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"CAPACITY BUILDING AT ITS FINEST..."
NonProfit Times Names Taproot President as Top 50 Influencer



Congratulations to Taproot Founder and President Aaron Hurst for his recent inclusion on *The NonProfit Times'* Top 50 Power & Influence list. For Taproot's efforts in capacity building, Aaron Hurst was chosen among other leading executives for the impact they have now and for the innovative plans they are putting in place to evolve the charitable sector.

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INNOVATION OF THE MONTH: LEADING ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN FIRMS IMPROVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We love to see projects that have the potential for national-level impact. As Taproot gears up next month for its very first campaign around the issue areas of education and youth, a great education-oriented example is the recent



collaboration of [Cannon Design](#) and [Public Architecture](#) for [KIPP \(Knowledge is Power Program\)](#), a national network of free, open enrollment schools. KIPP has plans to quickly expand its network of schools in the coming years, but past renovations and facility design had to be done without formal guidelines or a consistent design framework. Most of the education staff overseeing the building process have limited understanding of the relationship between learning experience and physical environments. To address this, Cannon Design and Public Architecture teamed up with KIPP to write a new [learning environment guide](#) that outlines high-level strategies for developing and improving elementary education spaces. By leveraging Cannon Design's education expertise around school learning environments and insights from their [Third Teacher book](#) and incorporating KIPP's institutional knowledge, the new guide provides a highly flexible framework that will support KIPP educators across the country with their continued expansion in the future.

3 TIPS FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMPLOYEES' SKILLS SETS

One of the most common challenges we hear from companies trying [to build or scale a pro bono program](#) is understanding how they can identify the employee skills that will be a good match for the needs of their nonprofit partners. Here are three approaches we've seen work well in a variety of companies:

- Review Taproot's newly released [Volunteer Profile Standards](#) and acquaint yourself with a master list of skills your employees may have and nonprofits typically need, or use Taproot's [Competencies Map](#) to search by department.
- Within every department there are individuals who have a sense of what skills and areas of expertise are housed there. Reach out to one of these **functional champions**; regardless of how senior they are; they can often either tell you if the skills you need are present or can connect you with someone who knows.
- In some companies, the **Human Resources department** will have a document or database that already houses data around the skill type and experience level of employees by region or department. Gaining access to this can be a virtual jackpot for gauging the presence and concentration of relevant employee skills.

Ready for a more scalable solution? Use the [Volunteer Profile Standards](#) as a template to create volunteer profiles in your existing volunteer management database that will capture the professional skills and interests of your employees. You can use this information to facilitate virtual sourcing and matching for pro bono projects.

DELOITTE SURVEY SHOWS CONNECTION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERISM AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the release of their [IMPACT Report](#) in June (which shared insights from their \$50 million pro bono commitment), Deloitte also recently released their [2011 Volunteer IMPACT Study](#), focused on millennials and volunteering. In it, current, relevant statistics help quantify the benefits of a strong community engagement program, and there's no question this is on the minds of the younger generation. Key findings include:



- Even among millennials who rarely or never participate in their company's volunteering program, 61% say that a company's commitment to the community would likely be a factor when choosing between two potential jobs with same location, responsibilities, pay, and benefits.
- Millennials who frequently participate in their company's employee volunteer activities are two times more likely to rate their corporate culture "very positive" as compared to millennials who rarely or never volunteer (56% vs. 28%).
- Half of millennials surveyed (51%) say they want volunteerism to benefit them professionally.