

HOW DOES VOLUNTEERING HELP EMPLOYEES



MEMBERSHIP WORLD CO.UK
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A photograph of three people in a forest, wearing blue t-shirts with the word 'VOLUNTEER' on them. They are engaged in a conservation activity, possibly planting trees or clearing land. The background is filled with lush green trees and foliage.

HOW DOES VOLUNTEERING HELP EMPLOYEES

According to the 2022, Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose Giving in Numbers report, 84% of companies now offer flexible scheduling or paid time off for the staff to do volunteering work and some even upto 60 hours. So lets look at some of the benefits of volunteering.



1 It helps individuals feel valued and empowered

Individuals will likely want to do something that resonates with their needs. It gives them a sense of purpose. Interestingly with GenZ and millennials they are often more like to work for a company that allows for a better work life balance and supports community projects. Some want to simply feel a sense of “giving back” to their industry



2 Build new connections eg British Heart Foundation

Some people getting involved in volunteer projects to meet new people particularly those that have a similar interest eg British Heart Foundation, if they have or know someone who has suffered from a heart condition. Or for example, someone passionate about animals might volunteer at an animal shelter, while a sports enthusiast might volunteer in a youth sports program.





3 Learning new skills

A number of people that have worked in the charity sector for example have done to so learn new skills, for example working abroad on specific projects. If they have learnt skills in their volunteer role, they will bring that experience back to their workplace. Younger people will often work in the charity sector to enhance their CV or get a reference.



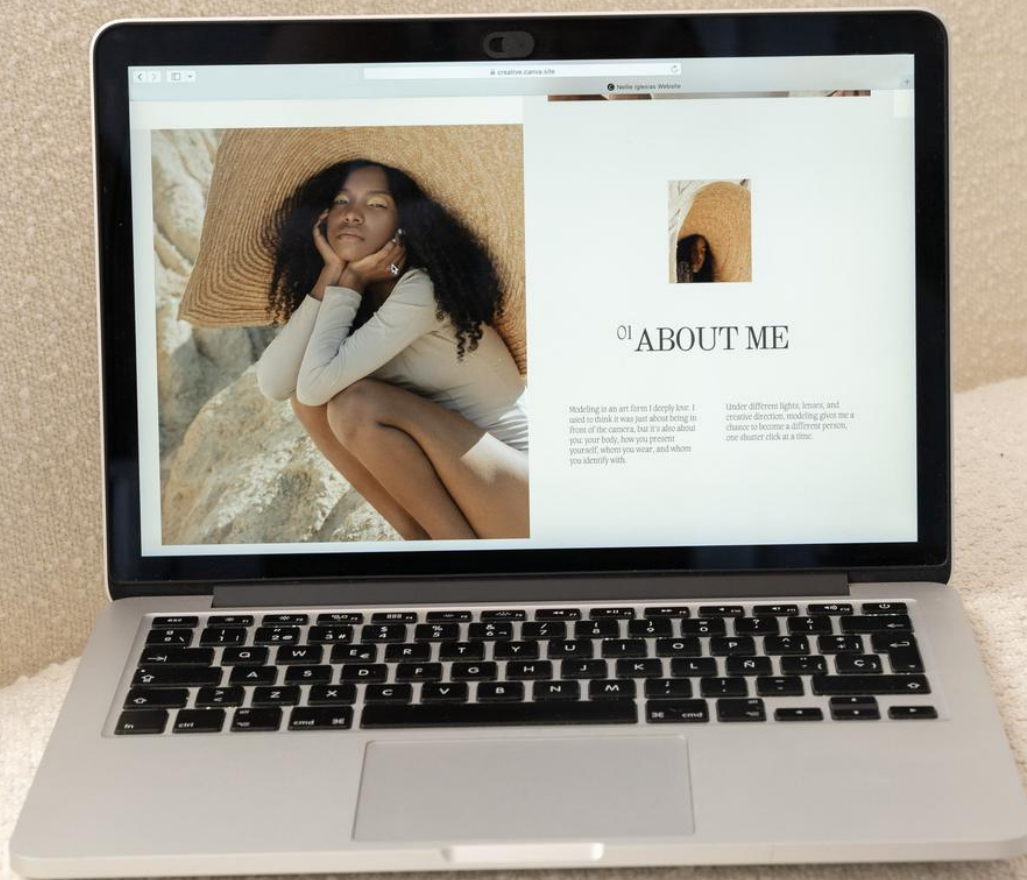
4 Individuals feel happier if they are involved in volunteer projects

If individuals are involved in a project where they can see a positive impact of their work and its benefiting others, they are more likely to feel engaged and it will boost morale. This can be good for mental well-being, and alleviate stress. A greater sense of pride can also ensue.

5 Leadership potential

Volunteering can help bring out potential in individuals untapped talents. For example a scout leader could realise his or potential for taking on bigger roles in their day job. Many volunteer programs offer free training as part of a project which can be hugely beneficial.





6 Improving brand image

The Big Help out scheme that was created by the Scout Movement enhanced not only the organisations positioning but also a greater desire for volunteering.





How do you create a volunteer strategy

1. UNDERSTAND THE GOAL AND PURPOSE

It's very important to understand the reason why you want to create a program, so this will be about its purpose its vision, its values and make sure it aligns with the broader business objectives.

2. SENIOR MANAGEMENT BUY-IN

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3. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

If you are wishing to achieve a wider goal that has a wide social impact, it might be wise to consider partnering with other organisations who have a similar objective so you are more like to achieve this through greater exposure and reach.

4. ENSURE REWARD AND RECOGNITION INITIATIVES IN PLACE

This is an essential part of the process, when people are recognized within their peer group it will inspire them to be more motivated and feel valued for what they do





The Scout Movement have 434,000 members (young people) with 143,000 volunteers in the UK, but it's part of a global movement that has 57 million members. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the organisation, in fact says Matt Hyde we have 100,000 on the waiting list and the only reason we have this is because we simply don't have enough volunteers. The Scout Movement has 500 staff supporting the volunteers from safety to communications. The Scout Movement is made up of 8,000 independent charities that's about 5% of UK Charities. Matt says his role is all about strategy, but believes whilst the Scout brand is a powerful brand, it must be locally owned.



Matt Hyde
CEO

The Big Out scheme in 2023 was co-founded by Matt Hyde and Catherine Johnson from the RVS. Matt said during the Covid crisis when the Government asked for volunteers a staggering 12.4 million took up the charge, 4.6 million for the first time and 3.8 million wanted to continue volunteering. It's a fact that during Covid 1 in 3 jobs were put in people's arms came from St Johns Ambulance volunteers.

Matt said we were inspired by those numbers and we have now got 28 charity CEOs together to help shape the future of volunteering. During Covid we saw the best versions of ourselves where it was checking in on neighbours or bashing the pans for the NHS, there was a sense of collectiveness. Matt along with Comedy writing legend Richard Curtis who they sit on the Comic Relief Board with pitched the idea to the Director General of the BBC, Tim Davey by allowing people to donate their TIME rather than simply cash.

What was interesting here is we didn't use the title volunteer in the title. There was no room in the schedule to do this so it was put on hold. Until the Queen died and the newly crowned King gave an extra day's Bank Holiday. The BBC agreed to support it and this would mean helping drive the message across multiple TV channels. But the team had just 5 months to get the program off the ground. The newly launched platform allowed people to put in their postcode and pull up opportunities close to them.

The results were staggering. Seven million people volunteered, 2,000 businesses were involved with 35,000 opportunities listed. Eighty percent that took part said they met someone from a different background and 70% said they were more likely to volunteer in the future. And about 10 million were inspired to volunteer. Volunteering is not only good for society but it's good for yourself and it's a fact it reduces loneliness.





HOW DO YOU RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

It's essential to track the most effective way to recruit volunteers as they come from all different sources. What's important is that you make it easy for people to apply. And there is a proper training and support system in place for them to flourish. How do you motivate people along the way and remove some of the bureaucracy. If it feels too much like a job and not fun anymore, engagement will drop off worse still people will leave.



Also if you allow them an easy exit process for them to work in a flexible way they are more likely to come back. This could be for personal reasons or they need a break. Matt Hyde commissioned a study to look at the volunteer program and some of the results were hard to read but equally highly valuable too. It helped the Scout Movement understand all the touch points and look at the 12 stages of the journey and why people might have left. Matt said we worked with a number of different volunteer personas so we could better understand their motivations.

We realised if we went to them on their terms we had better results. In fact during Covid formal volunteering went down but informal volunteering went up. We found one of the biggest growth areas came from the Muslim community but that's because we reached out to community leaders and got their buy-in and were part of the recruitment process.. We also realised that having a flexible program was super important





Robin Osterley
CEO

There are 186,000 volunteers in the charity retail sector down 20% since the pandemic and it's still the largest single volunteer movement. Robin Osterley, CEO Charity Retail Association explains there are so many safeguards that have to be put in place because these people are putting themselves in front of random members of the public. There is a fair bit of training that has to go on. All of our members complain about not having enough volunteers. So many recruitment strategies have simply not worked and some have had to restrict opening hours.

Kathryn Johnson spoke at our conference and simply said we are just not doing it right. We are not making ourselves attractive enough for potential volunteers. A form is thrust in front of them and they simply expect people to go away and fill it in. This can be immediately a turn off. How about being a bit more creative like "Are you free now or can you come back and have a trial shift and see if you like it". Yes we need data of course, so sit them and complete it together. We need to make volunteering fun and less like a chore or even a job. Robin says our members are relaxed about having all the right skills. One such example I was inspired by was when I visited a Birmingham Drug Charity store where a recovering drug addict wanted to work for the charity but was painfully shy and non-verbal. The store gave her a job sorting books and this became her empire. Gradually as her confidence grew she became to talk and was then able to serve customers on the till. My message is work with people you've got, don't try and mould them. And don't be dismissive ie, if we haven't got our skill then go away. Robin says older volunteers get more out of the community and meeting friends while younger people are doing it to get a reference and boosting their skill capital





OTHER CONTRIBUTORS



Andrew Canter Chairman of the Branded Content Marketing Association, a professional organisation representing the branded content and influencer marketing industry says theyre needs to be an incentive. We have a number of industry groups. Your voice adds to the direction of the community. You have to create a value exchange for the member and listen to what they want from their volunteer role. Busy executives will commit to time on Boards if they can see an impact on what they are involved in.

Director of Membership, Services & Volunteering at Coeliac UK which represents those suffering with Coeliac says volunteers are the lifeblood of the organisation. “We have governance and research groups and transparency is important so we are seen as doing right by the gluten free community. We find our monthly evening session forum really beneficial because it allows them to share and solve issues and problems. Like with all forums there are reputational risks, so it’s a fine balancing act as well but the feedback is so important for us’

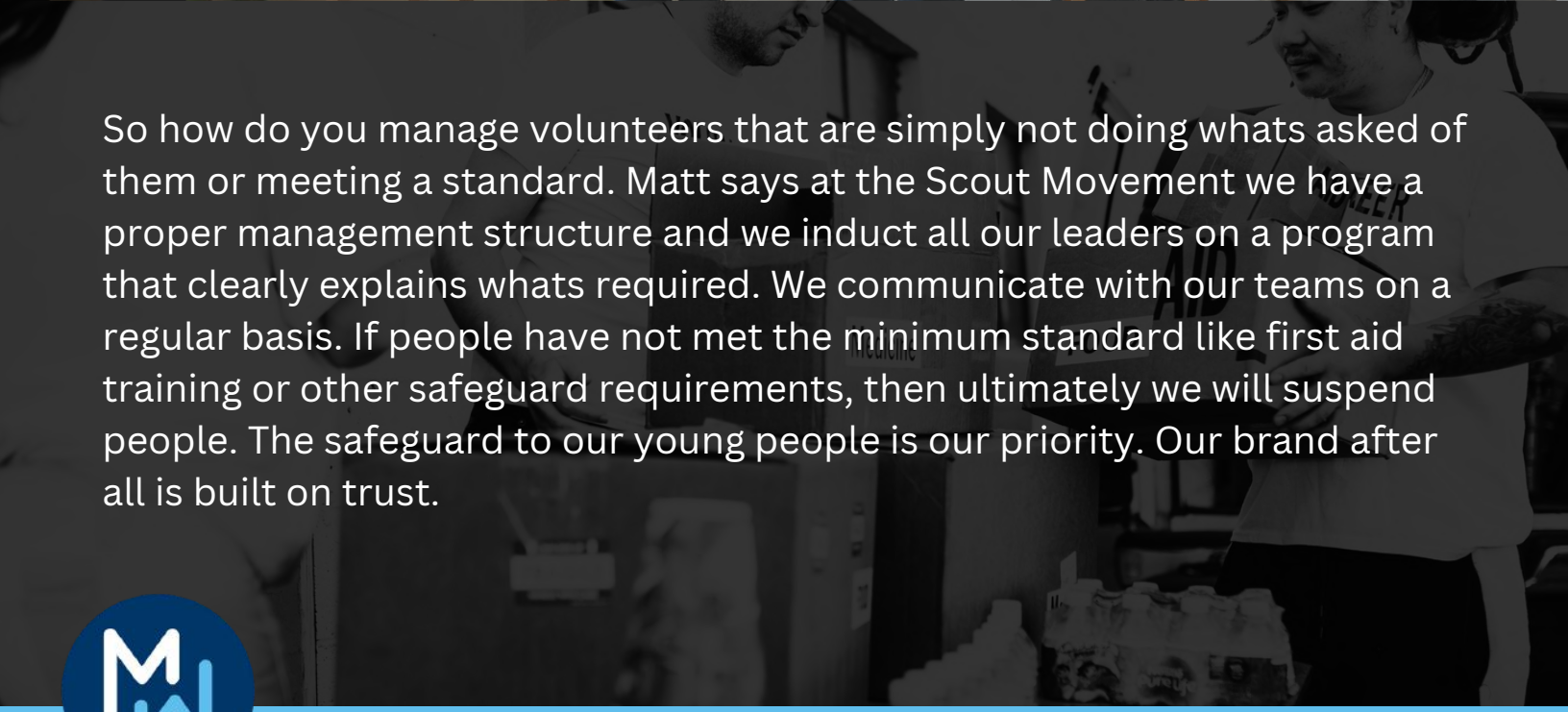
Martin Robinson, CEO of the Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association which represents the private aircraft ownership community and part of international group which has 500,000 members says “One of the challenges we have with volunteers is social media. People with a little information will sometimes tell others who also have a little information will often want to share. We feel there is a real opportunity to inspire young people in aviation through volunteering and then move on maybe to an apprenticeship”

Kealey Franklin who is General Secretary of the Road Traffic Management, and responsible for road signs in the UK. She says we are lead by standards and that’s why our members are part of our community . Our volunteer working groups do well. Some people bring a lot of value to the table while others do not.





HOW DO YOU MANAGE VOLUNTEERS



So how do you manage volunteers that are simply not doing what's asked of them or meeting a standard. Matt says at the Scout Movement we have a proper management structure and we induct all our leaders on a program that clearly explains what's required. We communicate with our teams on a regular basis. If people have not met the minimum standard like first aid training or other safeguard requirements, then ultimately we will suspend people. The safeguard to our young people is our priority. Our brand after all is built on trust.





VOLUNTEER PLATFORMS

Here is a list of volunteer platforms you might like to consider:

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

<https://doit.life/volunteer>

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/want-to-volunteer/>

<https://www.beonhand.co.uk/>

<https://thebighelpout.org.uk/>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gordon Glenister
CEO Membership World

Membership World is the organisation for membership professionals. Founded by membership and influencer strategist Gordon Glenister, Membership World offers support to those running associations, professional bodies, institutes, societies, and corporate membership programmes.

For more information visit our [website](https://www.membershipworld.co.uk).

