a new

form of strategic employee engagement in the community that is distinct from "volunteering" and that focuses on maximizing societal benefits. Although this article will not attempt to name this new generation program, promising terms, in English at least, include employee community engagement, employee community involvement and employee community action. These terms still position employees as the core of the program, communicate that the emphasis is on serving the civic sector and, most important, free the program from association with volunteering, or what has been dubbed "true volunteering" in this paper.²⁰

In truth, our employee volunteer programs have already strayed a long way from true volunteering. They often accrue benefits well outside of altruistic rewards, pay volunteers and are not truly voluntary, for example. Coining a new term, then, is simply a way to be accurate and transparent about the current character and future direction of our programs. If we offer "employee community engagement" instead of "employee volunteering" opportunities, there is no suggestion that the service is altruistic, unpaid or voluntary; and no tension if it is none of these. An employee community engagement program would comfortably encompass compulsory board service for high-level managers, workplace greening efforts that take place during work hours and paid pro bono service. In other words, shifting from volunteering to community engagement vanquishes much of the resistance and many of the contradictions community involvement managers face when applying the Drivers of Effectiveness or when otherwise trying to move toward a strategic model. By redefining their employee volunteering as community engagement, community involvement managers lay out a more direct and less obstructed path to success.

As seen in Figure 3, employee community engagement is not just new language, it is new territory. The aim is not altruism, but to fully leverage the business context of employee volunteering in order to do the most societal good. Causes are selected in accordance to their ability to benefit from employee skills and other corporate assets and to benefit the business. Finally, participant recruitment is based on employee community engagement being a refreshing and meaningful twist on business. For example, a leadership program might have a service component; and a department team-building event might include cleaning up a beach.

²⁰ For the sake of simplicity, this paper will use the term "employee community engagement" to represent the newly conceived form of employee engagement in the community.

Figure 3. Key features of employee volunteering versus employee community engagement

| | Customary employee volunteering that tries to balance true and strategic volunteering | New employee community engagement |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Raison d'etre | Balance of altruism, on the one hand, and business benefits on the other hand | Fully leverage the business context to generate the greatest amount of societal benefit |
| Cause selection | Balance of employee choice, on the one hand, and what the company can best support and what can best support the company on the other hand | What the company can best support and what can best support the company |
| Recruitment based on | Balance of doing the right thing, on one hand, and supporting the business on the other hand | Doing business in a way that more strategically supports the community |

If it seems radical to invent a new concept to get us beyond the true-strategic volunteering tension, take heart that several companies already have. IBM's Corporate Service Corps (CSC), mentioned earlier, is essentially an example of an employee community engagement program as described above. The international service program, in which teams of employees serve on issues that relate to IBM's business, was modeled on the U.S. Peace Corps, not on a traditional volunteer program. CSC does not have the word "volunteer" in its name and does not claim to be altruistic. To the contrary, IBM has been completely transparent in communicating that – while CSC is a corporate citizenship program designed to make a

civic sector contribution – it is first and foremost a leadership development program meant to help IBM function well in tomorrow's global context. Furthermore, an admission criteria based on job performance precludes most employees from participating. In other words, CSC is, by its own admission, not a true volunteer program: it aims to benefit the business, it is closed to most employees and it is paid. Yet precisely because IBM was willing to break away from the tradition of employee volunteering, CSC is a thriving program that provides substantial and meaningful support to worthy causes. CSC delivers much more value than one can imagine a customary employee "volunteer" program could.

VI. IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYEE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While upgrading from employee volunteering to employee community engagement will boost the program's effectiveness, there is currently little guidance for making this transition. Community involvement managers will need to use judgment and ingenuity, and will undoubtedly encounter unforeseen challenges. As with all innovations, early adopters will need to be especially diligent in detecting and solving issues. For those ready to take on this leadership challenge, below are suggestions for transitioning from employee volunteering toward strategic employee community engagement.

Update the language

As covered earlier, the term "volunteering" elicits specific heartfelt values, including altruism and optional participation that result in tension and opposition to attempts at a strategic program. Thus, effectiveness, as well as transparency and clarity, suggest that community involvement managers interested in high-impact employee volunteering stop using the term volunteering.

Naming a "nonvolunteer" employee community engagement program is neither difficult nor radical. The U.S. government's AmeriCorps program, which provides individuals a living stipend for their full-time service, successfully transitioned out of using the term volunteering after many objected that anybody who received a stipend was not a volunteer. It now uses the term "service." Examples of employee community engagement programs with nonvolunteer names include Aetna Employees Reaching Out, Team Bank of America, The Home Depot's Team Depot, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' STAR (Sharing Time, Activities and Resources), and US Airway's Do Crew. Similarly, employees who participate in employee community engagement programs can be referred to as participants, fellows, corps members or team members, for example, instead of "volunteers."

In other words, moving beyond the term volunteering is both productive and feasible.

Don't use civic sector volunteering as a stepping stone to employee community engagement

Emerging efforts to involve employees in the community need not take the detour of attempting to offer true volunteer programs in the workplace and then instituting practices to make these strategic. Instead, new efforts can begin from a strategic platform and avoid many of the difficulties existing programs face.

In other words, future employee community engagement

programs will be best served by eschewing the phases of development that most existing programs have followed. Current employee volunteering is, in large part, the result of citizens bringing civic sector volunteering to their places of employment, especially in the United States. The receptionist who volunteered at her daughter's soccer club, the vice president who served on the board of the local environmental organization and other employees who volunteered in their private lives urged coworkers to join them, talked their bosses into holding a collection at their holiday parties, and otherwise systematically nudged their companies toward what eventually became formalized employee volunteer programs. However, as described above, having an employee community engagement program with roots in civic sector volunteering is problematic.

Because the United States is often regarded a leader in employee volunteering, many community involvement professionals across the globe interpret the progression followed by American companies over decades as step-by-step instructions for developing their own programs. Unfortunately, following in the footsteps of U.S. employee volunteering results in programs that attempt to replicate civic sector volunteering in the workplace, precisely what is not feasible and what represents a core weakness of current programs. For example, drawing from common practices adopted by U.S. programs early in their development, many community involvement managers launch their programs with a standard dollars-for-doers policy, in which employees can direct a small company grant to nonprofit organizations they serve through volunteering. Such a policy, however, is better aligned with the true volunteering of the civic sector than with strategic employee community engagement. Such a first step, then, might set a direction for the program that will subsequently require course correction.

Instead of replicating the meandering path toward strategic value typical of present programs, companies might consider starting at the outset with strategic employee community engagement. For example, instead of a standard dollars-for-doers policy, which simply provides a gentle boost to employee's personal volunteering, the first employee community engagement activity might be a team dollars-for-doers program that supports employee skills-based team projects in a cause area in which the company has expertise. This policy encourages contributions that are more sophisticated and likely to offer greater benefit to the nonprofit than "extra-hands volunteering," focuses on causes where the company is likely to make a difference, draws on the company's expertise and leverages the power of teams. In other words, it is far

more strategic than the typical first element historically instituted by U.S. programs, the standard dollars-for-doers programs.

For companies with a choice, a direct route toward strategic employee community engagement will serve the civic sector better and sooner than trying first to develop a true volunteering model and then working to transform this program into strategic employee community engagement.

Position activities first as business, second as community engagement

Most employee volunteer programs inadvertently position themselves as a diminished version of true volunteering. For example, a company might issue this invitation: "participate in our community giveback contest on April 4 in which teams compete around best ways to feed our less fortunate neighbors," which includes in small print "(department participation in this team-building event is subject to department head's approval)." This presentation essentially says "come participate in something that we are calling community engagement, but isn't really since we are imposing a team-building component on it and since you can't serve the community without your department head's approval." Clearly, it is difficult to sell a program that is such a twisted version of what it claims to be.

A better option is to position the event as a business activity that is enhanced with community engagement. Employee community engagement resides somewhere between true volunteering and pure business operations. Thus, the program can use either of these anchors to define the program. The message above could instead be "participate in our interdepartment team-building contest on April 4 in which teams compete around best ways to feed our less fortunate neighbors (department participation subject to department head's approval)." From this perspective, the department head's approval is appropriate because it is a team-building activity first and foremost. With this positioning, it is a plus that the company added a community involvement component to a team-building event that might otherwise have had no civic sector value. This positioning is no longer about promoting a corrupted version of community involvement; it is about promoting a compassionate version of a team-building activity.

An illustration of the compelling character of business positioning comes from a department at an American financial institution that conducted an annual team-building event. During the first few years, they held paint ball, ropes course and picnic team-building events. In a subsequent year, they held a service project and from then

on, every team-building event was a service project. Once they experienced the joy of service, the department head explained, "employees considered other forms of team building cheap and shallow." Had the first few years consisted of service events and the team-building component was superimposed later, the department's team-building events might not be as popular as they are today. Adding a community involvement component to a team-building event is generally considered an enrichment of the experience and a welcomed upgrade in the social responsibility of the event, but adding a team-building component to a community engagement event might be considered a dilution of the experience and an inappropriate intrusion of business.

When presented with the suggestion to position the employee community engagement activities first as business and second as community engagement, community involvement professionals often worry that a service-enhanced business endeavor is a less compelling recruitment message than a pure community involvement endeavor. However, research shows this is not the case and, if anything, the transparency of the first option might support recruitment. Research shows that when it comes to recruiting employees in community engagement programs, win-win appeals are more effective than appeals to altruism alone.²¹ The experience of IBM's Corporate Service Corps (CSC) corroborates this finding. CSC was never positioned as volunteering. Indeed, when asked about the purpose of CSC, Stan Litow, vice president of Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs, started with pure business strategy: "It is part of the basic change in IBM to become a globally integrated enterprise." He then continued by describing how it develops leaders before even mentioning how it engages the civic sector.²² This business positioning, however, does not appear to have negatively affected interest. CSC received more than 5,000 applications from over 50 countries, smashing expectations that applications would number in the mere hundreds.

In other words, a business activity with a community engagement component appears to be more compelling and less problematic than a community engagement activity with a business component.

If you are going to balance true and strategic volunteering, balance between (not within) offerings

As covered earlier, balancing the tension between true and strategic volunteering is a self-limiting approach that

21 Pelozo, John, Simon Hudson, Derek N. Hassay, "The Marketing of Employee Volunteerism" in *Journal of Business Ethics*, 2009, 85:371-386.

22 Hamm, Steve, "The World Is IBM's Classroom" in *BusinessWeek*, March 12, 2009, accompanying interview video at http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_12/b4124056268652.htm.

most likely results in a low-impact program. However, there is no denying that sometimes employee expectations of employer support for their private volunteering are too high to ignore, especially if the company has a history of offering such support. If a company decides to offer both volunteering and strategic community engagement, it should consider crafting distinct offerings for each, rather than trying to have one employee experience serve both purposes.

Accenture in the United Kingdom, for example, has a powerful strategic employee community engagement program where new hires are offered the opportunity to spend the first two years of their career teaching in a challenging school through nonprofit partner Teach First. The program is a substantial and thoughtful investment in education that is likely to have an impact. It also strategically helps Accenture because, as the program's marketing materials explain, it prepares new employees for anything that a career at Accenture might expose them to. Other strategic employee community engagement opportunities at Accenture include pro bono services and

the Accenture Development Partnership, which provides strategic advice and technical project management support to civic sector organizations operating in the development sector. Nevertheless, because it considers it vital for the health of its workplace culture, Accenture also offers a balanced portfolio of service options that include fund-raising opportunities, days of service and other „non-strategic“ service opportunities.

It is more honest and productive to balance employee volunteering and strategic employee community engagement across the portfolio of employee engagement options, rather than within one experience.

In addition to the above suggestions, of course, the evolution from employee volunteering to strategic employee community engagement has implications for how the company manages relationships with the civic sector, how it makes philanthropic contributions and how it manages other aspects of its corporate citizenship that are outside the scope of this paper.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is said that the wisest man in ancient Athens, Solon, declared in the fifth century B.C. that service to others was the highest good.²³ Humanity has not only conducted, but also extolled, human acts of service to others for millennia and will, hopefully, for millennia more.

Yet, as historical forces have changed the structure of society, humans have adapted the irrepressible spirit of service to each new structure. In the middle ages, educational and literary outposts emerged in churches; in the 19th century, the International Committee of the Red Cross emerged from wars; and in the 20th century, service learning, which combines academic classroom curriculum with meaningful service, emerged from our formal education system.

The modern concept of volunteering originated out of the civic sector that developed over the last few centuries across many countries. Thus, volunteering is designed to work directly with civic organizations that serve the poor, preserve culture, clean up the environment, fight for justice or otherwise promote societal benefits. When industrialization populated our society with highly structured workplaces, we started bringing this concept of volunteering to work with us and, over several generations, created what we now know as “employee volunteering.”

However, volunteering has not been properly adapted to the workplace, nor can it be without becoming something less than volunteering. Volunteering – with its altruistic, voluntary and personal character – cannot blossom within the hard confines of the workplace that is constrained by business considerations. Conversely, the business quest for a strategic program that is logically designed to maximize effectiveness can never thrive when the program is expected to honor the idealistic nature of volunteering. The result is that our employee volunteering is seriously undermined, and the awesome support it could offer civic sector causes remains latent. The collection of volunteer activities contributed by most

employee volunteer programs is virtually identical to what the employee base would do privately. A company might add a small grant or event coordination, but rarely backs employee volunteering with anything more than modest support. Meanwhile a treasure of corporate assets – from specialized skills to logistics with global reach – that could dramatically augment the impact of these programs, don’t serve this higher purpose.

Maximizing civic sector impact involves ending “employee volunteering” as we know it. We need to design strategic employee community engagement programs – avoiding the term “volunteering” itself – that don’t try to live up to the ideals we assign to volunteering and, therefore, can draw from the full prowess of business. The purpose of strategic employee community engagement is to fully leverage the business context to generate the greatest amount of societal benefit, not to offer true volunteering. Such employee community engagement makes evidence-based decisions on what to support and not support, even if this results in disregarding some needs at the company’s doorstep; chooses issues that can support its business, even if this is inherently nonaltruistic; and otherwise applies strategic processes to employee involvement in the community. This attention to logical design at the expense of heartfelt preferences might appear uncompassionate. Yet, what could be more compassionate than ensuring our employee engagement programs are as effective as possible at helping the less fortunate, supporting our children, protecting our environment and otherwise serving society?

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, said that “every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” The bright beginning of the last century, employee volunteering, has completed its shining moment. Now we need the courage to end employee volunteering as we know it in order to begin a more effective and impactful era of employee community engagement.

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23 Herodotus (author), John Marincola (editor), *The Histories*. London, UK: Penguin Classics, 2003.



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