

COMMUNIQUÉ

Trends, Best Practices, and Opinions on Community Involvement

Pro Bono Today: What's New, What's Working Part 1 of a 4-Part Series

Pro bono continues to grow and evolve, providing more opportunities for employees to stretch their skills and nonprofits to strengthen their operations, according to our latest research report, “Pro Bono Today: What's New, What's Working.” In a series of four Communiqués, we'll reveal key findings that show how the practice of corporate pro bono is moving forward.

“Pro Bono for All”

One significant finding is that many of the companies in our study have consciously expanded their pro bono programs to include more employees and more nonprofits. They have crafted a portfolio of programs, from time-intensive, strategically focused programs such as Loaned Employees, to short-term engagements, such as half-day or full-day pro bono marathons.

The wisdom of these portfolios is not just that more employees can volunteer and more nonprofits are served. It's that the companies are recognizing that both employees and nonprofits can be in different states of readiness to perform and receive pro bono.

Take employees, for example. The research found that the highly intensive pro bono programs are reserved for high performers and high-potential employees because of their leadership development properties (more on that in another edition of Communiqué.) That leaves out a lot of employees who would like to use their professional skills to help nonprofits solve their problems. Creating additional opportunities, through marathons or a database of pro bono or skills-based projects posted by the nonprofits, allows potentially all employees to try their hand at pro bono or skills-based volunteering.

As for nonprofits, not every organization with a compelling need is ready to host pro bono volunteers. Nonprofit readiness is always a concern when choosing a partner for

a strategic, time-intensive project, whether virtual or on-site. (For more information on nonprofit readiness, please see our previous study, "[Balancing Pro Bono Supply and Demand: Challenges and Solutions From the Nonprofit Point of View](#)." While not ready to host a team of volunteers on site for weeks or months to dig into a strategic issue, a nonprofit might still benefit from professional help on a smaller project, such as social media marketing or writing an employee handbook. Having these options also breaks down some of the barriers to accepting pro bono help, which we will discuss in part 4 of this series.

In the study, we walk you through four examples of portfolios of pro bono programs at Adobe Systems, Booz Allen Hamilton, JPMorgan Chase and Prudential. Each has three or four different programs in place with varying levels of time commitment and intensity. JPMorgan Chase, for example, has its Field Service Corps, a three-week on-site immersion program, as well as its Virtual Service Corps, in which project team members volunteer two to five hours a week for six to 12 weeks for a nonprofit, as well as two other programs. Booz Allen Hamilton has a three-tiered service model, which includes pro bono consulting engagements and two skills-based volunteer programs, one for selected employees (a hybrid model of pro bono and skills-based volunteering) and one that every employee can access.

The full report can be downloaded for free at www.lbg-associates.com.

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Coming next: How Corporations Are Addressing the Barriers to Pro Bono for Nonprofits

About LBG Associates

LBG Associates is a woman-owned consulting firm focused on designing, implementing and managing corporate citizenship and employee engagement programs and initiatives. Founded in 1993 by Dr. Linda Gornitsky, LBG Associates drives social change through advice, implementation, research and training. Find more information at: www.lbg-associates.com.

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