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Managing Efficient Employee Volunteer Programs

Best practices for maximizing efficiency and effectiveness

A MICROEDGE EDUCATIONAL ARTICLE

Employee volunteer programs can create immense benefits for your organization [See our eBook, Why Should You Care About Employee Engagement?]. But once you put one in place, how do you ensure that you're managing it as efficiently as possible to yield the best results and maximize engagement and interest among your employees? Here are a few best practices to help you achieve that goal:

Plan thoroughly before you start

In order to kick off a powerful employee volunteer program, you need to know which direction you're headed in. Get the input from those who will be involved, namely your company's leaders and staff. And make sure to do as many of the following when developing your initial plan: develop mission and vision statements for the program; create a needs assessment; set and communicate your overall goals and objectives; and set and finalize your program budget.

Establish firm policies and procedures

Your staff need to know the parameters of the program—they need to know what to do and how to do it, in terms of on-site participation and administrative responsibilities, tracking, etc. Setting clear policies and procedures provides the structure for sound program management. They ensure consistency on how all events are managed, reported, etc. They set expectations. They minimize risk of misinterpretation. And they standardize your program across all your various regional offices.

Organize orientation and training events

Once your program is in place, you need to ensure your employees understand the big picture and where they fit into it. This is essentially an extenuation of your policies and procedures—you've set the foundation, now you have to make sure that everyone understands the expectations you've placed upon them. Doing so will pay dividends over time.

Ensure employees understand the BIG picture and where they fit into it.

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Set clear roles and time slots

Once your program is up and running, it's time to focus on increasing the efficiency of your event logistics. Map out the roles needed for each event and, as much as possible, align those roles with the individuals with the skills or interests most closely related to them. If people are not volunteering all day, but rather for a shorter period during the event, create time slots for each role and fill them as far ahead of time as possible to make sure your team shows up ready to hit the ground running.

Designate team leaders

If a particular event requires you to break down your volunteers into groups or teams, be sure to designate a team leader for each. This person is responsible for making sure everyone is on point, understands their responsibility, and is able to complete it. They also act as a mediator should anything go awry.

Make sure to track your hours properly

Your employees can volunteer all day, and that really brings them together. But they also deserve credit for a job well done, and your company deserves credit for the collective good it's doing in the community. Set up reliable and streamlined mechanisms for tracking hours so that you can have an accurate picture of what you've done. This can be cumbersome if you rely on your employees to self-report. However, if you have the right employee volunteering software you can automate this so that everyone always gets credit for what they do, and you can tell a more powerful story to the communities you support.

Evaluate your work and improve your process

Create open channels for employees to evaluate their own work. Use surveys to get their feedback. Have your program managers on site take notes and look for ways to improve efficiency. A volunteer program is not static, it is always evolving, but you must proactively look for weaknesses in order to enable a continuous process of growth.

Want to learn more about developing effective employee volunteer programs?

To learn about MicroEdge AngelPoints solutions for employee volunteering, view free webinars, review testimonials from current clients, read white papers, case studies and more…
visit: **www.microedge.com/APVolunteering**

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