



High-Impact Employee Volunteering: Resources & Research

Transformative Versus Transactional Volunteering

What is Transformative Volunteering?

Transformative volunteering creates space for participants to reach beyond the immediate context and circumstances of themselves and their communities. Instead of simply exchanging time or resources for the reward of making a difference, volunteers are guided to consider their potential to become increasingly pro-social human beings with a greater capacity for empathy.

The primary focus of transformative volunteering is the change that occurs in the volunteers themselves. Volunteering programs and activities are designed to invite all participants to “engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation.” This transformation in an individual’s perspective is necessary to achieve change at the psychological, convictional, and behavioral level.

Read the research: Mezirow, J. (1991). [*Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*](#). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

What is Transactional Volunteering?

Transactional volunteering is the voluntary giving of one’s time, knowledge, social network, expertise, skills, abilities, experience, knowledge, training, or insight for the benefit of another without any expectation of direct or commensurate compensation. The “reward” is typically the knowledge that one was able to “make a difference” by helping solve a problem or advance a cause.

4 Reasons to Adopt the Transformative Model

1. Increased levels of affective commitment

Employees who are enabled to act pro-socially (give, volunteer, and otherwise “do good” for their colleagues or communities) are likely to respond with increased affective commitment to their organization.

Read the research: Grant, A. M., Dutton, J. E., & Rosso, B. D. (2008). [*Giving commitment: Employee support programs and the prosocial sensemaking process*](#). *The Academy of Management Journal*, 51, 898-918.

2. Improved job performance

Research indicates that “volunteering was associated with both volunteer and job meaningfulness, and that the pull of meaningful volunteer work was even stronger when employees had less meaning in their jobs. The results further revealed benefits of volunteering for employers. Volunteering was related to job absorption but not job interference, and it was therefore associated with better job performance.”

Read the research: [*Rodell, Jessica \(2013\). Finding Meaning through Volunteering: Why Do Employees Volunteer and What Does It Mean for Their Jobs?*](#) *The Academy of Management Journal* 56(5):1274-1294



3. Competitive hiring position

“For recruitment practice, our results suggest that the net effect of leveraging CSR practices in employee recruitment is clearly a positive one from the perspective of a hiring organization. The majority of our participants — about two-thirds of them — reported they were more attracted to the employer as a result of its community investment or environmental strategies.”

However, the research contains a very distinct and important warning: if the company's CSR program is seen to be inauthentic or too small, prospective employees will take a negative position towards the company. In those cases where a company may not be willing to substantially invest in CSR, it may be better to not use citizenship programs in recruiting efforts. Additionally, community investment programs must be experienced as meaningful and relational.

*Read the research: Jones David A., Willness Chelsea R., Heller Kristin (2016). [Illuminating the signals job seekers receive from an employer's community involvement and environmental sustainability practices: Insights into why most job seekers are attracted, others are indifferent, and a few are repelled](#). *Frontiers in Psychology* Volume 7 (00426).*

4. Improved organizational resilience

By developing leaders through and experiential process of learning that involves intentional moments of critical reflection and sensemaking, employees in leadership positions acquire the critical skills necessary to contribute to organization's overall resiliency. Transformative volunteering approaches develop leadership through the cognitive process of learning, modeling a practice of sensemaking and the creation of significance or meaning. Equipped with this experiential knowledge, individuals possess the necessary skills and experience to contribute to the “organization's capacity to anticipate, respond, and adapt”.

Why Does Volunteering Make Me Feel Good?

The Helper's High

The 'helper's high' could help you live a longer, healthier life.

By [Jeanie Lerche Davis](#)

In the last few years, researchers have looked at the so-called helper's high and its effects on the human body. Scientists are searching to understand just how altruism -- the wish to perform good deeds -- affects our health, even our longevity.

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/science-good-deeds>

The Brain's Reward System

Human fronto-mesolimbic networks guide decisions about charitable donations

By [Jorge Moll](#), [Frank Krueger](#), [Roland Zahn](#), [Matteo Pardini](#), [Ricardo de Oliveira-Souza](#), and [Jordan Grafman](#)

In this article, we use functional magnetic resonance imaging while participants anonymously donated to or opposed real charitable organizations related to major societal causes. We show that the mesolimbic reward system is engaged by donations in the same way as when monetary rewards are obtained.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/103/42/15623.abstract>

The Helper's High – The Condition of Task Significance

The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions
By Adam M. Grant

This research discovered that fundraising callers who received a task significance intervention increased their levels of job performance relative to callers in 2 other conditions and to their own prior performance.

http://solutions-centre.org/pdf/2008_Grant_JAP_TaskSignificance.pdf



The Helper's High – The Condition of Visualization

The Selfless Mind: How Prefrontal Involvement In Mentalizing With Similar And Dissimilar Others Shapes Empathy And Prosocial Behavior

By Jasminka Majdandžić a,b,c,† , Sandra Amashauffer a , Allan Hummer d , Christian Windischberger d , Claus Lamm a,c

Engaging in this other-enhancement process thus seems to help people to overcome a self-other distinction that would otherwise impede prosocial responses. The propensity to engage in this process furthermore seems more pronounced in people high in dispositional empathic concern and in overall subjective empathic responses during the Empathy Task

<http://fulltext.study/download/956560.pdf>

How Humans Have Evolved to Do Good

Survival of the Empathic

Book extract: 'The Brain: The Story of You'

by David Eagleman

Our brains are primed for interaction, making us deeply social creatures who co-operate for the good of the group. But what causes people to turn on each other?

<https://www.ft.com/content/3f5c647a-7768-11e5-a95a-27d368e1ddf7>

Survival of the Empathic

The neuroevolution of empathy

By Jean Decety

There is strong evidence that empathy has deep evolutionary, biochemical, and neurological underpinnings. Even the most advanced forms of empathy in humans are built on more basic forms and remain connected to core mechanisms associated with affective communication, social attachment, and parental care.

Additionally, "A growing number of fMRI studies have demonstrated that the same neural circuit—the so-called pain matrix—that is involved in the first-hand experience of pain is also emulated by the anticipation, perception, or imagination, of other individuals in pain."

http://ggsc-web02.ist.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Decety_ANYAS2011.pdf

Survival of the Empathic

The Empathic Civilization

TED Talk

By Jeremy Rifkin

In this talk from RSA Animate, bestselling author Jeremy Rifkin investigates the evolution of empathy and the profound ways it has shaped human development and society.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jeremy_rifkin_on_the_empathic_civilization

The Pain Matrix

Why Do I Need You? | Preview

By David Eagleman

A PBS episode on how the human brain depends on other brains to thrive and survive.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b070ss9x>



In Groups and Out Groups

The science of de- and re-humanization

Video series [by Intelligence Squared](#)

Featuring David Eagleman

How do ingroups and outgroups form, neurally-speaking? How does social context and obedience to authority navigate mass behavior? Here's David Eagleman's take on these questions, through the lens of neuroscience.

<http://www.eagleman.com/blog/dehumanization>

In Groups and Out Groups

The Brain's Empathy Gap - Can mapping neural pathways help us make friends with our enemies?

The New York Times Magazine

By Jeneen Interlandi March 19, 2015

"In recent years, neuroscientists have begun to map empathy's pathways in the brain. We know that the ability to identify other people's thoughts and feelings as separate from our own (what psychologists refer to as having a "theory of mind") is associated with a handful of interconnected brain regions known collectively as the "theory-of-mind network." And we've begun to pin specific tasks — like identifying other people's mental states, or making moral judgments about their actions — to specific parts of this network."

https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/magazine/the-brains-empathy-gap.html?_r=2

In Groups and Out Groups

Dehumanizing the Lowest of the Low - Neuroimaging Responses to Extreme Out-Groups

Department of Psychology; Center for the Study of Brain, Mind, and Behavior; Princeton University

By [Lasana T. Harris](#), [Susan T. Fiske](#)

Functional magnetic resonance imaging provided data for examining brain activations in 10 participants viewing 48 photographs of social groups and 12 participants viewing objects. The resulting neural evidence supports the prediction that extreme out-groups may be perceived as less than human, or dehumanized.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01793.x>

Volunteering as a Mechanism to Develop Empathy

The Neurons that Shaped Civilization

A Ted Talk

By Vilayanur Ramachandran

"Neuroscientist Vilayanur Ramachandran outlines the fascinating functions of mirror neurons. Only recently discovered, these neurons allow us to learn complex social behaviors, some of which formed the foundations of human civilization as we know it."

https://www.ted.com/talks/vs_ramachandran_the_neurons_that_shaped_civilization

Volunteering as a Mechanism to Develop Empathy

The neural components of empathy: Predicting daily prosocial behavior

An article produced by Department of Psychology, University of California

By Sylvia A. Morelli, Lian T. Rameson, and Matthew D. Lieberman

When we see specific emotions in people around us it stimulates congruent emotions in us as the observer. "At other times it may be necessary to actively take the target's perspective in order to understand and connect with their emotions. Finally, empathy heightens our focus on and concern for others, regardless of what specific emotion the target is experiencing, and motivates us to behave prosocially."

[http://www.scn.ucla.edu/pdf/Morelli\(InPress\)SCAN.pdf](http://www.scn.ucla.edu/pdf/Morelli(InPress)SCAN.pdf)



Why Businesses Support Employee Volunteering

The Business Case for Employee Volunteering

By Realized Worth

Many companies have employee volunteer programs, but for many companies in Europe, Canada and the US these programs are underfunded, underdeveloped and underutilized. This blog series is meant to offer a number of compelling reasons why your business needs to invest (a bit more) in employee volunteering.

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2011/06/business-case-for-employee-volunteering.html>

Finding meaning through volunteering: why do employees volunteer and what does it mean for their jobs?

Academy of Management Journal 2013, Vol. 56, No. 5, 1274–1294.

By Jessica b. Rodell

“Results suggested that volunteering was associated with both volunteer and job meaningfulness, and that the pull of meaningful volunteer work was even stronger when employees had less meaning in their jobs.”

<http://media.terry.uga.edu/socrates/publications/2013/11/Rodell2013.pdf>

Trends in employee volunteering

The New Competitive Advantage: Giving in Numbers Brief 2016

By CECP

In the most complete annual survey of corporate societal engagement, CECP, in association with The Conference Board, heard from a record 272 multi-billion dollar companies with aggregate revenues of USD\$ 7.5 Trillion.

http://cecp.co/pdfs/2016_GIN_8x11_High_Res_FINAL.pdf

Deloitte Volunteer Impact Research

Developing leadership skills through volunteerism

Deloitte’s 2016 Impact Survey results indicate that [volunteering](#) experience may play a big role in building leadership skills considered to be “must haves” for successful leaders. Findings from the survey—which was targeted at individuals who either directly influence hiring or indirectly influence the person making the hiring decision—also support the idea that including volunteering experience on a résumé may make job candidates significantly more attractive to employers.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/citizenship-deloitte-volunteer-impact-research.html>

The Journey of the Volunteer – Understanding Human Motivation

Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motivation

Differences Between Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

By [Kendra Cherry](#)

Updated June 21, 2016

“Why do we do the things we do? What is it that drives our behaviors? Psychologists have proposed some different ways of thinking about motivation, including one method that involves looking at whether motivation arises from outside (extrinsic) or inside (intrinsic) the individual.”

<https://www.verywell.com/differences-between-extrinsic-and-intrinsic-motivation-2795384>



Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motivation

Is Volunteering Rewarding in Itself?

By Stephan Meier, University of Zurich | Alois Stutzer, University of Zurich and IZA Bonn

The Researchers of this study found *“robust evidence that volunteers are more satisfied with their life than non-volunteers. Causality is addressed taking advantage of a natural experiment: the collapse of East Germany and its infrastructure of volunteering. People who accidentally lost their opportunities for volunteering are compared to people who experienced no change in their volunteer status.”*

https://www.unibas.ch/fileadmin/www/redaktion/wipo/Alois_Stutzer/Volunteering_Economica.pdf

Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motivation

The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

By E. Gil Clary and Mark Snyder, Department of Psychology, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota (E.G.C.), and Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota (M.S.)

“Why do significant numbers of people engage in the unpaid helping activities known as volunteerism? Drawing on functional theorizing about the reasons, purposes, and motivations underlying human behavior, we have identified six personal and social functions potentially served by volunteering. In addition to developing an inventory to assess these motivational functions, our program of research has explored the role of motivation in the processes of volunteerism, especially decisions about becoming a volunteer in the first place and decisions about continuing to volunteer.”

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-8721.00037>

Global, contextual, and situational motivation – what’s the difference?

Prosocial Motivation at Work: When, Why, and How Making a Difference Makes a Difference

By Adam M. Grant and Justin M. Berg grantad@wharton.upenn.edu and bergj@wharton.upenn.edu

The authors examine *“prosocial motivation in basic frameworks of motivation. Psychologists have argued that motivation operates at three hierarchical levels of generality: global, contextual, and situational (Vallerand, 1997). Global motivation focuses on an employee’s relatively stable dispositional orientation toward particular goals and actions across time and situations. Contextual motivation focuses on an employee’s motivation toward a specific domain or class of behavior, and is moderately variable across time and situations. Situational motivation focuses on an employee’s motivation toward a particular behavior in a particular moment in time, and is highly variable.”*

https://faculty.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/GrantBerg_ProSocialHandbookFinal.pdf

The Empathy Map: What’s In It For Me? (WIIFM)

Corporate Volunteering & Giving: Get The Motivation Right

By Realized Worth

“What motivates your employees to participate in your corporate volunteering program? With so many options available for giving and volunteering, why in the world would anybody do it through the workplace? If you’re not asking that question, you should be – because your employees are.”

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2012/10/corporate-volunteering-giving-get-the-motivation-right.html>

The Empathy Map: What’s In It For Me? (WIIFM)

Visuals Align Worksheet No 3: Empathy Map

By XPlane - <http://www.xplane.com/>

Empathy Mapping for organizational insight is a valuable tool to ensure change is designed in a people-centered way. Call it user-centered design or human-centered design, the principle is to start with the people who will directly experience change and design with their needs in mind.

http://x.xplane.com/visual_alignment_dl



The Journey of the Volunteer – The Three Stages of the Volunteer Journey

The Journey of a Volunteer

Want Good Volunteers? Dump The Altruistic, Find The Self-Interested (Part 1 of 2)

By Realized Worth

“Self-interested volunteering” seems generally at odds with everything we’ve come to believe about volunteering. Right? “Self-interested volunteers.” Isn’t that an oxy-moron? What about altruism and the greater good? This article identifies two reasons why self-interest is an essential aspect of an outstanding volunteer experience. Both reasons have to do with motivation.

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2009/09/want-good-volunteers-forget-altruistic.html>

The Journey of a Volunteer

Want Good Volunteers? Dump The Altruistic, Find The Self-Interested (Part 2 of 2)

By Realized Worth

Selflessness and altruism make for bad volunteers. Without self-interest, volunteers easily opt out of commitments and objectify those they are trying to help.

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2009/09/want-good-volunteers-dump-altruistic.html>

Transformative versus Transactional Volunteering

‘Transformational’ volunteering to replace ‘transactional’ in US

By Ethical Performance

“The days of counting employee volunteer hours as an indicator of valuable community service are on the wane.”

<http://www.ethicalperformance.com/news/article/8844>

Transformative versus Transactional Volunteering

Second Generation Volunteer Administration: Moving from Transaction to Transformative Volunteer Learning Environments

By Nancy K. Franz, Ph.D, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

“Volunteer resource managers are primarily charged with oversight of transactions or tasks conducted by their volunteer force for the improvement of social, economic, or environmental conditions. However, a deeper goal focuses on the developmental aspects of working with individual volunteers. Transformative learning focuses more on the development of volunteers in addition to task accomplishment and often brings changes in work styles, world views, and/or personalities. Transformative learning can lead to better and more autonomous decision making and personal actions that better align with personal values. Transformed volunteers often provide deeper and more meaningful service than those simply accomplishing tasks. The life and work of the volunteer resource manager can also be impacted by the volunteer’s growth process.”

<https://publicgardens.org/file/396/download?token=4DNiinku>

The Journey of a Volunteer

The 3 Stages of the Volunteer: What they need from you & how to recognize them

By Realized Worth

Tourist – Traveler – Guide. This is the journey of the volunteer. The great failure of volunteer coordinators lies in expecting tourists to act like guides, treating guides like tourists, and ignoring the traveler all together. It’s time we meet people where they’re at. Here’s how to recognize employee volunteers at each stage, and how to treat them accordingly.

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2012/05/3-stages-of-volunteer-what-they-need.html>



Transformative versus Transactional Volunteering

4 Reasons to Adopt the Transformative Volunteering Method

By Realized Worth

In the traditional model of volunteering, the purpose is to freely provide a service to respond to a crisis or solve a problem. In the transformative model of volunteering, the purpose is to develop and strengthen empathy through experience.

<http://www.realizedworth.com/2016/08/4-reasons-to-adopt-the-transformative-volunteering-method.html>

About Realized Worth

For over 10 years, Realized Worth has partnered with some of the best-known brands in the world to design and implement corporate volunteer programs. Through a comprehensive **design, transition and implementation process**, we analyze existing programs and volunteer networks, provide clear recommendations on how to grow programs, and support the implementation of programs that keep employees engaged in transformative volunteerism year-round.

Contact Realized Worth at contact@realizedworth.com and learn more about our story and our services at www.realizedworth.com.