

COMMUNIQUÉ

Trends, Best Practices, and Opinions on Community Involvement

Pro Bono Today: The Elements of Success *Part 3 of a 5-Part Series*

In the last two editions of our series based on our new research, “Pro Bono Today: What’s New, What’s Working,” we talked about ways in which pro bono practices, including having short-term, pre-scoped projects, help nonprofits get started in pro bono and also get more employees involved. We also discussed how companies are making it easier for nonprofits to get started in pro bono. In this edition, we’ll discuss the common threads that run through many of the pro bono programs we researched—the elements of success.

Senior Management Support and Involvement

It’s a hallmark of successful pro bono programs that senior management approves of the program. In some cases, senior managers even get involved by serving on pro bono councils, interviewing applicants, or acting as advisors to the program.

Partnership with Human Resources/Talent Development

Human resources and talent development are playing a larger role in pro bono. It is widely recognized that pro bono is an effective leadership development tool. We observed that the more the talent team is involved, the more formal the development goals for the volunteers. This includes post-project debriefs that focus on how the volunteers apply what they learned to their regular jobs.

Effective Participant Preparation

Taking the time to prepare the volunteers and the nonprofits makes a big difference in how well the project goes. We noted that loaned employee programs have the most rigorous preparation programs for both. Pre-work for employees can include cultural education, research on the nonprofit and the social issue it targets, how to work with a nonprofit, plus setting up a schedule of activities for the project. On the nonprofit side, pre-work includes scoping the project for the time and resources available, setting expectations for the project, and coaching the nonprofit staff on how to work with the volunteers.

Defined Amount of Time the Employees Volunteer

Defining the time commitment upfront sets expectations for everyone before the project even begins. Employees know how many hours per week they are expected to work and for how many weeks. Projects are scoped specifically for that defined commitment, sometimes with the assistance of pro bono intermediaries that have expertise in matching projects to the available time.

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

Previous issues in this series can be viewed [here](#).

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Coming next: The Growing Partnership Between Citizenship and HR

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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