Corporate Volunteerism Council

Corporate Volunteerism 1984
A Report to the Community

Corporate Volunteerism: A Growing Commitment:

There is a strong tradition of corporate philanthropy in America. In fact, corporations and their employees have become a major philanthropic force in our communities. Minnesota corporations have been proud to be leaders in the area of corporate charitable contributions.

However, as corporations have become more socially aware and responsible in their communities, they have begun to expand their commitment to another American tradition — volunteerism.

Increasing numbers of companies are encouraging their employees' active community involvement and facilitating the means for that involvement. They have many good reasons for doing so.

Employees who volunteer gain experiences and insights which make them more valuable assets to their companies. They gain experience in leadership and in policy decisions. Employee volunteers also become more integrated into their communities and develop pride in themselves and in their companies. This involvement and pride often result in greater commitment to the company and to the community the company serves.

Most importantly, companies with corporate volunteer programs have seen that their employees can have a direct and positive impact on community problems. And a healthy community promotes a healthy business climate. Everyone wins — the community, the employee and the company.

Again, Minnesota is a leader in this growing area of corporate responsibility. In 1980, as many Minnesota companies were developing corporate volunteer programs, the Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota was formed to support those efforts and to promote the concept of corporate volunteerism.

Over the past few years, Minnesota corporate programs and projects have provided volunteers to fight hunger, illiteracy, disease, urban decay, social injustice and crime and have offered volunteer support to senior citizens, the disabled, the arts and government. So much has happened that it has been hard to keep up with it all — even for those of us working in the field.

In order to get a picture of the current status of Minnesota corporate volunteerism, the Corporate Volunteerism Council surveyed its members during the summer of 1984. This Report to the Community is based on the survey findings. The Council anticipates issuing a similar report every two years.

We believe the information reported here, although from only a portion of the Twin Cities corporate community, is illustrative of the commitment to corporate volunteerism that is growing in Minnesota. We also believe that this data will form a base line by which to measure the growth of Minnesota corporate volunteerism.

Finally, we hope that this report will stimulate the further development of corporate volunteer programs in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Roberta D. Boelter

Roberta D. Boelter
Chair, Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota
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An Overview

Objectives

• To provide a picture of the current status of corporate volunteerism among members of the Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota, a membership organization of Twin Cities corporations which have employee volunteer programs or are developing such programs.

• To identify the ingredients in those programs which indicate a commitment to the concept of corporate volunteerism.

• To establish a base line by which to measure the development of corporate volunteerism among member corporations and in the Twin Cities community.

Sample and Method

During the summer of 1984, surveys were mailed to 42 member companies of the Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota. Responses from 38 companies were received. The data from all 38 responses is included in the findings of this report.

What the report examines

It is the intent of this report to examine the commitment of these Twin Cities corporations to corporate volunteerism as illustrated by:

• Type and scope of corporate volunteer programs.

• How the corporations promote volunteerism.

• The extent and nature of corporate support given to volunteer programs.

• To what extent corporate volunteer programs use the four-step process of research, planning, implementation and evaluation.

• Comparisons of corporate volunteer programs based on number of employees, annual revenues, program age, and department managing the program.

Major Findings

Although nearly all of the companies surveyed have or are developing corporate volunteer programs, there is a great variety among those programs. Differences in company size, structure, revenues, program age, and managing departments can all result in program differences.

Most corporate volunteer programs were developed during the past few years, and most are continually evolving, developing and changing. It is thus difficult to make generalizations or identify definite trends. This report only represents the status of these particular corporate volunteer programs at one moment in time.

• Traditional corporate volunteer activities involving executives are still the most common, but group projects involving all levels of employees are also popular.

• One trend among larger companies is the development of volunteer programs for retirees.

• Cooperative projects with community organizations and/or other companies are also becoming popular — especially among companies with larger employee populations.

• Larger companies tend to have more formalized programs. The majority of programs are managed by community relations/public affairs departments, especially in larger companies.

• A variety of means are used to communicate about volunteer programs and to promote volunteerism to employees. Company publications, personal contacts, bulletin boards and memos are the most popular methods. Larger companies also use employee meetings and more varied and sophisticated means of communications.

• The vast majority of the companies have some kind of volunteer recognition program. The most popular means of recognition are publicity in company publications, letters of commendation, special recognition events and employee awards. Again, larger companies indicate greater variety.

• The majority of companies support volunteerism by providing release time for approved activities, reimbursement of certain employee expenses, and monetary and/or in-kind donations to organizations where employees volunteer.

• Several companies consider volunteerism to be a form of employee development, but few give it consideration in employee performance appraisals.

• Most companies also support their volunteer programs with budgets (which are reported to be growing with the programs) and designated program coordinators. Coordinators spend an average of 25% or less of their work time on volunteer programs. Those coordinators who spend more than 25% of their time on the programs usually are in community relations/public affairs departments in larger companies.

• Many corporate volunteer programs are also directed or assisted by employee councils or committees.

• A significant number of coordinators report their programs receive the active support of their CEO and senior management, but most perceive the support from mid-management to be less.

• The majority of companies report having written plans for their programs. There is, however, a need for greater attention to research of employee volunteer interests and community needs upon which to base program plans and evaluation of programs and individual volunteer experience to insure ongoing program effectiveness.

Corporate Programs

Description of Sample

Company size by annual revenues	
$ 1-$ 50 million	8%
$ 51-$100 million	3%
$101-$500 million	29%
Over $500 million	47%
Information not available	13%

Company size by employee population	
1- 100	5%
101- 500	24%
501-1000	16%
1001-2500	37%
Over 2500	18%

Type of Business (primary focus)	
Manufacturing	39%
Retail/Services	18%
Utilities	8%
Wholesale/Distribution	8%
Financial/Insurance	26%

Business Scope	
Local	18%
Regional	13%
National	68%

Headquarters	
Located in Twin Cities	89%
Located elsewhere	11%

Most of the corporations surveyed (89%) indicated having a volunteer program of some kind. This data was anticipated as the corporations surveyed were members of the Corporate Volunteerism Council. Three of the four companies which indicated having no volunteer programs actually did have some involvement with volunteerism and promoted it in some way to their employees. One company is in the process of developing a program.

The majority of the volunteer programs (59%) have been in place for five years or less, and a large percentage of those (75%) for two years or less. However, a still significant 38% have had programs for over five years. Most of the programs over five years old (69%) are in companies with over $100 million in annual revenues or with employee populations over 1,000 (62%).

Employee Participation

Although all companies with volunteer programs said that their entire Twin Cities employee populations were eligible to participate in at least some parts of their programs, a few indicated that they limit their programs (or parts of them) to management or salaried employees. A few also noted that they do not include part-time or union employees. The exact percentages of these restrictions cannot be determined from the survey data.

Twenty-six percent of the companies indicated that 10% or more of their employee populations were involved with their volunteer programs. Twenty-nine percent of the companies reported increased employee

	Individual Placement	Group Projects	Retiree Programs	Cooperative Projects	Single or Special Focus	Nationwide Programs	One Shot Projects	Management & Technical Assist.	Loaned Executives	Social Service Leaves	Boards and Commissions	Fundraising
B. Dalton Bookseller	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Bemis					●			●				
Cargill	●	●			●			●	●		●	
Control Data			●							●	●	
Conwed					●		●		●			●
Cray Research	●							●			●	●
Dayton's Department Store	●	●		●			●	●	●		●	●
Dyco Petroleum	●	●					●				●	
Economics Laboratory	●			●	●			●	●		●	
First Bank Minneapolis	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	
First Federal Savings											●	
Gelco		●					●		●			●
General Mills	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●
H.B. Fuller	●	●		●	●	●	●				●	●
Honeywell		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
IDS/American Express	●	●			●			●	●		●	●
Inter-Regional Financial Group	●	●					●	●			●	●
James B. McComb & Associates								●				
Josten's							●	●			●	
Land O'Lakes	●	●						●	●	●	●	
Lutheran Brotherhood	●	●				●	●	●	●		●	●
Medtronic					●		●	●	●		●	
Minnegasco	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●
Northern States Power	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●
Northwestern Bell		●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●
Northwestern National Life Ins.	●	●					●	●	●		●	
Norwest Bank St. Paul	●	●		●			●	●	●		●	●
Opus Corporatin					●						●	●
Pillsbury Company (The)			●	●				●	●		●	
Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.	●							●	●		●	●
Piper, Jaffrey & Hopwood		●			●			●	●		●	●
Prudential Insurance		●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
St. Paul Companies (The)	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●
Soo Line Railroad		●	●				●		●			●
Sperry Corporation	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		●	●
Tennant								●	●			●
3M	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●
WTCN-TV/Gannett Co.		●		●	●	●	●	●			●	

involvement during the past year, while 45% reported involvement to have remained constant. No company reported a decrease in employee involvement.

Forty-seven percent indicated that retirees were eligible to participate in company volunteer programs and 32% have formal programs specifically for their retirees. All companies which reported having retiree programs have employee populations over 1,000 and 75% have annual revenues of more than $500 million.

Program Administration

Administration of most corporate volunteer programs is the responsibility of a single department. This is most often a community relations or public affairs department (58%), but programs are also managed by human resources (13%), communications/public relations (13%) and other departments (11%). Companies with larger employee populations (71% of those over 1,000) and larger annual revenues (78% of those over $500 million) are more likely to place the responsibility for volunteer programs in a community relations/public affairs department.

Companies with smaller annual revenues and fewer employees are less likely to have a formally structured program than those with greater revenues and/or larger employee populations. Forty-seven percent of the companies with less than $500 million in revenues, and 41% with less than 1,000 employees reported having no formal program structure, and 20% and 24%, respectively, indicated responsibility for their volunteer programs was spread over more than one department.

In contrast, 83% of the companies with annual revenues of over $500 million and 76% of companies with more than 1,000 employees reported having more formalized programs managed by designated program coordinators or administrators.

Volunteer Activities

Volunteer activities involving executives have traditionally been and continue to be the most common. These include the placement of executive employees on nonprofit boards and community commissions (82%) and the lending of executives (71%), especially to assist with annual United Way campaigns. Many corporations are lending employees from various levels to provide management and technical assistance to nonprofits (79%), often through the Management Assistance Project (66%) — a five-year-old project which is a partnership effort of 24 Twin Cities corporations and the Minneapolis and St. Paul United Ways.

Also popular are group projects (66%), many of which involve a one-time commitment (61%) such as bike-a-thon or a clothing drive and often are fundraising efforts.

Forty-seven percent of the companies surveyed indicated having some kind of special company focus for their volunteer activities. This focus may range from an almost exclusive volunteer focus such as B. Dalton's literacy program, to a special, but non-exclusive emphasis such as H.B. Fuller's focus on domestic violence and Inter-Regional Financial Group's focus on child welfare.

Cooperative projects and community partnerships (such as Minnesota Foodshare and Metro Paint-a-thon) are increasing in popularity. Forty-two percent of the companies indicated involvement in such efforts. Corporations see cooperative projects and partnerships as excellent ways to leverage their resources. Sixty-nine percent of the companies reporting participation in cooperative efforts have employee populations over 1,000.

The majority of corporations with volunteer programs (62%) also place individual volunteers in community agencies and projects. And while 71% reported utilizing the resources of community agencies such as Voluntary Action Centers and the Management Assistance Project, most (61%) do not allow direct recruitment of their employees by those agencies. One exception to this policy is the hosting of volunteer fairs where agencies are invited to a company to provide employees with information about volunteer opportunities.

Corporate Promotion

Communications

Most companies use a variety of means to communicate and promote their volunteer program to their employees, the most popular being in-house publications (79%), bulletin boards (78%), memos (66%), personal contact (74%), by phone (58%), flyers (47%) and employee meetings (42%). Seventy-five percent of those companies who hold meetings to promote their volunteer programs have over 1,000 employees.

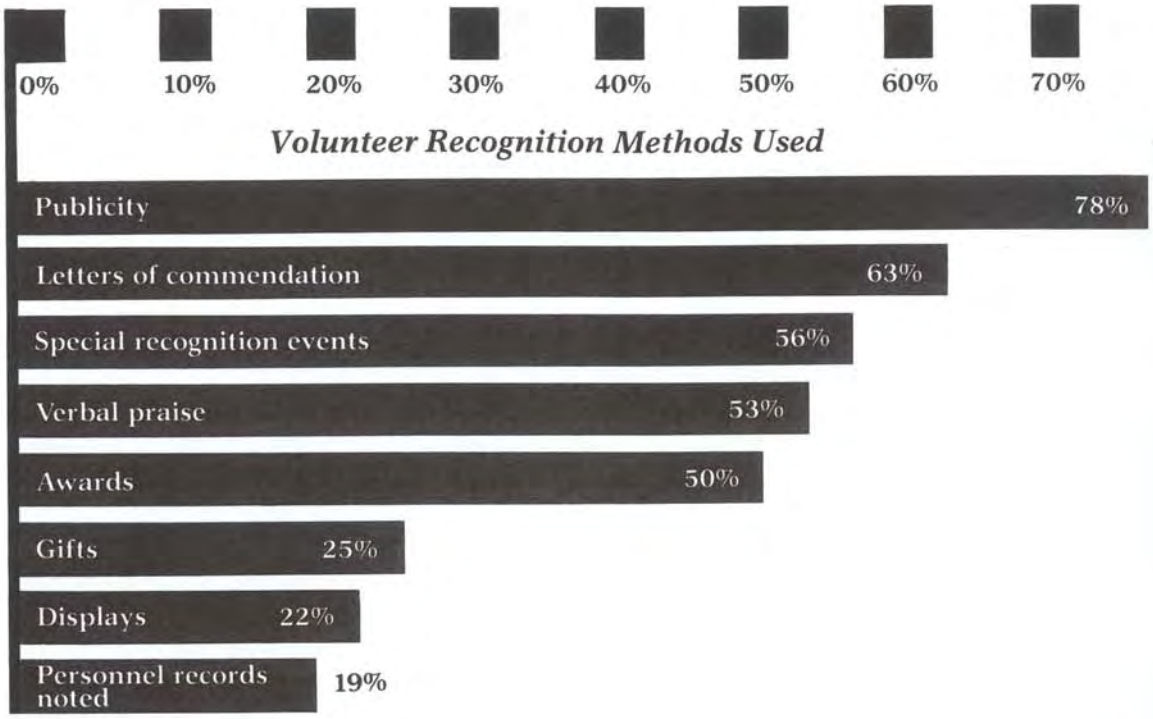
Annual reports of volunteer activities or company annual reports which describe those activities are used by 24% of the companies, of which all but one have over 1,000 employees and 67% have over $500 million annual revenues.

Other communications methods used are personal letters from chief executive officers (24%), brochures (34%), video tapes (24%), slide shows (13%) tent cards on cafeteria tables (16%), notices in elevators (11%), presentations at annual meetings (8%) and payroll inserts (8%).

A greater variety of communication methods overall is used by companies with older programs, larger employee populations and higher revenues.

Volunteer Recognition

Companies also promote volunteerism through their recognition, commendation, and reward of employee volunteer efforts. Eighty-five percent of the companies surveyed indicated having some form of volunteer recognition program. Of those companies, volunteers are recognized most often (78%) in company publications. Letters of commendation from supervisors, department heads and chief executive officers are used by 63%. Fifty-six percent hold recognition events (such as thank-you parties and awards dinners) and 50% select employee volunteers to receive awards.



Other means used for volunteer recognition are company displays (22%), monetary rewards to employees or nonprofits where employees volunteer (22%), notation of personnel records (19%), verbal praise (53%) and personal gifts (25%).

Again, companies with larger revenues and employee populations indicated a greater variety of recognition methods.

Corporate Support

Support to the Volunteer

In addition to sponsoring, facilitating and promoting volunteer activities, Twin Cities corporations reinforce their commitment to volunteerism through a variety of support mechanisms. The majority of companies surveyed (66%) provide some form of release time for approved volunteer activities, and 55% reimburse employees for certain expenses connected with volunteering.

Many companies (53%) link volunteerism and corporate contributions in some way. Twenty-nine percent make direct grants, 16% match employee donations and 34% make in-kind donations (e.g. printing services, office equipment and company products) to organizations where their employees volunteer. Such links are most likely (79%) when responsibility for the volunteer program is located in community relations/public affairs departments, the same department usually responsible for corporate contributions.

Thirty-four percent reported links between volunteer programs and human resource departments, many of which assist in volunteer recruitment and program promotion. Community involvement is often viewed as important to individual employee development, but only 16% indicated a consideration of volunteer activities in employee performance appraisals.

Support to the Program

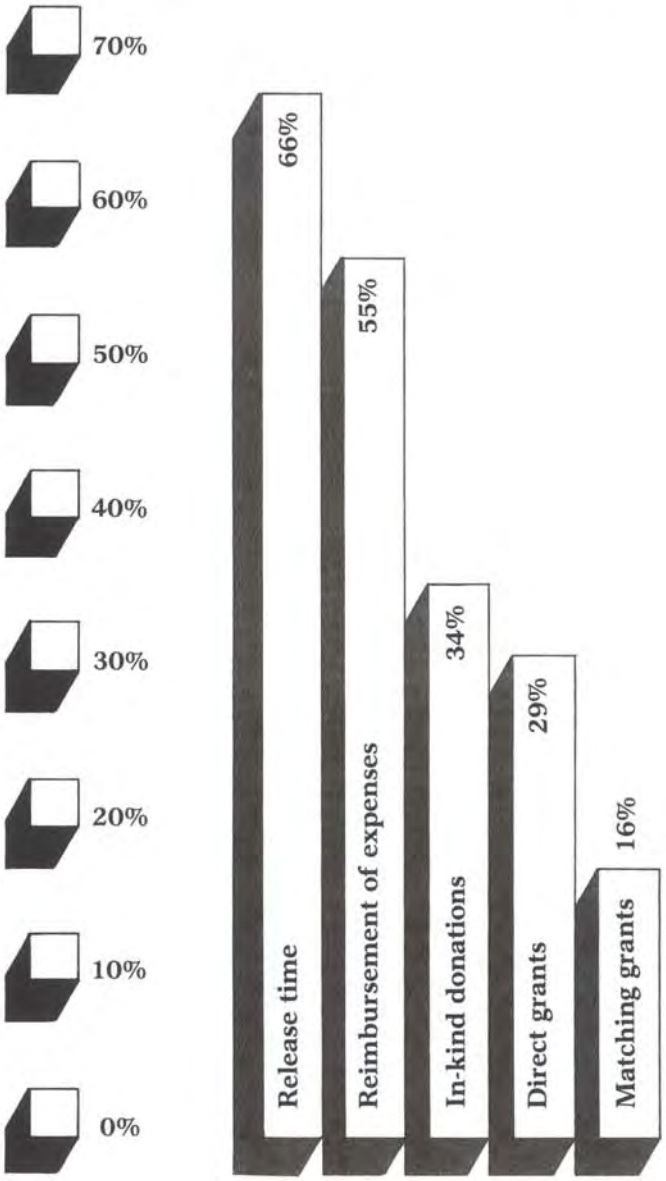
Companies also support their volunteer programs as a whole by providing budgets (65%) which grow with the program (55%) and designating program coordinators (84%).

For most coordinators, the volunteer program is only one of several responsibilities. The majority (58%) spend 25% or less of their time on corporate volunteerism activities. Of those coordinators who spend more than 25% of their time on volunteer programs, nearly all are in companies with over 1,000 employees (89%), more than $500 million annual revenues (67%) and in community relations/public affairs departments (89%).

Several companies (29%) have established employee councils or committees to direct and/or assist in the implementation of the volunteer programs. Some councils (55%) also disperse portions of their companies' charitable contributions.

Management support, critical to the success of any corporate program, is difficult to measure. While highly subjective, 42% of volunteer program coordinators reported their program had the active support of the CEO and senior management, 29% reported passive support and 18% reported moderate support. The support of mid-management was perceived to be less with only 13% of the coordinators reporting active support, 37% moderate support and 37% passive support.

Support Mechaniams for Volunteer Activities



Corporate Process

Commitment to volunteer programs, as well as the promotion and support of those programs, was clear among most of the companies surveyed. However, corporate commitment to a program is also demonstrated by the application of sound business procedures. A successful business program of any kind usually goes through the cyclical four-step process of research, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Research

Regarding research, only 21% of the companies surveyed said they had a formal means for determining employee volunteer interest, and only 18% said they had a formal means for determining community needs for volunteers. All programs which do determine employee interest and community need are managed by community relations/public affairs or communications departments. There are no apparent links between these research items and age of programs, company revenues or employee population.

Planning

Sixty-five percent of those companies with volunteer programs reported having a written plan for its implementation. Companies with revenues over $500 million (72%), employee populations over 1,000 (70%), programs in place more than five years (85%), and programs managed by communications (100%) or community relations/public affairs departments (68%) were much more likely to have a written plan than companies with lower revenues (31%), smaller employee populations (57%), newer programs (55%), and programs managed by human resources (40%) or other departments (0%).

Evaluation

Few companies (18%) reported systematically evaluating the extent and effectiveness of their volunteer programs. Volunteer hours are, however, tracked by 21% of the companies. Fewer (18%) track hours put in on company time. All programs which report tracking volunteer hours are managed by community relations/public affairs departments.

More companies (32%) report evaluating individual volunteer experiences. Of those that do, 73% have more than 1,000 employees and 67% of the programs were managed by community relations/public affairs departments. However, all but one of the programs managed by human resources departments also evaluate individual volunteer experience.

In order to assure the ongoing effectiveness of corporate volunteer programs, it is clear from this data that there is a need for greater attention to 1) research upon which to base volunteer program planning and 2) systematic evaluation of programs and individual volunteer experiences.

Thanks to . . .

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Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota*

Corporate Members

B. Dalton Booksellers
Bemis Company
Burlington Northern Railroad
Cargill, Inc.
Control Data Corporation
Conwed Corporation
Cray Research, Inc.
Dayton's Department Store
Dyco Petroleum Corporation
Economics Laboratory, Inc.
Farm Credit Services
First Bank Minneapolis
First Bank System
First Federal Savings
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General Mills, Inc.
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Northwestern Bell, St. Paul
Northwestern National Life Insurance Company
Norwest Bank Minneapolis, N.A.
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Piper, Jaffrey & Hopwood, Inc.
Prudential Insurance Company
Soo Line Railroad
Sperry Corporation
The St. Paul Companies
Tennant Company
3M
WTCN-TV 11

Associate Members

Citizens League
Community Volunteer Service of St. Croix Valley Area
Hennepin County Community Services
Management Assistance Project (MAP)
Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota Office of Volunteer Services
Retired Senior Volunteer Services
St. Paul Chamber of Commerce
United Way's Voluntary Action Center, Minneapolis
Volunteers Intervening for Equity (VIE)
Voluntary Action Center of the St. Paul Area

*as of October 1984

For More Information

This report provides a broad overview of the status of corporate volunteerism among member companies of the Corporate Volunteerism Council of Minnesota. For more specific information about corporate volunteer programs in the Twin Cities or information about the Corporate Volunteerism Council, contact:

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Minneapolis, MN 55404
612/340-7532

or

Voluntary Action Center of the St. Paul Area
518 Bremer Building
419 North Robert
St. Paul, MN 55101
612/227-3938

or

Community Volunteer Service of St. Croix Valley Area
115 South Union Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
612/439-7434

A resource manual entitled *Volunteerism Corporate Style,* containing numerous case studies and examples of corporate volunteer communications and program tools, is published by the Corporate Volunteerism Council and may be ordered through the Minneapolis Voluntary Action Center cited above.