

Leading Best Practices in Pro Bono Service Conference Call Series Summary and Takeaways

Professional Development October 23, 2008

Pro Bono Programs Overview: Realizing the professional development benefits of pro bono service

There is an increasingly strong business case to be made for the professional development value of pro bono service. According to the 2008 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT survey, intentional integration of pro bono service is a practical component of developing cost-effective, high impact training and development programs. The Deloitte survey confirms that Human Resource (HR) professionals believe pro bono service strengthens recruitment, retention, and learning and development efforts through employee engagement and experiential learning.

Given the nascent stage of most corporate pro bono programs, companies are approaching the integration of pro bono service and employee development in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. For example, in an effort to create a sustainable program integrated with current engagement offerings, Gap Inc. formed a skills-based/pro bono service volunteer steering committee comprised of functional leaders with a significant stake in the benefits of the program. The committee members include professionals in learning and development, employee relations, and diversity inclusion who dedicate time and offer feedback to assist in realizing these potential benefits. Other recommendations for maximizing the professional development benefits from pro bono service include ensuring pro bono coordinators speak at or their message is included in conferences, recruiting events and new hire orientations as well as taking full advantage of the intra- and internet and other company-wide communications to spread the pro bono service message.

Presenters

.....
Frances Kennedy
Senior Manager,
Community Involvement

Deloitte.

Kris Kosek
Community Relations
Planning Lead



Abby Frost
Program Manager

Be what's possible
Gap Inc.

Recruitment benefits...

- 66% of the Gen Y workforce reports that they would prefer to work at a company that provides opportunities to apply their skills to benefit nonprofit organizations
- 77% of job seekers consider the social commitment of a company when choosing an employer

Retention benefits...

- Strengthens relationships between coworkers outside normal scope of job
- Desire to work for a good, socially responsible corporation
- Invests in the community where employees live
- Rewards employees with additional opportunities

Potential Challenges

- While there are many studies and articles which demonstrate the professional development business case for pro bono Services. These proof points need to be gathered into one place that is easy to reference. This is an opportunity for the Pro Bono Action Tank to compile a comprehensive review of benefits.

Learning and Development benefits...

- 91% of HR executives believe that pro bono service would add value to training and development programs
- 90% of surveyed corporate HR professionals agree that contributing business skills/expertise to a nonprofit, in a volunteer capacity, can be an effective way to develop leadership skills

- Another challenge lies in the integration of pro bono service into companies HR efforts. The relationship between pro bono coordinators and talent management varies across companies, with some companies finding that even if HR appreciates the business value, partnership still can be difficult to navigate or maintain. Most companies agree it is essential to align the pro bono programs with existing talent management needs from the very beginning. Understanding the current best practices for integrating pro bono service will be useful to leverage for these conversations. There was a strong request to continue this conversation to understand more about how companies are handling this potential barrier.

- In some companies, the current economic downturn poses a potential threat to the implementation of new pro bono programs. Cite the benefits in recruitment, retention, leadership development and employee morale in making a strong business case for pro bono service as a viable strategy for professional development during these difficult times.

Key Takeaways

Tailor the business case to meet your talent manager's needs. There is an extensive amount of resources to prove the business case for professional development. When discussing pro bono service with HR personnel, it is beneficial to use the specific proof points that correspond to the motivation of that HR individual (i.e. retention or leadership and development, etc.).

Align pro bono efforts with HR strategy from the beginning. To assure effective partnership, it is important to include HR leaders in the design of the program so that stakeholder goals are tied to mutual success. Ask how your pro bono projects can reflect the development opportunities your employees should have.

Integrate pro bono services into professional development efforts. Realizing the potential of pro bono services depends on integrating it into those recruitment, retention and leadership development processes. Consider these processes you already have in place and incorporate pro bono service into these systems.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND RESERVE A SPACE FOR THIS FINAL 2008 CALL

Dec 4- The role of pro bono service during a recession (11am PT / 1pm CT / 2pm ET)
How can pro bono service be leveraged during these hard times?

RSVP to Jamie Hartman, Executive Director of the Pro Bono Action Tank at jamie@taprootfoundation.org

These efforts are guided and sponsored by the PBAT Leadership Group:



Deloitte.



About the Pro Bono Action Tank:

The Taproot Foundation's Pro Bono Action Tank (PBAT) is a coalition of leaders across the business, government and independent sectors leading the pro bono movement to ensure organizations serving the public good have access to the professional services they need to achieve their missions.