

SECTION 1:

Background on EVP Evaluation

Excerpted materials from the Measuring Business Outcomes of Your Employee Volunteer Program seminar. For more information visit www.pointsoflight.org

“If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.”

Albert Einstein

Purpose of EVP Evaluation

Benefits of EVP Evaluation

- Learn about/prove the value of your employee volunteer program (EVP)
 - What really matters about our EVP?
 - How can we tie the EVP to business objectives?
- Strategize new approaches
 - How can we make it more effective, different, new, or innovative?
- Refine your practices
 - What can I do to make it better?

For example, the information gained from conducting an evaluation of your employee volunteer program can help you:

- Identify program strengths and weaknesses
- Improve planning and implementation
- Document progress toward meeting goals
- Assess impacts, internal and external
- Provide feedback to participants, managers, and partners
- Report to stakeholders

Informing Decision-Making

A well-designed evaluation will give you information you can use to make decisions.

- What decisions do you need to make about your program?
- Who will make these decisions (you, your team, co-managers, executives)?
- What data or information do they want?
- How can you best get them what they need to make those decisions?
- What is your budget and time-line?

Levels of Tracking Results


Tracking the results of your EVP can occur at various levels of sophistication. At a minimum, EVPs should track Level 1 data (see next page) which correspond to satisfaction data. Established programs should track Level 2 results, which correspond to the “bean counting” data—number of hours, volunteers, etc.

Over time, EVPs should hold themselves accountable to the win–win–win changes they purport to effect in their employees, company, and community. This means that they need to track outcomes (meaningful changes), as listed in Level 3.

Level 1: Operational Data/Satisfaction Feedback

Operational data/satisfaction feedback consists of data that describe basic counts on inputs (e.g., volunteer hours), what the EVP did, how well the processes worked, and the satisfaction level of the stakeholders. These data can be purely qualitative data. Operational data/satisfaction feedback answers questions such as:

- What events and activities were held? How did they go? What worked well?
- How satisfied were the volunteers, community partners, company managers, and others?
- What needs to be changed?

 Definition

Qualitative Data: Information that is not numerical and can not be categorized. It includes words, pictures, video – anything that is not a number and does not fall into a category.

Level 2: Outputs/Accomplishments

Outputs/accomplishments are the volume of things that the EVP “got done.” These data can include qualitative items (words, pictures, video), and quantitative data on external things done, such as the number of individuals tutored or the number of meals served.

In addition to the above figures, EVPs might also want to track employee demographics (helps to get a sense of who participates and who does not). In sum, there may be other outputs or accomplishments that are important to the company.

Definition

Outputs/Accomplishments: A measure of the things that the program did. Please note that outputs do not capture the meaningful effect the program had on individuals, organizations, or the community. Outputs do not answer the “So what?” question. For example, the number of houses renovated or brochures distributed are both outputs/accomplishments. But counting those items does not tell us anything about how the quality of life changed for the people in the renovated houses, or whether individuals learned anything from the brochures.

Getting Started

If you are facing the challenge of building a system to track hours and volunteers but have few resources to dedicate to this, consider the President’s Volunteer Service Award corporate package. Setting up an account that allows your employees to go online to track hours is free. Plus, setting up a more sophisticated branded system is affordable. Go to www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

Guidance in Tracking Volunteer Hours

Step 1: Define Volunteering

Generally speaking volunteering is work conducted by choice, without monetary reward, and for the public good. However, organizations differ in what this entails. For example, some companies require that volunteer hours be for organizations with nonprofit IRS status. Similarly, some companies include transportation time to and from the volunteer activity as volunteer time but others do not, and some companies explicitly exclude indirect activities. For example, they might not count time walking in a walkathon or running in a marathon as volunteer time. In sum, volunteering is culturally and contextually specific. Thus, companies are encouraged to use a definition that works well for them. It should be noted that many companies do not explicitly define volunteering but instead leave it to employee interpretation.

Step 2: Define “Company Volunteering”

Employees can conduct various types of volunteering that might be unwise to include in the official tally of “company volunteering.” For example, should volunteering that employees conduct on their own time, entirely independent of the company, count in the official EVP tallies? What about volunteering conducted on employees’ own time but for which they received some sort of company support such as a “dollars for doers” grant or online assistance identifying the volunteer opportunity? Another question is whether volunteer hours conducted by contractors should be included. Again, there is no standard definition of “company volunteering.” Companies need to decide which hours to include in their tally of company volunteering based on their particular situation. Listed below are the basic options.

- Include only volunteer hours conducted on company time. This is the most restrictive definition. Because employees were “paid” for this time, it allows the company to feel secure in stating that employee volunteerism was a company donation.
- Include volunteering from events organized using company resources. This would include events conducted outside of business hours as long as they were organized by the company, in addition to release-time volunteering.
- Include all volunteering supported by the company. This would certainly include release-time and company-organized volunteer hours, but would also include individual volunteer hours that received a “dollars for doers” grant, for example. It might also include volunteer hours logged by employees if this entitled them to some type of company support, such as being entered in a drawing for a grant or receiving recognition.

- Include all employee volunteering. This is the most expansive definition and the one with the highest risk of PR difficulties. For example, employees may resent having the company take credit for volunteering they do on their own time and the media may accuse the company of trying to improve its image off the charitable efforts of its employees. One way to reduce the likelihood of PR difficulties is to report the employee volunteering as just that rather than as a company contribution.

Step 3: Track Company Volunteer Hours

There are various ways to collect volunteer hours, each with strengths and weaknesses. The definition of “company volunteer hours,” above, helps to identify the most appropriate way to track hours. For example, if a company includes only release-time volunteer hours in their official count, timesheet data from HR might be sufficient. Similarly, a company that includes all employee volunteer hours will need a mechanism for enticing employees to submit their hours. The principal mechanisms for tracking volunteer hours are as follows.

- Data collected by HR
- Reporting conducted by event organizers/managers—can be through internal systems or off-the-shelf products
- Hours logged by individual employees—can be through internal systems or off-the-shelf products
- Surveys administered to all employees or a sample of employees—can be through internal systems or off-the-shelf products

Guidance in Tracking Number of Volunteers

The customary way to provide data on the number of employee volunteers is to provide the number or percentage of employees that volunteered over a one-year period. For example, “3,450 employees volunteered in company-organized volunteer events in 2005” or “63% of employees volunteered, either on their own time or through company events, in 2005.”

The definition of “company volunteering,” above, will determine who exactly counts as a volunteer. There are a few pitfalls that need to be avoided in counting the number of volunteers.

- Double counting. Because employees may volunteer multiple times in a one-year period, adding up the total number of volunteers from various events results in double (and triple, quadruple, etc.) counting. Listed below are some tactics for getting around this problem.
 - Collect volunteer data per individual, using, for example, employee IDs in log forms, online reporting, etc. This circumvents the problem of counting the person more than once.
 - Add up the total number of employees by event but adjust that total downward based on a credible and valid estimate of the over count. For example, let’s say that adding up participation in all volunteer events in the course of a year gives 12,000 and that you know from a survey that, on average, employee volunteers attend three events a year. Dividing the total by three would provide a reasonable estimate of the total number of employee volunteers. Thus, the number of employee volunteers would be 4,000 (12,000 / 3).
- Including non-employees in the employee count. When EVPs include family members, retirees, customers, or others in their projects, care needs to be taken to not report these individuals as employee volunteers. There are two options to avoid this problem. The first is to report the total number of volunteers from whatever population they may belong. For example, “4,600 employees and family members participated in company volunteer events in 2006.” The second option is to track employees and non-employees separately. For example, event log forms could have a checkbox for volunteers allowing them to identify themselves as employees, retirees, family, and other.

Of course, in addition to reporting the customary total annual figures, EVP managers might want to report the number of volunteers by department, event, month, or other category. The above guidance still applies to these cases.

Guidance in Valuing Volunteer Time

What is the value your employee volunteers contribute to your community?

Decisions to Make in Valuing Volunteer Time

- In counting volunteers, do you include
 - All volunteering?
 - Just company endorsed volunteering?
 - Just company sponsored activities?
- In counting hours, do you include
 - All hours (including weekends)?
 - Just on-company-time hours?
- How are these tracked? Can you really do this?
- What are these hours worth?
 - Who the person is or what the person does
 - Valued at:
 - Company cost – actual cost
 - Company rate – billable rate
 - Non-profit replacement rate (what it would cost the non-profit to hire someone to do that job)

Recommendations on Valuing Volunteer Time

- If you only count volunteering done on company time, use your fully loaded cost
- If you count all volunteering, use the market-place cost for what the person does, not who the person is
 - A computer systems analyst doing gardening is valued as a gardener
 - A computer systems analyst doing database design is valued as an analyst

To calculate the value of volunteer time, use the Points of Light & Hands On Network Calculator:


<http://www.pointsoflight.org/resources/research/calculator.cfm>

Hourly Wages and Benefits of Selected Job Types from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Professional/Skilled		Hourly Wage	Benefits	Total
	Computer Analysts	\$35.60	\$14.54	\$50.14
	Architects	\$32.54	\$13.29	\$45.83
	Chemists	\$30.72	\$12.55	\$43.27
	Physicians	\$60.92	\$24.88	\$85.80
	Nurses	\$27.00	\$11.03	\$38.03
	Elem. Teachers	\$23.34	\$9.53	\$32.87
	Psychologists	\$21.95	\$8.97	\$30.92
	Recreation Workers	\$15.88	\$6.49	\$22.37
	Lawyers	\$52.65	\$21.50	\$74.15
	Musicians	\$34.10	\$13.93	\$48.03
	Public Relations	\$28.44	\$11.62	\$40.06
	Computer Programmers	\$29.77	\$12.16	\$41.93
	Financial Mangers	\$36.61	\$14.95	\$51.56
	Personnel Managers	\$33.18	\$13.55	\$46.73
	Food Service Managers	\$20.14	\$8.23	\$28.37
Administrative/Skilled				
	Computer Operator	\$16.15	\$6.60	\$22.75
	Secretaries	\$16.33	\$6.67	\$23.00
	Receptionists	\$11.18	\$4.57	\$15.75
	Personnel Clerks	\$15.95	\$6.51	\$22.46
	Bookkeepers	\$14.95	\$6.11	\$21.06
	Data Entry Clerks	\$12.22	\$4.99	\$17.21
Skilled/Unskilled Labor				
	Auto Mechanic	\$18.05	\$7.37	\$25.42
	Carpenters	\$19.20	\$7.84	\$27.04
	Electricians	\$25.52	\$10.42	\$35.94
	Roofers	\$17.71	\$7.23	\$24.94
	Cashiers	\$8.61	\$3.52	\$12.13
	Bakers	\$11.07	\$4.52	\$15.59
	Drivers	\$14.80	\$6.05	\$20.85
	Animal Caretakers	\$10.69	\$4.37	\$15.06
	General Labor	\$10.91	\$4.46	\$15.37
	Food Service	\$7.51	\$3.07	\$10.58
	Cooks	\$9.45	\$3.86	\$13.31
	Janitors	\$10.30	\$4.21	\$14.51
	Guides	\$13.10	\$5.35	\$18.45
	Ushers	\$7.96	\$3.25	\$11.21

Level 3: Business, Employee, and Community Outcomes

Outcomes are the meaningful changes that the EVP effected or appeared to effect (if it's not possible to prove causality). EVPs should, at some point, hold themselves accountable to the win-win-win goals of the EVP, such as improved teambuilding or improved client relationships. This level of tracking requires the involvement of individuals with an evaluation or research background. Companies often have individuals in HR or other departments that can help with this.

 Definition

Outcomes: A measurement of the meaningful changes that occurred in individuals, organizations, or communities due to the accomplishments/outputs. For example, increasing employee decision-making skills, increasing educational attainment, and improving corporate image are all outcomes. Outcomes answer the question “So what?” Please note that there is no clear line differentiating outputs/accomplishments and outcomes.


 Notes from the Field

How Aetna Tracks Results

Level 1 (Operational Data/Satisfaction Feedback). Local organizers are asked to send a thank you email to volunteers and community partners with a link to an online feedback form; local organizers participate in nationwide calls where they provide feedback to the EVP's management; the EVP's website requests feedback from users. Also, event organizers complete a group event form after every event in which they submit the number of hours and volunteers; employees are asked to log their Aetna volunteer event hours and their personal hours at an online site in return for the chance to win a quarterly grant for the nonprofit of their choice; and the annual all-employee survey asks employees if they participated in any Aetna-sponsored volunteer events (this provides the unduplicated number of volunteers).

Level 2 (Outputs/Accomplishments). The group form mentioned above tracks outputs and accomplishments such as number of pints of blood donated or children tutored.

Level 3 (Outcomes). Aetna's EVP has a goal to “increase workplace enjoyment.” From Aetna's annual all-employee survey, the morale of employees who volunteered is compared with the morale of those who did not. These data show that volunteers are 7 percent more likely to rate Aetna as a good place to work. This is a statistically significant difference and one of the larger morale effects seen at Aetna.

 Your notes

Types of Evaluation

Process evaluation

Process evaluation seeks to answer the question
How well is the program functioning?

It can help answer questions related to program implementation, such as:

- How does this program work?
- Why has it worked or not worked? For whom? In what circumstances?
- What have been the stumbling blocks?
- What do the experiences we provide mean to the people involved?
- What have we learned?
- What do we keep? What do we change?

Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation seeks to answer the question
What difference is the program making?

It can be used to measure things like what difference the project has made for:

- The company in general
- Parts of the company, like Human Resources
 - Retention, skill development
- The engaged employees
- The agencies
 - The organization
 - The clients

It also measures what has changed.

Both types of evaluation share a common goal: they are used to make decisions.

Stakeholders


Stakeholders are the people who:

- support and/or authorize your program
- are the audience for your evaluations

Each stakeholder group has

- its own information needs
- its own way of interpreting the evaluation findings

Stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation design.

 Your notes