



## Corporate Volunteer Programs: Benefits for Employees, Corporations, and the Community

Corporate volunteer programs — company-sponsored programs that encourage and enable employees to volunteer in their communities — have been springing up across Canada. Some programs offer employees time off work to volunteer. Others allow employees access to company premises and resources for their volunteer activity. No matter what approach they take, these programs pay dividends to

companies, employees, and the community.

Interviews with over 100 Ford Motor Company of Canada employees across the country<sup>1</sup> highlight the many benefits of a corporate volunteer program. Here are the positive results identified by participants in the Ford corporate volunteer program — and what some employees said about the program.

### Benefits to the corporation

- Enhanced, closer, and more trusting working relationships, higher morale, and greater job satisfaction at the company.
- Increased pride and positive feelings about the company.
- Improved corporate image, reputation, and perception of the company.
- Enhanced corporate visibility in the community (from volunteers and the media).
- Increased sales.
- Greater understanding of the interconnectedness of employees' roles within the broader corporate context.
- Changed perspectives of, and changed relationships with, co-workers.
- Greater connection with customers and consumers.
- Increased loyalty to the company and co-workers.

*“Doing things outside of work, I feel, helps the work atmosphere...sharing something where you laughed or sweated or had a good lunch...When you have that, you work better together.”*

*“It really does help when you go places [to volunteer]. People get to know you and say, ‘Well, you’re from Ford.’ ... It’s surprising how people swing over and buy a Ford product or say, ‘Oh, we’re going to buy a new car. Any suggestions?’”*

*“[Through volunteering] you also have a better handle on what your customers are like. ... Spending more time away from your regular day-to-day stuff also gives you a chance to connect with customers.”*

**Benefits to the community**

- Enhanced sense of community.
- Improved environment.
- Enhanced life for community members.
- Increased financial and other aid to community organizations.
- Increased level of community volunteering.

**Benefits to the employee**

- Reduced stress and a greater feeling of balance in one's life.
- Acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience.
- Increased energy for work.
- Increased contacts and establishment of personal networks.
- Enhanced feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.
- Personal growth.
- Feeling of having "made a difference" in people's lives.
- Increased appreciation for what one has.
- Greater respect for those in need.
- Commitment to volunteering in the future.

**Volunteering helps employees, employers, and the community**

As the quotations presented here demonstrate, employees who participate in corporate volunteer programs help their community, their employer, and derive personal benefits from their participation.

For more information on corporate volunteer programs, see *Developing an Effective Corporate Volunteer Program: Lessons from the Ford Motor Company of Canada Experience*, available at [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca).

*"It does a lot of good. I mean, I really felt like we helped a family by helping build their house. I really feel that we did something good for that organization and for that community and for one family."*

*"[Volunteering] enables you to forget your problems or concerns that you might have at the office and see that there's something else besides the office."*

*"When I come back to work [after volunteering], I'm pumped, I'm ready to go to work."*

*"It was an amazing feeling. ... I can still remember when, after we'd finished... the positive feelings everybody had that they really made a difference in somebody's life that day."*

*"[It] makes me feel good to be part of an organization that is contributing back to the community and to be able to do something valuable in a non-work setting with my work colleagues.... We interact on a different level when we're out doing that. It's much less formal. ... We go out and do something that we can have some fun at and that we feel good about. ... It brings us together as a work group. As a departmental manager ... I think that helps our performance back in the work place."*

<sup>1</sup> The interviews with Ford employees were conducted in the fall of 2001.

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 YEAR OF  
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For more information on the International Year of Volunteers, visit [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca).

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