

EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

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EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

More employers are recognising the business benefits of supporting their staff to volunteer. The benefits for employers include,

- enhanced company image
- cost effective staff development opportunities for individuals and teams
- stronger links with the local community
- improved commitment and motivation of your workforce

What is Employer Supported Volunteering?

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) is literally what it says – employers supporting their staff to volunteer.

Employers can support volunteering in lots of ways. For example, by advertising details of local volunteering opportunities through internal email, newsletters or notice boards, officially recognising the skills and experience gained through volunteering, giving staff time away from work to volunteer or by allowing the use of premises and equipment to support voluntary activities.

Why recruit volunteers through employers?

More organisations are using volunteers and volunteer recruitment has become a highly competitive business. Recruiting volunteers through employers is a way to reach a captive audience of potential volunteers. Voluntary organisations may also approach employers looking for employee volunteers with specialised skills or knowledge.

Why do employers want to support volunteering?

There is increasing government and consumer pressure for private and public employers to invest in the communities where they are based. Supporting employees to volunteer is an extremely practical and visible way for employers to demonstrate active community involvement.

Employers are also recognising that volunteering is an excellent way for individuals and groups to gain and develop a whole range of skills and experience, which is transferable to the work place.

Individual Employee Volunteering

Employers often support employees to take up existing volunteering opportunities with local organisations. Sometimes voluntary organisations adapt volunteering opportunities to suit employees, for example, volunteering during lunch breaks. Occasionally the employer and the voluntary organisation create individual volunteering opportunities to suit the employer's and voluntary organisation's needs.

Team Volunteering

Team volunteering opportunities, or team challenges as they are often known, are one-off or short term volunteering activities for a group of employees. Examples include gardening and decorating projects, producing publications or resources, or organising activities or events.

Team challenges are popular with employers. They are seen as cost effective team-building exercises. Team challenges make excellent PR opportunities; photos of employees painting and gardening make interesting news stories and look good in company literature.

Team challenges might not suit all voluntary organisations. Many organisations need long-term volunteers who will make a regular commitment over a sustained period. Planning, co-coordinating and managing a team challenge takes time and resources. Despite the extra work there are benefits in promoting team challenges, these include,

- getting a one-off piece of work done
- offering a 'volunteering taster' that may encourage employees to come back and volunteer in the future
- establishing relationships with companies that could lead to future sponsorship and support
- good PR opportunities for both the employer and the voluntary organization

Employer Supported Volunteering Brokers

Voluntary organisations can approach local employers directly to advertise volunteering opportunities for employees. In some areas third party brokers facilitate opportunities for employees to volunteer with local voluntary organisations and community groups. The broker is an organisation or individual that is independent of the employer and the voluntary organisation. In Scotland third party brokers include,

Volunteer Centres

There are over 50 Volunteer Centres across Scotland. Some have established links with local businesses and match up employees with volunteering opportunities. For your nearest Volunteer Centre phone Volunteer Development Scotland on 01786 479593

Scottish Business in the Community

Scottish Business in the Community run a number of different programmes that are designed to help businesses engage with the community. To find out more call 0131 442 2020 or email info@sbcscot.com or log on to www.sbcscot.com

Arts & Business

Arts & Business offer professional and personal development opportunities for middle to senior managers with larger arts organisations and museums. To find out more call Cathy Hirschmann 0131 558 1277 or email cathy.hirschmann@AandB.org.uk or log on to www.AandB.org.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

Scottish Business in the Community

www.sbcscot.com

This website gives a good overview of business community involvement in Scotland and outlines the different programmes run by SBC that companies can get involved with.

Volunteer Development Scotland

www.vds.org.uk

Website for the Scottish national centre for volunteering and community involvement. Outlines volunteering practice and policy in Scotland.

Arts & Business

www.AandB.org.uk

Arts & Business offer professional and personal development opportunities for middle to senior managers.

CSV

www.csv.org.uk

CSV is a national voluntary organisation that develops and manages volunteering programmes across the UK, including a number of employee volunteering partnerships.

Standard Life Corporate Community Involvement

www.standardlife.com/ci

To be launched in September 2001. Standard Life actively supports local communities through its Corporate Community Investment Policy. The website gives a good overview of Standard Life's work with charities, voluntary organisations and educational bodies.

BT Interface Scotland

www.btinterface.co.uk

This website is intended to encourage and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practice amongst those engaged in social and economic development throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Business in the Community (England)

BITC have several good websites listed below:

<http://www.bitc.org.uk>

Business in the Community's general website.

<http://www.cci-resource.org.uk>

Very useful set of 'How to' guides and case studies.

<http://www.corpcommunityinvestment.org.uk>

This site offers a wide range of Corporate Community Involvement information, including a comprehensive list of best practice case studies, tools to measure your CCI programme and the opportunity to sign up to the Prime Minister's challenge to employers.

<http://www.percent.org.uk>

The PerCent Club web site is designed to help your company to calculate its contribution to the community; discover the criteria needed to be eligible for The PerCent Club; compare its community contributions against competitors.

Business Community Connections

www.bccconnections.org.uk

This not-for-profit organisation is dedicated to helping charities obtain more support from business. The website contains a Community Partner Directory and practical tips on many aspects of community involvement.

WorldCSR.com

www.WorldCSR.com

Gateway to websites and resources of the leading business led organisations on corporate social responsibility.

Volunteering England

www.volunteering.org.uk

Website for the English national centre for volunteering. They also host Employees in the Community Network, a membership group made up public and private sector employers and national voluntary organisations.

VOLUNTEER PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Using a well-known promotional campaign is a good way to introduce employees to volunteering. Listed below are six national campaigns. To find out more about these campaigns, as well as order resource packs and promotional goods, log on to www.vds.org.uk/volpromotions



Volunteers' Week

Volunteers' Week is a national celebration of volunteers and takes place in early June. Companies use Volunteers' Week as a focus to launch Employer Supported Volunteering Schemes. Resource packs and promotional materials including balloons, posters, t-shirts, pens and stickers etc. can be ordered.

Millennium Volunteers

Millennium Volunteers is a UK wide initiative to encourage, support and recognise 16 to 25 year olds who volunteer their time for the benefit of others. By becoming a MV, young people gain skills like team working, decision-making, interpersonal communication as well as practical skills. It is a chance for young people to learn from each other and appreciate their diversity. The MV Certificate and Award of Excellence recognises a young person's achievements and commitment, and is something employers value.

Make a Difference Day



CSV Make a Difference Day (MADD) is the UK's largest single day of volunteering action, co-ordinated by CSV. In 2000, 25,000 people across the UK made a positive impact to their communities. Ericsson, GE Lighting and Niketown were just a few of the companies that involved their employees in MADD making a positive impact to their communities whilst developing team work, raising their profile, building valuable relations and establish new partnerships. Everyone can make a difference and everyone includes you!

Partners in Volunteering Awards

The Partners in Volunteering Awards, organised by Volunteer Development Scotland, is an Award scheme that celebrates the best volunteering partnerships between business and the community. There are Four Award Categories; Best Ongoing Partnership, Best Newcomer, Best Small Business Award and Best VC partnership. The Partners in Volunteering Awards recognise and reward both the business and community partner.

CASE STUDIES – PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS IN SCOTLAND

The Bike Station/Network Rail, Waverley Station, Edinburgh

The Bike Station refurbishes donated bikes with the help of volunteers as well as offering opportunities for volunteering and training. The bikes are refurbished for excluded groups such as the homeless, unemployed and young disadvantaged.

Network Rail offered premises in the old vaults under Waverley Station when the Bike Station faced closure in 2002. The Award is in recognition of Network Rail's contribution to the local community by assisting a small charity by offering invaluable support to the Bike Station. Network Rail saw the potential for using otherwise empty spaces in partnership with community groups.

Network Rail arranged the clear out and refurbishment of the workshop space; liaised with major contractors First Engineering and Ogilvie's Plc to help with new fire doors as well as rewiring, additional plumbing and lighting. Network Rail's support and that of the contractors kept refurbishment costs to an absolute minimum.

Network Rail staff have supported the Bike Station by: getting involved as volunteers, both on the committee and in the workshop; bringing donations of bikes and parts; spreading the word to other station staff such as Scotrail, GNER, Virgin, Costa Coffee, Whistlestop, Initial Cleaning and the Internet Café. They have all been actively involved in supporting the Bike Station

Nicoll Russell Studios/various groups/organisations

Nicoll Russell Studios has assisted 4 different organisations over the last two years. They helped two youth groups to redesign and refurbish their premises to make them into an internet café and a youth café. They worked with a committee to draw up plans, to cost and renew the lighting in different areas of the building.

Nicoll Russell Studios have also just completed a full set of plans for another community group who intend to enhance their premises by building a sports facility. This has involved working with local residents on the management committee, giving them guidance on the preparatory work involved and providing the plans. From this, the group is now in a position to supply enough evidence to apply for funding from other sources. Nicoll Russell's support has helped the organisations overcome hurdles and develop or enhance their own facilities.

People working and living in the community got more confidence to take on projects knowing they had the support, knowledge and advice of experts on hand.

Five members of Nicoll Russell's staff have been involved with the range of hours involved being from 8 – 86.

The partnership, with Dundee Business Support Group is continuing (started in 2001)

Torith Ltd/Baldragon Academy

This is the third year that Torith have helped pupils at Dundee's Baldragon Academy. The school wanted to link up with a local company to give S2 pupils an insight into a local industry.

In year 1 the company provided the school with a load of materials to give over 120 pupils a chance to find out about the construction industry and the opportunity to have some hands on experience.

In year 2, Torith (who also own a hotel) joined with other local hotels to give the pupils an insight into the hotel industry.

This year, they have agreed to come back into the school to give over 130 pupils a chance to plan and build a model house. An event is planned for 28 October, 2003. A great deal of their time is spent on the planning of the days for the school pupils and they have even awarded prizes for the best team on the day.

What the partnership has achieved for Baldragon Academy – it has helped it achieve its aims and objectives by introducing S2 pupils to an industry that they may not get the chance to experience otherwise (especially girls).

Torith Ltd is getting the chance to highlight the different careers within the construction industry and is now seeing pupils who attended the first event, considering a career with their own company.

The pupils can see for themselves what is expected within their different jobs and how they can progress in the school life to enter their chosen field.